

Sermon Title: The Picture of a Consistent Shepherd and Sheep Relationship

Sermon Text: 1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

Sermon Purpose: To call the hearer to an understanding of the importance of healthy shepherd and sheep relations in order to have a healthy church.

Sermon Proposition: There are 2 aspects of healthy shepherd and sheep relationships for effective Church ministry.

Introduction: (Exodus 18:13-24; Acts 20:17-31; 1 Timothy 3:1-11; Titus 1:5-9)

There are four basic New Testament terms that identify and describe church leaders.

1. **Elder**/Presbuteros, which characterizes leaders as spiritually mature and wise. (Acts 15:2ff; 1 Timothy 5:17-19)
2. **Overseer**/Episkopos, which describes the leader's spiritual oversight and authority. (Bishop Acts 20:28) **Philippians 1:1; 1 Timothy 3:1-2; Titus 1:7**
3. **Pastor**/Poimen, emphasizes the leader's responsibility to feed and protect the flock. (Ephesians 4:11; Matthew 9:36; Mark 6:34)
4. **Leader**/hegemon, indicates that the church leaders must be able to provide spiritual discernment and guidance to the flock. (Hebrews 13:7, 17, 24)

Establishing leaders and leadership in the early church was not an easy task. This was true at Thessalonica, first, the church was less than a year old and made up of primarily new converts. Therefore, few, if any of the members would have sufficiently qualified as mature and wise enough to articulate spiritual truth and lead the congregation with discernment. But Paul exercised his delegated authority, responsibility, and discernment to identify qualified men, and started training them to become elders in the church.

Secondly, finding qualified elders among the Thessalonians was difficult because those new believers generally were common people. Many of them were slaves who were not used to leadership responsibilities. [John MacArthur, *The MacArthur New Testament Commentary 1 & 2 Thessalonians*, Moody Press, Chicago, 2002, p.167-168]

I. The Shepherd's responsibility to the sheep. V.12

A. The responsibility of the shepherd to **labor** among the sheep. V.12a

The picture is of diligent focused labor, is from the Greek word "kopiao," which means to exhibit great effort and exertion, to the point of sweat and exhaustion.

1 Thessalonians 2:9 For you remember, brethren, our labor and toil; for laboring night and day, that we might not be a burden to any of you, we preached to you the gospel of God.

2 Thessalonians 3:6-7 But we command you, brethren, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that you withdraw from every brother who walks disorderly and not according to the tradition which he received from us. **7** For you yourselves know how you ought to follow us, for we were not disorderly among you;

Acts 18:3 So, because he was of the same trade, he stayed with them and worked; for by occupation they were tentmakers.

1 Corinthians 3:13 each one's work will become clear; for the Day will declare it, because it will be revealed by fire; and the fire will test each one's work, of what sort it is.

Successful leadership in the church comes to those willing to work to exhaustion for the sake of divine mandates and spiritual objectives, embracing the proclamation of the gospel, the planting of churches, building up of believers.

- B. The responsibility of the shepherd to exercise **delegated authority** over the sheep. V.12b
To “have charge over” (proistemi) means “to stand before” and conveys the idea of authoritatively presiding, leading, or directing.

1 Timothy 3:4-5 one who rules his own house well, having *his* children in submission with all reverence **5** (for if a man does not know how to rule his own house, how will he take care of the church of God?);

1 Timothy 3:12 Let deacons be the husbands of one wife, ruling *their* children and their own houses well.

1 Timothy 5:17 Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine.

1 Peter 5:1-4 The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: **2** Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; **3** nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; **4** and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

1. Can be done by establishing a positive spiritual tone.
2. Can be done by establishing an atmosphere of unity under Christ.
3. Can be done by helping members cope and find contentment in life’s difficult circumstances and situations.
4. Can be done by helping members to find biblical solutions for their problems.
5. Can be done by laboring for necessary transformation within the church.
6. Can only be done by diligent effort and reliance on the Word of God and the Holy Spirit.

- C. The responsibility of the shepherd to give **instructions**. V.12d

This expression comes from the Greek word *noutheteo* which is translated admonish in the text. It is giving instruction that brings about transformation. The shepherd is to provide doctrine that corrects false doctrine and moral errors. The idea of giving advice and correction that is designed to change the mindset, conduct, and direction of a person (sheep). (**1 Thessalonians 5:14**)

2 Thessalonians 3:15 Yet do not count *him* as an enemy, but admonish *him* as a brother.

1 Timothy 4:11-13 These things command and teach. **12** Let no one despise your youth, but be an example to the believers in word, in conduct, in love, in spirit, in faith, in purity. **13** Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.

1 Timothy 4:6 If you instruct the brethren in these things, you will be a good minister of Jesus Christ, nourished in the words of faith and of the good doctrine which you have carefully followed.

2 Timothy 4:1-2 I charge *you* therefore before God and the Lord Jesus Christ, who will judge the living and the dead at His appearing and His kingdom: **2** Preach the word! Be ready in season *and* out of season. Convince, rebuke, exhort, with all longsuffering and teaching.

“To admonish” was considered one of the primary responsibilities of parents toward children and leaders toward sheep.

“To preach a sermon, I think, is not the hardest part; and yet what skill is necessary to make the truth plain; to convince the hearers, to let irresistible light in to their consciences, and to keep it there, and drive all home; to screw the truth into their minds, and work Christ into their affections; to meet every objection, and clearly to resolve it; to drive sinners to a stand, and make them see that there is no hope, but that they must unavoidably either be converted or condemned – and to do all this, as regards language and manner, as beseems our work, and yet as is most suitable to the capacities of our hearers. This, and a great deal more that should be done in every sermon, must surely require a great deal of holy skill. So great a God, whose message we deliver, should be honoured by our delivery of it. It is a lamentable case, that in a message from the God of heaven, of everlasting moment to the souls of men, we should behave ourselves so weakly, so unhandsomely, so imprudently, or so slightly, that the whole business should miscarry in our hands, and God should be dishonoured, and his work disgraced, and sinners rather hardened than converted; and all this through our weakness or neglect! How often have carnal hearers gone home jeering at the palpable and dishonourable failings of the preacher! How many sleep under us, because our hearts and tongues are sleepy, and we bring not with us so much skill and zeal as to awake them!” [\[Ibid., p.171\]](#)