

## **Elder Shepherd – Part 2**

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### Introduction:

A. God desires his people to have shepherds that will feed his flock. (Jeremiah 23)

1. Woe to the evil shepherds.
2. They have scattered the flock not caring on them.
3. Thus God will punish his shepherds.
4. God will restore the flock placing shepherds that will tend the flock.

B. What does it mean to be tended well?

1. People will no longer be afraid.
2. People will not be missing.

C. Prayer:

*Father, your Spirit is moving clearly in many directions. You want us to value those who have suffered and need recovering. Peter said you will restore and make steadfast the ones who have suffered. We need your help in pulling this off. The generations often don't trust each other yet they need each other. Give us a vision for tending the flock well. Help us to communicate your vision, we yield to you.*

I. When we can't handle truth we can handle facts.

A. *Love is Stronger than Death* is a book about a five year old girl with a brain tumor and the parents needed to hear the facts.

1. Many people in trouble need facts.
2. Difficult truths often cannot be faced unless hidden behind facts.

B. There is a truth so good that we often need to hide it behind a formula.

1. God wants us to be one in Christ at the same level as God and Christ. (John 17:20-22)
2. God is in us and we are in God.
3. We are to experience a Trinitarian unity with each other.
4. Christ gave glory to his followers as God gave him glory.
5. Whatever glory God gave Christ the Lord has given to us.

6. When this glory is released in us it is healing and parallel to the energy of the Trinity.

C. What is this glory that we can give to each other?

1. I gave up my counseling practice because of this verse.

2. I used to explain behavior as defense mechanisms but I began to wonder what this has to do with Christianity.

3. Some problems have organic bases but matters of soul are far more common and are dealt with in community.

4. When we tend to souls something Trinitarian happens that brings healing.

5. What was God's design for man and woman? (Genesis 1:26-27)

a. Visualize a time when there was only God.

b. What words describe this time when only God existed?

1. Joy.

2. Unity.

3. Tranquility.

4. Peace.

5. Love.

6. Lonely.

7. Fun; no competition or need to restrain.

c. C. S. Lewis said we cannot be fully ourselves now because what we are is not that good.

d. Why did God create people?

1. They wanted to do something great.

2. Man is able to enter into community deeper than even angels.

3. Man is not experiencing this community now but will some day.

6. I want to disciple well so that people can commune with God and with each other.

a. I must understand what in me can experience Trinitarian community?

b. How does the Trinity get along?

c. If the church is to know another Reformation we will have to recover the doctrine of Trinity and its implications for community.

d. Do you ponder the Trinity as a model for your marriage?

II. The nature of the Trinity can be explained by *perichoretisis* meaning neighborhood.

A. In the Trinity there is a pouring of each member into other members.

1. Jesus said we are in him, a pouring concept. (Romans 5)

2. Words that pour are more powerful than those that destruct.

3. In the New Covenant the function of the shepherd changes. (Jeremiah 30-31)

a. In the Old Testament before the Spirit came upon all people the teacher could not say all have the Spirit.

b. The old nature was in people so the Law needed to be proclaimed.

c. The New Covenant teaching arouses the appetite for Christ that indwells believers.

d. When was the last time you felt poured into by another?

e. In a union there needs to be a pouring of each member into the other.

f. When the glory within us is released it arouses the desire for the life in Christ in us.

4. The Navigators are task oriented because the agenda is to get something across.

a. There are good things to get across but if this is the center of our focus we are not connecting.

b. Maybe we need to get something out of us rather than getting something across.

c. The church today has two models for change.

1. "Do it right" - according to our standard, an Old Covenant model.

2. "Fix what is wrong" - is therapeutic model, emphasizing fixing the broken parts of our lives before we do what is right.

d. A third model is to "release what's good."

1. Arouse the desire for Christ within.

2. This is perichoretical ministry.

5. Notice when the Father speaks to Jesus.

- a. Baptism.
- b. Transfiguration.
- c. When Jesus asked God to glorify him.
- d. At baptism the heavens were torn open. (Mark 1: 11)
- e. Jesus died so that we would not be separated from God.
- f. Why did God break the silence at Jesus' baptism?
  - 1. Man sinned by not believing the goodness of God.
  - 2. Jesus was praying as he came out of the water, expressing by obedience his confidence that the Father is really good.
  - 3. This excited God the Father and he wanted this loving trust to be in believers. (John 17:25-26)
- g. My son was a good soccer player and once scored a goal, making some adults say, "Who's son is that?"
  - 1. This delighted me.
  - 2. I claimed him as my son.
- h. The glory God gave to Jesus was the ability to display it to mankind.
  - 1. He needed to be incarnate to do this.
  - 2. There was no other way.

B. How do we release glory in our lives?

- 1. When you talk with a spouse ready to leave how do you release glory to heal?

A Godly friend divorced his wife and I invited them to visit me. He thanked me for extending grace to him. He told me that I asked some probing questions so that he was afraid to see me. He said this was his failure but I think I failed too. I need to relate perichoretically so that I can release glory into others.
- 2. The richest vision of what God can do often grows out of the disappointment over how little he seems to be doing.
  - a. Glory is released through confusion and wrestling over who he is.
  - b. When God seems to be up to nothing he wants to release his glory.

c. People that have been in ministry for years have one of three things:

1. “Lose their vision” due to difficulty.
2. They “settle into a narrow vision” that is comfortable.
3. They survived profound disappointment and pain by finding a “richer and more compelling vision” of what God can do.
  - i. Ezra realized the glory after the new temple was seen as insignificant in comparison to what they had before. (Ezra 3:10-13)
  - ii. Zerubbabel also realized his work was nothing in comparison to the former glory. (Haggai 2:1-3)
  - iii. Each became aware of how their best efforts produced little.
  - iv. They kept moving in spite of discouragement.
  - v. As they moved God promised to once again shake the nations and fill this new house with more glory than the former.
  - vi. Their tears may have been necessary for the release of the increase of glory.

3. We go through three stages of ministry.

a. “Idealism” - realizing God called us.

1. Characterized by blessing and encouragement.
2. Knowledge and gifts are emphasized, especially by seminaries.
3. Something is held onto that makes a minister distinctive.
4. Denial of ugly motives exist in this stage.
5. How painful life can be is not realized.
6. The confusion of God and life is not understood.

b. “Disillusionment” - realizing there is conflict within us.

1. We realize that things out of our control go wrong.
2. Temptation to sin becomes stronger.
3. Joy found in Christ.

4. What's hidden in the stage of disillusionment is how meaningful life can be and how sustaining God can be.
5. When disillusionment hits we can do one of three things.
  - i. Yield and quit, not finishing well.
  - ii. We can try to recover the joy of stage one by returning to what we once were good at, like an adult going back to baby food. This is a deadly routine.
  - iii. Admit my brokenness and look to God for strength, staying in the word and in prayer, and with one person who can listen and help. This leads to stage three.
- c. "Passionate vision" - after weeping over how pathetic our work is, like Ezra.
  1. In this we can rejoice over touching one life; the world may not recognize this but Jesus will.
  2. Knowing Christ becomes more important than life.
    - i. The prodigal son learned the love of a wise Father.
    - ii. There is a hunger to be held by a wise Father.
    - iii. I heard a seasoned scholar admit he didn't quite get the Gospel yet.
  3. A deepened longing for closeness creates a great loneliness that gives hope for what's ahead.
    - i. This transforms us.
    - ii. We realize we were built for something we've not yet experienced. This helps us stay deeply involved in relationships that don't satisfy.
    - iii. The elder shepherd is aware of longings for intimacy.
      - a. A boy from a dysfunctional family used to sit on the porch of a family that laughed at dinner.
      - b. I encouraged him to enter the house and sit with the friendly people.
      - c. Elder shepherds learn this intimacy.