

Elder Shepherd – Part 4

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Introduction:

- A. We're taking questions in this session.
- B. You cannot attribute what is said to any one person.

I. Questions.

- A. Can you summarize your messages over the last few nights?
 1. Our culture has been sold a bill of goods and the church needs to proclaim and reclaim the ministry to each other that address the core issues in the human soul.
 2. Western civilization has come to think the core issues of human needs are not spiritual.
 3. People do have deep spiritual lack of connection between self and others and from God.
 4. These issues can only be dealt with in the context of a Christian community.
 5. Life and death are in the power of the tongue. (Proverbs 18:21)
 6. Paul tells us to speak only wholesome words that edify. (Ephesians 4)
 - a. We've heard many death words.
 - b. We need to be encouraged.
 - c. A friend struggled with depression and was diagnosed with clinical depression.
 - d. His dad had a rags to riches story and criticized this man even on his death bed.
 - e. How do we speak life words to a man like this?
 - f. This is my calling and mission.
- B. Can you define glory?
 1. Glory is displayed excellence or zeal.
 2. Jesus prayed the Father would glorify his name. (John 12)
 3. The display of God's character reveals his excellence.
 4. When I forgive I display the glory of God.
 5. When grace is released in me I display the glory of God.

6. This deals with psychological problems.
 7. God gives us the capacity of revealing himself.
- C. In talking with the younger generation they seem to believe problems are not their fault. How do you help people come out of that hole to embrace their own sense of responsibility?
1. Modern psychotherapy began by talking to people about their problems and attributed their problems to upbringing, so the hurting person is not at fault.
 2. The Christian community has reacted by telling people to stop fussing about their pain and to accept responsibility for their own problems.
 3. We are both victims and are responsible for our own lives.
 4. Only the Holy Spirit can handle this dual condition.
- D. How do we help young people get to understand they are responsible for their own problems?
1. One position is that of victimization.
 2. Another position is the hard nose personal responsibility position.
 3. Neither is accurate because we have a flesh and spirit struggle.
 - a. The regenerated human spirit means I have the resources to please God in spite of circumstances.
 - b. When I am betrayed I may suffer but I don't need to sin in response to the betrayal.
 - c. Sanctification is mortifying the flesh and vivifying the spirit.
 - d. There is more in us than an inclination to blame others; there is a longing in us to do what is right.
 - e. In the middle of my pain I can glorify God by loving others by the power of God.
 - f. We don't need to pout, which only leads to death.
 - g. If there is no inclination within a person to do other than pouting they are not true believers.
 - h. When men feel badly we demand that our wives pity us like our mothers did.
 1. Once when I felt this way my wife decided to go on an errand.
 2. I became annoyed.

3. I operated in the flesh and justified my wrong response as necessary.
(Romans 7)
 4. In our culture our hurt becomes the dominant thing, yet God commands us to love others in spite of our hurts.
 5. I could have become angry or share with her how she made me hurt.
 6. I could have coldly been nice to her as out of Christian duty.
 7. The flesh will eek out even as we try to obey God.
 8. I could have realized that even in this bad moment I still have a desire to love my wife and allow this impulse of the Spirit to lead me.
 9. This led to a release of the grace of God in me.
 10. When we do keep in step with the Spirit the Lord sometimes gives us a sense of how good this is.
 - i. Soon after this my wife learned her dad was dying.
 - ii. She asked me to hold her.
 - iii. If I had acted in the flesh previously she would not have drawn near to me.
- E. We have counselors that travel the world to help people. What would be the application for them of what you've been sharing?
1. They need to realize the essence of Christian counseling is not to endlessly explore the past, neither to become rigidly behavioral.
 2. If someone exposes a serious problem that requires counseling we need to realize all problems contain a flesh and spirit conflict.
 - a. This rules out organic problems that have a psychological root.
 - b. These need medication.
 - c. Most problems are not in this category.
 3. The flesh is any approach to life where God is not the center.
 - a. Most personal problems grow out of an attempt to handle problems without God.
 - b. We accuse God of not caring for us.
 - c. We cannot face the horror of life without God so to deny God's rightful place in our lives is to cut us off from our only help.

d. This results in exploring the inner feelings that are supposed to lead to a way of handling our trouble.

e. This leads to defense mechanisms that destroy life.

4. What do we do with the flesh?

a. Mortify it.

b. Vivify the spirit.

c. In this way we can embrace our terrible life experiences as part of God's design to bring us to the end of ourselves and to full trust in Christ.

d. We can admit that what happened to us was bad but we remember these experiences in a spiritual dynamic whose goal is to reflect the reality of God.

e. This will change the problem by dispensing grace.

f. Dispensing grace is to speak words of life and acts of love to others in spite of their bad habits and unloving actions until Christ is formed in others. (Galatians 4:19)

g. If we dispense grace quickly we often do not need to deal with the flesh.

h. Perhaps 80% of personal problems will be dealt with by dispensing grace in the body of Christ.

i. I have made mistakes of trying to deal with the flesh for too long.

1. My priority now is to dispense grace instead of dealing with the flesh.

2. We need to arouse the spirit in others.

F. Healthy spiritual life requires belonging to a healthy spiritual body. Is this more of a solution than developing elders?

1. Yes, our Sunday School class is our focus in developing a healthy body.

2. The notion of developing ongoing community needs to receive more priority than spreading elders across the country.

3. A healthy community allows hurting people to express the inner passion for good affections in them that need to be released.

4. A healthy community also helps hurting people to understand that their good urges can be stronger than the bad urges.

5. The Christian is free to indulge his deepest desire, nurtured in community.

6. As we think deeply about what we really want we desire to experience joy.

G. How do we help people identify the people that do need professional counseling?

1. If people have suicidal tendencies they need help.
2. I gave a list of physical problems that require professional help.

H. Dispensing grace is based on the idea that something in us is stronger than the desire for revenge or other bad impulses. Is this correct?

1. This is part of the equation.
2. We need to talk about being caught up in the wonder of God.
3. The Spirit of God has done something in Christians that exceeds the evil in them.
4. My example of dealing with my son that was expelled from university was a time I dispensed grace.
 - a. When my other son became in trouble in high school I had become very angry.
 - b. This time I reacted differently.
 - c. The results are vastly different.
 - d. Christians need to profoundly trust Christ in them and seek to release Christ to others.
 - e. I don't naturally respond warmly to people.
 - f. I need to work on releasing this love that is deeply inclined in me.
5. Dispensing grace to the unbeliever is not aimed at arousing goodness because it's not in them.
 - a. They still have a longing for good however, like a vague memory.
 - b. Philip Yancey *What's so Amazing about Grace?* talks about having spent time in his church dealing with people drawn to church because of something about grace there,
 1. One woman was an ex-prostitute who wanted to be around people who believed she could be better but didn't think church was such a place.
 2. When she finally did go to church she found people that did not feel her sin was any worse than hers.