

Message Six

Shepherding according to God

RK Hymns: 1170

Scripture Reading: John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 5:2; 2:25; Eph. 4:12-16

- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- 1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

I. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock— John 21:15-17; Acts 20:28:

- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.
- A. Shepherding refers to caring for all the needs of the sheep.
- B. All the sheep need to be well provided for and well tended to.

II. In the Lord's recovery today, there is an urgent need of shepherding— John 21:16; 1 Pet. 5:2:

- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- 1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;
- A. In His organic salvation God the Father first regenerates us by God the Spirit and then shepherds us in God the Son as our Shepherd so that we may exist and grow in His life for eternity— John 3:6; 10:10, 14-16.
- John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
- John 10:10 The thief does not come except to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.
- John 10:14 I am the good Shepherd, and I know My own, and My own know Me,
- John 10:15 Even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.

- John 10:16 And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.
- B. To shepherd the believers is crucial for their growth in the divine life unto maturity for the building up of the Body of Christ—Eph. 4:12-16.
- Eph 4:12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,
- Eph 4:13 Until we all arrive at the oneness of the faith and of the full knowledge of the Son of God, at a full-grown man, at the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ,
- Eph 4:14 That we may be no longer little children tossed by waves and carried about by every wind of teaching in the sleight of men, in craftiness with a view to a system of error,
- Eph 4:15 But holding to truth in love, we may grow up into Him in all things, who is the Head, Christ,
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

III. Shepherding depends on teaching; if we cannot teach, we cannot shepherd—**Matt. 28:19-20; 9:35-36:**

- Matt 28:19 Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,
- Matt 28:20 Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.
- Matt 9:35 And Jesus went about all the cities and the villages, teaching in their synagogues and preaching the gospel of the kingdom and healing every disease and every sickness.
- Matt 9:36 And seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and cast away like sheep not having a shepherd.
- A. Shepherding and teaching go together—Eph. 4:11.
- Eph 4:11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,
- B. Our shepherding should always be with teaching, and our teaching should always be with shepherding—Acts 2:42; 20:28; Col. 1:28.
- Acts 2:42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.
- Acts 20:28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.
- Col 1:28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;

IV. We all need to know and experience Christ as the Shepherd of our souls—**1 Pet. 2:25:**

- 1 Pet 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.
- A. As the Shepherd of our souls, Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being:
- Christ's organic shepherding primarily takes care of our soul—Psa. 23:3.
Psa 23:3 He restores my soul; He guides me on the paths of righteousness / For His name's sake.
 - He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising oversight over the condition of our inner being—cf. Heb. 13:17.
Heb 13:17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.
 - This kind of shepherding is an inward, intrinsic, organic comforting—2 Cor. 1:3-4.
2 Cor 1:3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort,

2 Cor 1:4 Who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort those who are in every affliction through the comforting with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

- B. Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and all our problems, needs, and wounds— John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17:

John 14:16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,

John 14:17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.

1 Cor 15:45b ... the last Adam became a life-giving Spirit.

1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

1. As our pneumatic Shepherd, Christ takes care of us from within our spirit:
 - a. His shepherding begins from our spirit and spreads to every part of our soul— Eph. 3:17.
Eph 3:17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,
 - b. From our spirit Christ reaches all the parts of our soul and takes care of us in a tender, organic, all-inclusive way— 1 Thes. 5:23.
1 Thes 5:23 And the God of peace Himself sanctify you wholly, and may your spirit and soul and body be preserved complete, without blame, at the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ.
2. This is the inward shepherding of the processed and consummated Triune God united and incorporated with His regenerated believers—2 Cor. 13:14; John 3:6; 14:20; Rom. 8:16.
2 Cor 13:14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with you all.
John 3:6 That which is born of the flesh is flesh, and that which is born of the Spirit is spirit.
John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
Rom 8:16 The Spirit Himself witnesses with our spirit that we are children of God.

V. Those who shepherd the flock of God should shepherd according to God—1 Pet. 5:2; Phil. 1:21a:

1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

Phil 1:21a For to me, to live is Christ ...

- A. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition—2 Pet. 1:4; Eph. 1:5, 9; 3:21; John 14:6.

2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

Eph 1:5 Predestinating us unto sonship through Jesus Christ to Himself, according to the good pleasure of His will,

Eph 1:9 Making known to us the mystery of His will according to His good pleasure, which He purposed in Himself,

Eph 3:21 To Him be the glory in the church and in Christ Jesus unto all the generations forever and ever. Amen.

John 14:6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

- B. *According to God* in 1 Peter 5:2 means that we live God; only those who live God can shepherd according to God:

1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

1. God's economy is to work Himself into us so that we may receive Him as our life and life supply in order to live Him— John 11:25; 6:48, 57.
 - John 11:25 Jesus said to her, I am the resurrection and the life; he who believes into Me, even if he should die, shall live;
 - John 6:48 I am the bread of life.
 - John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
 2. We are participating in the divine life and the divine nature so that we can live God in our humanity—Gal. 2:20.
 - Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
- C. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function but not in the Godhead— Col. 3:4; 2 Pet. 1:4:
- Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
 - 2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
1. We need to be filled to the brim with the divine life, enjoying the Triune God as the fountain, the spring, and the river to become the totality of the divine life, even to become the divine life itself— John 4:14; Col. 3:4.
 - John 4:14 But whoever drinks of the water that I will give him shall by no means thirst forever; but the water that I will give him will become in him a spring of water springing up into eternal life.
 - Col 3:4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.
 2. We need to become God in His attributes of love, light, righteousness, and holiness— 1 John 4:8; 1:5; Rom. 3:21, 25-26; Eph. 1:4; 5:27; 1 Pet. 1:15-16.
 - 1 John 4:8 He who does not love has not known God, because God is love.
 - 1 John 1:5 And this is the message which we have heard from Him and announce to you, that God is light and in Him is no darkness at all.
 - Rom 3:21 But now, apart from the law, the righteousness of God has been manifested, witness being borne to it by the Law and the Prophets;
 - Rom 3:25 Whom God set forth as a propitiation place through faith in His blood, for the demonstrating of His righteousness, in that in His forbearance God passed over the sins that had previously occurred,
 - Rom 3:26 With a view to the demonstrating of His righteousness in the present time, so that He might be righteous and the One who justifies him who is of the faith of Jesus.
 - Eph 1:4 Even as He chose us in Him before the foundation of the world to be holy and without blemish before Him in love,
 - Eph 5:27 That He might present the church to Himself glorious, not having spot or wrinkle or any such things, but that she would be holy and without blemish.
 - 1 Pet 1:15 But according to the Holy One who called you, you yourselves also be holy in all your manner of life;
 - 1 Pet 1:16 Because it is written, "You shall be holy because I am holy."
 3. We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities—Rom. 8:19, 29; 2 Cor. 3:18; Matt. 16:24.
 - Rom 8:19 For the anxious watching of the creation eagerly awaits the revelation of the sons of God.
 - Rom 8:29 Because those whom He foreknew, He also predestinated to be conformed to the image of His Son, that He might be the Firstborn among many brothers;
 - 2 Cor 3:18 But we all with unveiled face, beholding and reflecting like a mirror the glory of the Lord, are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory, even as from the Lord Spirit.

- Matt 16:24 Then Jesus said to His disciples, If anyone wants to come after Me, let him deny himself and take up his cross and follow Me.
4. We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to the goal of His economy—Eph. 1:10.
Eph 1:10 Unto the economy of the fullness of the times, to head up all things in Christ, the things in the heavens and the things on the earth, in Him;
- D. If we would shepherd according to God, we need to become one with God— John 14:20; 1 Cor. 6:17:
John 14:20 In that day you will know that I am in My Father, and you in Me, and I in you.
1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
1. The basic principle of the Bible is that in His economy God is making Himself one with man and man one with Him— John 15:4; 1 Cor. 6:17.
John 15:4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.
1 Cor 6:17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.
 2. God desires that the divine life and the human life be joined together to become one life that has one living— John 6:57; Gal. 2:20.
John 6:57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.
Gal 2:20 I am crucified with Christ; and it is no longer I who live, but it is Christ who lives in me; and the life which I now live in the flesh I live in faith, the faith in the Son of God, who loved me and gave Himself up for me.
 3. When we are one with God, we become God in life and nature and are God in our shepherding of others—1 John 5:11-12; 2 Pet. 1:4; 1 Pet. 5:2.
1 John 5:11 And this is the testimony, that God gave to us eternal life and this life is in His Son.
1 John 5:12 He who has the Son has the life; he who does not have the Son of God does not have the life.
2 Pet 1:4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.
1 Pet 5:2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

VI. In order to shepherd according to God, we need to live a shepherding life— John 21:15-17; 2 Cor. 6:1-13; 7:2-3:

- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- 2 Cor 6:1 And working together with Him, we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain;
2 Cor 6:2 For He says, "In an acceptable time I listened to you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the well-acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.
2 Cor 6:3 We give no occasion of stumbling in anything that the ministry may not be faulted,
2 Cor 6:4 But in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,
2 Cor 6:5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings;
2 Cor 6:6 In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love,
2 Cor 6:7 In the word of truth, in the power of God; through the weapons of righteousness on the right and on the left,
2 Cor 6:8 Through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true;
2 Cor 6:9 As unknown and yet well known; as dying and yet behold we live; as being disciplined and yet not being put to death;

- 2 Cor 6:10 As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.
- 2 Cor 6:11 Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged.
- 2 Cor 6:12 You are not constricted in us, but you are constricted in your inward parts.
- 2 Cor 6:13 But for a recompense in kind, I speak as to children, you also be enlarged.
- 2 Cor 7:2 Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.
- 2 Cor 7:3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together.
- A. The more we are constituted with Christ, the more we will spontaneously live a shepherding life because the constitution of Christ in our spiritual life has a shepherding aspect—Col. 1:27; 3:10-11, 14; John 21:15-17.
- Col 1:27 To whom God willed to make known what are the riches of the glory of this mystery among the Gentiles, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory,
- Col 3:10 And have put on the new man, which is being renewed unto full knowledge according to the image of Him who created him,
- Col 3:11 Where there cannot be Greek and Jew, circumcision and uncircumcision, barbarian, Scythian, slave, free man, but Christ is all and in all.
- Col 3:14 And over all these things put on love, which is the uniting bond of perfectness.
- John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
- John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
- John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- B. In order to have a shepherding life, we need an enlarged heart, a heart to embrace all of God's people—2 Cor. 6:11-13; 7:2-3; cf. 1 Kings 4:29.
- 2 Cor 6:11 Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged.
- 2 Cor 6:12 You are not constricted in us, but you are constricted in your inward parts.
- 2 Cor 6:13 But for a recompense in kind, I speak as to children, you also be enlarged.
- 2 Cor 7:2 Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.
- 2 Cor 7:3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together.
- 1 Kings 4:29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and very much understanding and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.
- C. A shepherding life is a life that warms up others by cherishing them in the humanity of Jesus to nourish them in the divinity of Christ with the riches of Christ—Eph. 5:29; Prov. 25:15.
- Eph 5:29 For no one ever hated his own flesh, but nourishes and cherishes it, even as Christ also the church,
- Prov 25:15 By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, / And a soft tongue can break the bone.
- D. A shepherding life is an all-fitting life, a life that is able to fit all situations, accept any kind of environment, and work under any condition—2 Cor. 6:1-13; 7:2-3.
- 2 Cor 6:1 And working together with Him, we also entreat you not to receive the grace of God in vain;
- 2 Cor 6:2 For He says, "In an acceptable time I listened to you, and in the day of salvation I helped you." Behold, now is the well-acceptable time; behold, now is the day of salvation.
- 2 Cor 6:3 We give no occasion of stumbling in anything that the ministry may not be faulted,
- 2 Cor 6:4 But in everything we commend ourselves as ministers of God, in much endurance, in afflictions, in necessities, in distresses,
- 2 Cor 6:5 In stripes, in imprisonments, in tumults, in labors, in watchings, in fastings;
- 2 Cor 6:6 In pureness, in knowledge, in long-suffering, in kindness, in a holy spirit, in unfeigned love,

- 2 Cor 6:7 In the word of truth, in the power of God; through the weapons of righteousness on the right and on the left,
- 2 Cor 6:8 Through glory and dishonor, through evil report and good report; as deceivers and yet true;
- 2 Cor 6:9 As unknown and yet well known; as dying and yet behold we live; as being disciplined and yet not being put to death;
- 2 Cor 6:10 As made sorrowful yet always rejoicing; as poor yet enriching many; as having nothing and yet possessing all things.
- 2 Cor 6:11 Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged.
- 2 Cor 6:12 You are not constricted in us, but you are constricted in your inward parts.
- 2 Cor 6:13 But for a recompense in kind, I speak as to children, you also be enlarged.
- 2 Cor 7:2 Make room for us; we have wronged no one, we have corrupted no one, we have taken advantage of no one.
- 2 Cor 7:3 I do not say this to condemn you, for I have said before that you are in our hearts for our dying together and our living together.
- E. We need to shepherd the flock of God according to the loving and tender heart of our Father God and according to the seeking and shepherding spirit of our Savior Christ—Luke 15:1-32.
- Luke 15:1 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him.
- Luke 15:2 And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured among themselves, saying, This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.
- Luke 15:3 And He told them this parable, saying,
- Luke 15:4 Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?
- Luke 15:5 And when he finds it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.
- Luke 15:6 And when he comes into his house, he calls together his friends and his neighbors, saying to them, Rejoice with me, for I have found my sheep that was lost.
- Luke 15:7 I tell you that in the same way there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner repenting than over ninety-nine righteous persons who have no need of repentance.
- Luke 15:8 Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one silver coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds it?
- Luke 15:9 And when she finds it, she calls together her friends and neighbors, saying, Rejoice with me, for I have found the coin which I lost.
- Luke 15:10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.
- Luke 15:11 And He said, A certain man had two sons.
- Luke 15:12 And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he distributed to them his living.
- Luke 15:13 And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely.
- Luke 15:14 And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want.
- Luke 15:15 And he went and joined himself to one of the citizens of that country; and he sent him into his fields to feed hogs.
- Luke 15:16 And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything.
- Luke 15:17 But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine!
- Luke 15:18 I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.
- Luke 15:19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.
- Luke 15:20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.
- Luke 15:21 And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.
- Luke 15:22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

Luke 15:23 And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry,
 Luke 15:24 Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found.
 And they began to be merry.
 Luke 15:25 Now his older son was in the field. And as he came and drew near to the house, he
 heard music and dancing,
 Luke 15:26 And calling to him one of the servants, he inquired what these things might be.
 Luke 15:27 And he said to him, Your brother has come, and your father has slaughtered the
 fattened calf because he has received him back healthy.
 Luke 15:28 But he became angry and was not willing to enter. And his father came out and
 entreated him.
 Luke 15:29 But he answered and said to his father, Behold, so many years I have been slaving
 for you and have never neglected a command of yours, and you have never given me
 a goat that I might be merry with my friends;
 Luke 15:30 But when this son of yours came, who devoured your living with harlots, you
 slaughtered for him the fattened calf.
 Luke 15:31 And he said to him, Child, you are always with me, and all that is mine is yours.
 Luke 15:32 But we had to be merry and rejoice, because this brother of yours was dead and has
 come to life, and he was lost and has been found.

VII. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is mutual shepherding—1 Cor. 12:23-26:

- 1 Cor 12:23 And those members of the body which we consider to be less honorable, these we clothe
 with more abundant honor; and our uncomely members come to have more abundant
 comeliness,
 1 Cor 12:24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving
 more abundant honor to the member that lacked,
 1 Cor 12:25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same
 care for one another.
 1 Cor 12:26 And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified,
 all the members rejoice with it.
- A. All of us need to be under the organic shepherding of Christ and be one with Him to
 shepherd one another— John 21:15-17.
 John 21:15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John,
 do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love
 You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.
 John 21:16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to
 Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.
 John 21:17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved
 that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You
 know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.
- B. We are both sheep and shepherds, shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality.
- C. In mutual shepherding, we shepherd one another in love—1 Cor. 13:1-13.
 1 Cor 13:1 If I speak in the tongues of men and of angels but do not have love, I have become
 sounding brass or a clanging cymbal.
 1 Cor 13:2 And if I have the gift of prophecy and know all mysteries and all knowledge, and if I
 have all faith so as to remove mountains, but do not have love, I am nothing.
 1 Cor 13:3 And if I dole out all my possessions to feed others, and if I deliver up my body that I
 may boast, but do not have love, I profit nothing.
 1 Cor 13:4 Love suffers long. Love is kind; it is not jealous. Love does not brag and is not puffed up;
 1 Cor 13:5 It does not behave unbecomingly and does not seek its own things; it is not provoked
 and does not take account of evil;
 1 Cor 13:6 It does not rejoice because of unrighteousness, but rejoices with the truth;
 1 Cor 13:7 It covers all things, believes all things, hopes all things, endures all things.
 1 Cor 13:8 Love never falls away. But whether prophecies, they will be rendered useless; or
 tongues, they will cease; or knowledge, it will be rendered useless.
 1 Cor 13:9 For we know in part, and we prophesy in part;
 1 Cor 13:10 But when that which is complete comes, that which is in part will be rendered
 useless.

- 1 Cor 13:11 When I was a child, I spoke as a child, I thought as a child, I reasoned as a child; since I have become a man, I have done away with childish things.
- 1 Cor 13:12 For now we see in a mirror obscurely, but at that time face to face; now I know in part, but at that time I will fully know even as also I was fully known.
- 1 Cor 13:13 Now there abide faith, hope, love, these three; and the greatest of these is love.
- D. Through this mutual shepherding, the church as the Body of Christ will build itself up in love—Matt. 16:18; Eph. 1:22-23; 2:21-22; 4:16.
- Matt 16:18 And I also say to you that you are Peter, and upon this rock I will build My church, and the gates of Hades shall not prevail against it.
- Eph 1:22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,
- Eph 1:23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.
- Eph 2:21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;
- Eph 2:22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.
- Eph 4:16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.