



## FEED MY SHEEP

*“Man shall not live by bread alone but by every word that comes from the mouth of God” (Matthew 4:4).* These are the words of a hungry Jesus to Satan as He was being tempted in the wilderness. Jesus was quoting from Deuteronomy 8:3. This same Jesus, who is called the “WORD” in John chapter one, is also called “the bread of life”. *“Jesus said to them, I am the bread of life, whoever comes to Me shall not hunger, and whoever believes in Me shall never thirst” (John 6:35).* Jesus is the spiritual sustaining food for man to have real vital spiritual life -- eternal life. *“And this is eternal life, that they know You, the only true God and Jesus whom You have sent” (John 17:3).* The true spiritual food that will keep the people of God (the sheep) spiritually healthy and holy is the Word of God!

As I stated in an earlier blog (4/30/2020), God’s people are presently in a “famine” of the Word because many of the shepherds of our day are in a famine themselves! The reality is that we can only lead our congregants as far as we ourselves have come spiritually. In Jesus’ day, the Pharisees were the *super shepherds* who studied the Word of God and many even memorized the first 5 books of the Old Testament. They had head knowledge of the Word but no deep, lasting spiritual knowledge of the Word. They did not recognize Jesus, the WORD, when He came into the world; and they killed Him because they were feeding at the “tree of knowledge” in the garden. They were moral men, but they practiced a works-based morality. So, you have men who have an intellectual knowledge of God’s Word and who are moral but are spiritually in a famine! Jesus said of them *“Let them alone; they are blind guides. And if the blind lead the blind, both will fall into a pit.” (Matthew 15:14).* Unfortunately for God’s people (the sheep), we have many of these same blind guides present today in the church. They have knowledge of God’s Word and may even be moral men -- but they lack the one thing necessary to feed God’s people -- unction of the Holy Spirit on their teaching and preaching -- to be endowed with power from on high to hear clearly from GOD His message for his flock and to stand before God and faithfully deliver His message to the people. Many preach and teach with enticing words of man’s wisdom, but not in demonstration of the Holy Spirit and of power and woefully their labors remain spiritually fruitless.



When Jesus was restoring Peter at the lakeside breakfast, He gave Peter three important directives for his ministry: *“Feed My lambs...Tend My sheep...Feed My sheep” (John 21:15-17).* The mission is the same today for the shepherds (pastors, leaders, teachers) of God’s people. **The sheep need to be fed the Word of God by the Power of God for the Work of God.** In conversation with other sheep (true born again

believers), I have found that there are many areas where the sheep are experiencing difficulty finding good solid preaching and teaching from their local churches. They resort to sermons and teachings on YouTube and Vimeo and other internet sources. These resources are good, but God designed the church to function as a local entity with a local identity and a local mission specific to that area and church. The local church is the heart and soul of all that we call church. The trouble is that if the sheep are not truly being fed the Word, then the local church becomes weak and ineffective. This is not an easy problem to solve.

What are we to do?



**Number One** is to *never* react to what you are “emotionally feeling” but rather seek wisdom from God in faith, fasting and prayer concerning spiritual issues. If you are experiencing a famine in your local church, the first thing to examine is how much you have been praying personally for your local church and its leadership. If there has been little or no prayer than the problem lies with us! If there has been much prayer, seeking, weeping than we have some especially important decisions to make concerning our own personal spiritual growth and wellbeing. I am not one who believes in changing churches lightly or in changing churches often and have personally not done so. Unfortunately, what we call church growth today is typically the shifting of existing inventory from church to church instead of the addition of newly regenerated souls to the body of Christ through Biblical evangelism. The old saying “do not jump from the frying pan into the fire” can hold true here! What you may think is better may actually be worse! Incredibly strong Word-based Spirit-empowered teaching and preaching is the exception and not the norm these days so spend time listening and discerning before you make any moves you may regret later. Talk to others who have spiritual insight; but the real answer lies within you: the Holy Spirit can show you the way -- Christ in you the hope of Glory!

If you are blessed to find a local church that preaches and teaches the Word of God, **by the power of God, for the work of God** you now have an important decision to make! There are many things that attach us to the local church -- some good, some not so good. Some reasons are: My family has always gone there; I got married there; My girlfriend or boyfriend goes there; I have always belonged to that denomination; It is real close by; I love the music; I’m married to the pastor; They have a big youth program; I love their fellowship meals; There is lots of parking; Sermons are short; Sermons are long; The pews are comfortable; and They have lots of good programs for everyone! *(I hope you got a chuckle out of one of those!)* 😊



My take on all this is? Time is short, and we are heading towards the Day of the Lord; and we need to be strengthened in the faith, encouraged in the faith, challenged, warned and exhorted by the power of the Holy Spirit through God-fearing men who are walking in the Spirit and living the sanctified life. Are you being fed? Are you being challenged in your faith? Are you growing in the knowledge of the Lord Jesus Christ and the Scriptures? Only you can answer these questions; and only you can make these important choices.

God had a very scary warning for the shepherds of Israel who did not feed His sheep which is still applicable to church leaders today. We would be incredibly wise to take heed! The word of the LORD came to me: *“Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel; prophesy and say to them: ‘This is what the Sovereign LORD says: Woe to you shepherds of Israel who only take care of yourselves! Should not shepherds take care of the flock? You eat the curds, clothe yourselves with the wool and slaughter the choice animals, but you do not take care of the flock. You have not strengthened the weak or healed the sick or bound up the injured. You have not brought back the strays or searched for the lost. You have ruled them harshly and brutally. So they were scattered because there was no shepherd, and when they were scattered, they became food for all the wild animals. My sheep wandered over all the mountains and on every high hill. They were scattered over the whole earth, and no one searched or looked for them. “Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, because My flock lacks a shepherd and so has been plundered and has become food for all the wild animals, and because My shepherds did not search for My flock but cared for themselves rather than for My flock, therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the LORD: This is what the Sovereign LORD says: I am against the shepherds and will hold them accountable for My flock. I will remove them from tending the flock so that the shepherds can no longer feed themselves. I will rescue My flock from their mouths, and it will no longer be food for them. (Ezekiel 34:1-10)*



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