WEEK 5 — OUTLINE

Shepherding according to God (1)

Shepherding People by Cherishing and Nourishing Them according to the Pattern of the Lord Jesus and of the Apostle Paul

Scripture Reading: John 10:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4; Eph. 5:29; John 21:15-17; Acts 20:20, 28, 31; 2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; 2 Cor. 12:15; 1 Cor. 8:1; 13:4-8a

‹‹ DAY 1 ››

I. We need to shepherd people according to the pattern of the Lord Jesus in His ministry for carrying out God's eternal economy (Matt. 9:36; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4):

A. The content of God's entire New Testament economy in His complete salvation is Christ as the Son of Man cherishing us and as the Son of God nourishing us (Eph. 5:29):

1. Christ as the Son of Man came to redeem us from sin, accomplishing His judicial redemption through His death (1 Tim. 1:15; Eph. 1:7)—cherishing.
2. Christ as the Son of God came to impart the divine life into us abundantly, carrying out His organic salvation in His resurrection (John 10:10; 1 Cor. 15:45b)—nourishing.

‹‹ DAY 2 ››

B. In Luke 15 the Lord Jesus unveiled the saving love of the Triune God for sinners (vv. 1-2):

1. We need to follow the steps of the processed Triune God in seeking and gaining fallen people (vv. 3-7, 8-10, 17-18).
2. Our not having the Father's loving and forgiving heart and the Savior's shepherding and seeking spirit is the reason for our barrenness.
3. We need to cherish people (to make them happy and to make them feel pleasant and comfortable) in the humanity of Jesus (Matt. 9:10; Luke 7:34).
4. We need to nourish people (to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ in His ministry of three stages) in the divinity of Christ (Matt. 24:45-47).

‹‹ DAY 3 ››

C. Christ came not as a Judge but as a Physician to heal, recover, enliven, and save the lepers (8:2-4), paralytics (vv. 5-13; 9:2-8), the fever-ridden (8:14-15), the demon-possessed (vv. 16, 28-32), those ill with all kinds of diseases (v. 16), despised tax collectors, and sinners (9:9-11) that they might become reconstituted to become people of His heavenly kingdom (vv. 12-13).

D. He had to pass through Samaria, purposely detouring to Sychar to gain one immoral woman, cherishing her by asking her to give Him something to drink that He might nourish her with the flowing Triune God as the water of life (John 4:3-14).

E. As the One without sin, He did not condemn the adulterous woman but cherished her for the forgiveness of her sins judicially and for the setting free from her sins organically (8:1-11, 32, 36).

F. He went to Jericho just to visit and gain one person, a chief tax collector, and His preaching was a shepherding (Luke 19:1-10).

G. He cherished the parents by laying His hands on their children (Matt. 19:13-15).

‹‹ DAY 4 ››

H. The first one saved by Christ through His crucifixion was a robber sentenced to death (Luke 23:42-43).

I. The Lord's commissioning Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep was to incorporate the apostolic ministry with His heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, which is the church that issues in the Body of Christ (John 21:15-17; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:1-4; 2:25; cf. Heb. 13:17):

1. In His heavenly ministry, Christ as the High Priest, with a golden girdle on His breast, is cherishing and nourishing the churches (Rev. 1:12-13).
2. In His heavenly ministry, Christ is the Great Shepherd of the sheep to consummate the New Jerusalem according to God's eternal covenant (Heb. 13:20-21).

‹‹ DAY 5 ››

II. We need to shepherd people according to the pattern of the apostle Paul as a good shepherd, taking care of God's flock (1 Tim. 1:16; Acts 20:28):

A. Paul shepherded the saints as a nursing mother and an exhorting father (1 Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12).

B. Paul shepherded the saints in Ephesus by teaching them "publicly and from house to house" (Acts 20:20) and by admonishing each one of them with tears even for as long as three years (vv. 31, 19), declaring to them all the counsel of God (v. 27).

C. Second Corinthians 3:2-3 reveals that Paul wrote living letters of Christ with the life-giving Spirit as the essence:

1. Because the believers are a letter of Christ, they are also the letter inscribed in the heart of the apostles; today while we are ministering Christ to others, Christ is simultaneously written in the one to whom we are ministering and also in us.
2. This means that we can never forget those to whom we have ministered Christ; the one writing produces two original copies and involves two hearts becoming one.

D. Paul had an intimate concern for the believers (7:3; Philem. 7, 12).

E. He came down to the weak ones' level so that he could gain them (2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; cf. Matt. 12:20).

‹‹ DAY 6 ››

F. He was willing to spend what he had, referring to his possessions, and to spend what he was, referring to his being, for the sake of the saints (2 Cor. 12:15).

G. He was a drink offering, one with Christ as the wine producer, sacrificing himself for others' enjoyment of Christ (Phil. 2:17; Judg. 9:13; Eph. 3:2).

H. He was a minister of the Spirit to honor God by being filled with the Spirit to walk by the Spirit for His glory and to honor man by ministering the Spirit to them for their supply (2 Cor. 3:6, 8; Gal. 5:16, 25; Judg. 9:9).

I. Paul indicated in his teaching that the church is a home to raise up people, a hospital to heal and recover them, and a school to teach and edify them (Eph. 2:19; 1 Thes. 5:14; 1 Cor. 14:31).

J. Paul revealed that love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ (8:1; 12:31; 13:4-8a).

III. "I hope that there will be a genuine revival among us by our receiving this burden of shepherding. If all the churches receive this teaching to participate in Christ's wonderful shepherding, there will be a big revival in the recovery" (The Vital Groups, p. 40).

‹‹ WEEK 5 — DAY 1 ››

Morning Nourishment

Luke 15:1-2 Now all the tax collectors and sinners were drawing near to Him to hear Him. And both the Pharisees and the scribes murmured among themselves, saying, This man welcomes sinners and eats with them.

John 10:10-11 …I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly. I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

The content of God's entire New Testament economy is Christ as the Son of Man cherishing us and as the Son of God nourishing us....The Jesus who is portrayed in the four Gospels is very cherishing. He came to the world just to cherish people. All people need Him to cherish them, to make them happy, comfort them, and give them rest. If He came to us in His divine status, this would intimidate us. But even the most sinful tax collectors could sit with Him as friends, eating and talking with Him (Luke 15:1; Matt. 9:10). The scribes and Pharisees, the self-justified ones, could not bear to see Him eating with tax collectors and sinners. They did not realize that they also needed Him to be their Physician....The four Gospels reveal Christ as the cherishing Son of Man to meet the need of every fallen sinner. If you are sick of leprosy, He will cleanse you. If you are blind, He will give you sight. This is the Jesus in the four Gospels. (The Vital Groups, pp. 80-81)

Today's Reading

The full ministry of Christ is in three stages: incarnation, inclusion, and intensification. His ministry in the first stage of incarnation was to cherish people, to draw and attract people to Him. Once He was walking in a pressing crowd, and a sick woman desperately touched the fringe of His garment and was healed (Matt. 9:20-22). Everyone needs Him, can approach Him, and can touch Him. No one who came to Him was rejected by Him. He receives all without preference or discrimination.

His visiting was His cherishing. His death on the cross was the biggest cherishing to redeem us. Without His redemption, who could come to Him? When we heard the story of His death on the cross, our tears came down. We were attracted by Him.

In resurrection He was transfigured to become the life-giving Spirit, the Spirit of the bountiful supply (1 Cor. 15:45b; Phil. 1:19). This Spirit is for nourishing. As the all-inclusive Spirit from Acts through the Epistles, Christ nourishes us. This nourishing produces the church, builds up the Body of Christ, and will consummate the New Jerusalem. Because of the church's degradation, Christ's nourishing becomes sevenfold intensified in the book of Revelation to bring forth the eternal goal of God, the New Jerusalem. The totality of His nourishing will be this great universal city, which is the enlargement and expression of God. This city is the consummation of the bountiful supply of Christ as the life-giving, sevenfold intensified Spirit for nourishing us. The New Testament is composed of just two sections—cherishing and nourishing. With this revelation the entire New Testament has become a new book to me.

God sent His Son as a propitiation for our sins in His humanity (1 John 4:10)—cherishing. As the Son of Man, Christ came to be the sin offering to appease the situation between the sinners and God....God sent His Son to us that we may have life and live through Him in His divinity (1 John 4:9)—nourishing. This is confirmed by John 3:16: God gave us His only begotten Son that we who believe into Him may not perish through His redemption in His humanity (cherishing) but may have eternal life in His divinity (nourishing). God gave His only begotten Son to redeem us in His humanity judicially so that we may have eternal life in His divinity for Him to save us organically.

Christ as the Son of Man came to redeem us from sin (1 Tim. 1:15)—cherishing. This is the first part of the New Testament.

Christ as the Son of God came to impart the divine life into us abundantly (John 10:10)—nourishing. This is the second part of the New Testament. (The Vital Groups, pp. 82, 86-87)

Further Reading: The Vital Groups, msgs. 6, 9, 14

‹‹ WEEK 5 — DAY 2 ››

Morning Nourishment

Luke 15:4-5 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? And when he finds it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

We have to follow the steps of the processed Triune God in His seeking and gaining fallen people....[In Luke 15] the Lord told three wonderful parables, which unveil the saving love of the Triune God toward sinners.

The Son as the shepherd would leave the ninety-nine to seek the one lost sheep (Luke 15:3-7).

The second parable is that of a woman seeking a lost coin (vv. 8-10). This signifies the Spirit seeking a lost sinner. The Son's finding took place outside the sinner and was completed at the cross through His redemptive death. The Spirit's seeking is inward and is carried out by His working within the repenting sinner. (The Vital Groups, p. 39)

Today's Reading

Because of the Son's step of seeking the sinner by dying on the cross and the Spirit's step of sanctifying by searching and cleansing the sinner's inward parts, the sinner comes to his senses. This is shown by the prodigal son's coming to himself and desiring to return to his father (Luke 15:17-18). First Peter 1:2 reveals that before we received the sprinkling of Christ's blood, the Holy Spirit sanctified us. This is His seeking sanctification. The sinner is awakened by the Spirit's seeking to cause him to return to the Father. When the prodigal son returned, his father saw him while he was still a long way off. This indicates that the father was expectantly waiting and watching day by day for his son to return. When his father saw him, he ran to receive his returning son (Luke 15:20). This shows that God the Father runs to receive the returning sinners.

I believe there will be a big revival on the earth, not by a few spiritual giants but by the many members of Christ's Body being shepherds who follow the steps of the processed Triune God in seeking and gaining fallen people. (The Vital Groups, pp. 39-40)

I believe that not having the Father's loving and forgiving heart and not having the Savior's shepherding and seeking spirit is the reason for our barrenness. I realize that you all work hard, but there is almost no fruit....A good, gentle pastor may not have a particular gift, such as the gift of speaking; he may simply visit people and welcome them when they come to his meeting, but according to statistics, he will have a ten-percent yearly increase. We, however, do not have even a ten-percent increase. Can you see how barren we are? Many of you are good speakers, knowing the higher truths....However, we do not have fruit because we are lacking in the Father's loving and forgiving heart and the Son's shepherding and seeking spirit. We condemn and regulate others rather than shepherd and seek them. We are short of love and shepherding. These are the vital factors for us to bear fruit, that is, to gain people....Do we train the young ones to gain people or to regulate people? We have to reconsider our ways, as Haggai said (Hag. 1:5). Our way is not right; something is wrong. (A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers, and Seekers of the Lord, pp. 40-41)

To cherish people is to make them happy and to make them feel pleasant and comfortable. We must have a pleasant countenance when we contact people. We should be happy and rejoicing. We should not contact anyone with a cheerless countenance. We must give people the impression that we are genuinely happy and pleasant. Otherwise, we will not be able to cherish them, to make them happy.

Then we should go on to nourish them. We do not nourish people when we speak to them about marriage, courtship, politics, the world situation, or education. To nourish people is to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ in His full ministry in three stages. (The Vital Groups, pp. 102-103)

Further Reading: The Vital Groups, msg. 4; A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers, and Seekers of the Lord, chs. 2-3

‹‹ WEEK 5 — DAY 3 ››

Morning Nourishment

Matt. 9:12 …When He heard this, He said, Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill.

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 fountain of water springing up into eternal life.

In calling people to follow Him for the kingdom, the King of the heavenly kingdom ministered as a Physician, not as a Judge. A judge's judgment is according to righteousness, whereas a physician's healing is according to mercy and grace. Those whom He made people of His heavenly kingdom were lepers (Matt. 8:2-4), paralytics (8:5-13; 9:2-8), the fever-ridden (8:14-15), the demon-possessed (8:16, 28-32), those ill with all kinds of diseases (8:16), despised tax collectors, and sinners (9:9-11). If He had visited these pitiful people as a Judge, all would have been condemned and rejected, and none would have been qualified, selected, and called to be the people of His heavenly kingdom. However, He came to minister as a Physician, to heal, recover, enliven, and save them that they might be reconstituted to be His new and heavenly citizens, with whom He could establish His heavenly kingdom on this corrupted earth. (Matt. 9:12, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

Christ as the Son of Man (Jesus), going from Judea to Galilee, detoured into the city of Sychar, near Jacob's well, to purposely wait for the thirsty and water-seeking, immoral Samaritan woman (John 4:2-9)—cherishing. The very God who became a man traveled from Judea to Galilee, and He purposely detoured to a small city to cherish an immoral woman.

Christ as the Son of God, sent by God as a gift, gave her to drink the water of life which springs up into eternal life (John 4:10-14)—nourishing. First, He was the Son of Man to cherish her; then He was the Son of God to give her the living water that flows into the New Jerusalem, the totality of the eternal life.

Christ as the Son of Man would not condemn the sinful woman (John 8:11b)—cherishing. This sinful woman was accused by the scribes and Pharisees, but eventually they were condemned by Christ....The Lord said to the woman, "Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." Then He said, "Neither do I condemn you" (vv. 10-11). This is cherishing. None of the scribes and Pharisees could say that he was without sin. The Son of Man is the unique One without sin, so He was the only one qualified to condemn the sinful woman, but He would not do it. He came not to condemn the lost but to save them.

Christ as the Son of God (the very "I Am") would free her from sin so that she could sin no more (John 8:11b, 24, 36)—nourishing. According to Exodus 3:14-15, the great "I Am" is the name of Jehovah. Jehovah means "I Am That I Am." The Lord told the Pharisees that if they would not believe in Him as the I Am, they would die in their sins (John 8:24). In other words, they would never be freed from their sins but would remain in their sins until they would die in them. The sinful woman, no doubt, believed in the Lord Jesus, taking Him as the very I Am, to be freed from her sins [v. 36]....Only the Son of God in His divinity can enable us to sin no more. As the Son of Man, He will not condemn us but forgive us, and as the Son of God, He will free us from sinning.

Christ as the Son of Man went to Jericho, passed by the tree from which Zaccheus was expecting to see Him, and looked up and said to him, "Zaccheus, hurry and come down, for today I must stay in your house," in order to cherish him that He might nourish him with His salvation (Luke 19:1-10).

When His disciples rejected people bringing their children to Him, He stopped their preventing and asked them to bring the children to Him, and He cherished the parents by laying His hands on their children (Matt. 19:13-15). The disciples' preventing surely offended the parents. Quite often we are preventing people instead of cherishing people. The Lord stopped the disciples' preventing. (The Vital Groups, pp. 84-86, 99, 98)

Further Reading: The Vital Groups, msg. 10

‹‹ WEEK 5 — DAY 4 ››

Morning Nourishment

John 21:15-16 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. 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.

A proof that our vital group is prevailing is that we love people without any discrimination. Some Christian co-workers may feel that we should let certain persons suffer eternal perdition. They may say that they would not love certain persons, such as bank robbers. But while Christ was being crucified on the cross, two robbers were crucified with Him (Matt. 27:38). One of them said, "Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom" (Luke 23:42). Jesus said to him, "Truly I say to you, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise" (v. 43). The first one saved by Christ through His crucifixion was not a gentleman, but a criminal, a robber, sentenced to death. This is very meaningful. (The Vital Groups, p. 71)

Today's Reading

John 21 is the completion and consummation of the Gospel of John...showing that Christ's heavenly ministry and the apostles' ministry on the earth cooperate together to carry out God's New Testament economy.

When the Lord stayed with His disciples after His resurrection and before His ascension, in one of His appearings, He commissioned Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in His absence, while He is in the heavens (John 21:15-17)....To shepherd is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock....This is to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, which is the church that issues in the Body of Christ. (Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, pp. 130-131)

Christ is the best model of cherishing and nourishing as seen in Revelation 1. In verses 12 and 13 John said, "I turned to see the voice that spoke with me; and when I turned, I saw seven golden lampstands, and in the midst of the lampstands One like the Son of Man, clothed with a garment reaching to the feet, and girded about at the breasts with a golden girdle."...This garment is the priestly robe (Exo. 28:33-35), which shows that Christ is our great High Priest.

To be girded at the loins is to be strengthened for the work. Christ has finished His divine work in producing the churches. Now by His love He is caring for the churches which He has produced. This is why He is girded at the breasts. Today Christ is our High Priest taking care of His churches established by His labor,...wearing a golden girdle on His breasts...signifying Christ's divinity becoming His energy....His divine energy is exercised by and with His love to nourish the churches.

Christ takes care of the churches as the lampstands in His humanity as "the Son of Man" to cherish them (Rev. 1:13a). Christ as our High Priest takes care of the churches He has established first in His humanity to cherish the churches, to make the churches happy, pleasant, and comfortable.

He does this by dressing the lamps of the lampstand...to make them proper [Exo. 30:7]....Christ cares for the lampstands by trimming the wicks of the lamps of the lampstand, just as the priest did according to the type in the Old Testament (Exo. 25:38). When the wick was burned out, it became charred and black, so the priest had to come to cut off the black part of the wick. This is what it means to snuff the wick so that the lamp may shine better. The charred part of the wick, the snuff, signifies things that are not according to God's purpose which need to be cut off, such as our flesh, our natural man, our self, and our old creation. All the lampstands are organic. They are living lampstands. Since each church is a living lampstand, each church has much feeling. A church with charred wicks will not feel comfortable. (The Vital Groups, pp. 105-106)

Further Reading: The Vital Groups, msgs. 8, 11; Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John, msgs. 7, 13; The Secret of God's Organic Salvation—"the Spirit Himself with Our Spirit", ch. 2

‹‹ WEEK 5 — DAY 5 ››

Morning Nourishment

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…

2 Cor. 3:2-3 You are our letter, inscribed in our hearts, known and read by all men, since you are being manifested that you are a letter of Christ ministered by us, inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God…

We need to contact and take care of others, sinners and believers, as the apostle Paul, the top apostle, did in contacting people and taking care of people's need (2 Cor. 1:23—2:14). In 2 Corinthians 11:28-29 Paul said, "Apart from the things which have not been mentioned, there is this: the crowd of cares pressing upon me daily, the anxious concern for all the churches. Who is weak, and I am not weak? Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn?" This unveils the care of a proper shepherd. (The Vital Groups, p. 61)

Today's Reading

Our attitude may be that everyone is weak but we are not weak....In 1 Corinthians 9:22 Paul said, "To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak." This means that we should come down to the weak one's level....This is the way to shepherd people by visiting them. Paul also said, "Who is stumbled, and I myself do not burn?" [2 Cor. 11:29b]. This is to burn in sorrow and indignation over the cause of the stumbling of all the fallen ones. This shows the pattern of Paul as a good shepherd, taking care of God's flock. (The Vital Groups, p. 61)

In Paul's talk with the elders in Ephesus in Acts 20, Paul said that he taught them "publicly and from house to house" (v. 20)....In addition to all of his labor, he still visited the homes of the saints, from house to house. He did this to perfect the saints.

Paul went back again and again to every home of the saints, exhorting them and advising them with tears. An apostle should speak full of sympathy, with tears. Do you want to be an apostle? Then learn how to weep. In Acts 20:19, Paul said that he served the Lord as a slave with all humility and tears. Then in verse 31 he says that he did not cease admonishing each one of the saints with tears. An apostle tells the dear ones under his shepherding everything concerning God and His counsel with tears. He does not only speak publicly, but he also visits the homes of the saints. (Further Light concerning the Building Up of the Body of Christ, pp. 24-26)

Second Corinthians 3:2 speaks of the apostles' hearts, whereas verse 3, the hearts of the believers at Corinth. The one kind of letter is inscribed both in the hearts of the apostles and in the hearts of the believers.

According to verse 3, the letter of Christ is "inscribed not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God." The Spirit of the living God, who is the living God Himself, is...the very element, like the ink, with which the apostles minister Christ as the content for the writing of living letters that convey Christ. The writer of this letter is not the Spirit of God; the writer is the apostles....This means that the Spirit of the living God is the element with which the letter is written. This is a very crucial matter.

The one writing produced two original copies. This kind of writing does not take place, however, during the course of superficial preaching, [which]...does not produce letters. But the proper, adequate ministry always writes something of Christ both in the hearts of those receiving the ministry and in the heart of the one ministering.

This was the reason the apostles could assure the Corinthians that they would never forget them, for the believers had been written in their hearts. Wherever the apostles went, they carried the believers with them by having them written in their hearts. This matter is very subjective and experiential. It goes beyond being attached together, for it involves two hearts becoming one. (Life-study of 2 Corinthians, pp. 48-49, 51)

Further Reading: The Vital Groups, msg. 7; Further Light concerning the Building Up of the Body of Christ, ch. 2; Life-study of 2 Corinthians, msg. 6

‹‹ WEEK 5 — DAY 6 ››

Morning Nourishment

2 Cor. 12:15 But I, I will most gladly spend and be utterly spent on behalf of your souls. If I love you more abundantly, am I loved less?

Phil. 2:17 But even if I am being poured out as a drink offering upon the sacrifice and service of your faith, I rejoice, and I rejoice together with you all.

The drink offering was in addition to the basic offerings revealed in Leviticus 1—6 (Num. 15:1-10; 28:7-10)....The drink offering is a type of Christ as enjoyed by the offerer. Christ as the heavenly wine fills the offerer and even causes him to become wine to God. The apostle Paul became such a drink offering (2 Tim. 4:6) by enjoying Christ in this way, so that he could be poured out as a sacrifice to God upon the believers' faith through the shedding of his blood. (Phil. 2:17, footnote 1)

Today's Reading

The end of 1 Corinthians 12 reveals that love is the most excellent way (v. 31b). How can one be an elder? Love is the most excellent way. How can one be a co-worker? Love is the most excellent way. How do we shepherd people? Love is the most excellent way. Love is the most excellent way for us to prophesy and to teach others. Love is the most excellent way for us to be anything or do anything.

Love prevails. We should love everybody, even our enemies. If the co-workers and elders do not love the bad ones, eventually they will have nothing to do. We must be perfect as our Father is perfect (Matt. 5:48) by loving the evil ones and the good ones without any discrimination. We must be perfect as our Father because we are His sons, His species....How can we be a co-worker and an elder? It is by love in every way. We must love any kind of person. The Lord Jesus said that He came to be a Physician, not for the healthy ones, but for the sick ones. The Lord said, "Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill" (Matt. 9:12).

The church is not a police station to arrest people or a law court to judge people but a home to raise up the believers. Parents know that the worse their children are, the more they need their raising up. If our children were angels, they would not need our parenting to raise them up. The church is a loving home to raise up the children. The church is also a hospital to heal and to recover the sick ones. Finally, the church is a school to teach and edify the unlearned ones who do not have much understanding. Because the church is a home, a hospital, and a school, the co-workers and elders should be one with the Lord to raise up, to heal, to recover, and to teach others in love.

Some of the churches, however, are police stations to arrest the sinful ones and law courts to judge them. Paul's attitude was different. He said, "Who is weak, and I am not weak?" (2 Cor. 11:29a). When the scribes and Pharisees brought an adulterous woman to the Lord, He said to them, "He who is without sin among you, let him be the first to throw a stone at her" (John 8:7). After all of them left, the Lord asked the sinful woman, "Woman, where are they? Has no one condemned you?" She said, "No one, Lord." Then Jesus said, "Neither do I condemn you" (vv. 10-11). Who is without sin? Who is perfect? Paul said, "To the weak I became weak that I might gain the weak" (1 Cor. 9:22). This is love. We should not consider that others are weak but we are not. This is not love. Love covers and builds up, so love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ.

I hope that there will be a genuine revival among us by our receiving this burden of shepherding. If all the churches receive this teaching to participate in Christ's wonderful shepherding, there will be a big revival in the recovery. In the past we did much speaking and teaching with very little shepherding. Shepherding and teaching should be like two feet for our move with the Lord. Our shepherding should always be with teaching, and our teaching should always be with shepherding. (The Vital Groups, pp. 74-75, 40)

Further Reading: Life-study of 2 Corinthians, msg. 44; The All-inclusive Christ, chs. 5-6

‹‹ WEEK 5 — HYMN

Hymns, #922

1

To the lost world minister Christ,
Not just by word, but by life,
Imparting Christ by living deeds
To the poor souls living in strife.
To the lost world minister Christ,
By daily walk making Him known;
Imparting Christ by whom you live,
Share with all men what you own.

2

To the lost world minister Christ,
The precious One you possess,
Imparting Christ to those you love
As all their gain and success.

3

To the lost world minister Christ,
The very Christ you enjoy,
Imparting Christ to all your friends
As all their boast and their joy.

4

To the lost world minister Christ,
Who is your life and your all,
Imparting Christ to all you meet,
All fallen ones, great or small.