

Gifted for a Reason Pt 6

1 Peter 5:2

- We are on the next to last gift of our series which is the gift of “**Shepherding**” when people hear the church mention shepherding we automatically think of Pastors right! That’s because the word itself literally means to Pastor, but do you know you don’t have to be a Pastor to have the gift of Pastoring. I read where a church had a ministry in which they would send a bus to nearby neighborhoods and offer rides to people in order to bring them to church.
- The interesting thing was the only people who responding were children, Parents wouldn’t come themselves but they would permit their children to attend Sunday school and the church service. So each Sunday the Bus Driver would travel to the various apartment complexes and housing communities and pick the children up before long there were dozens of kids showing up each week. So he decided he wouldn’t just pick the kids up but he would meet the parents of the kids who rode the bus regularly and before long he made himself available during the week to the families who expressed needs other than providing rides for their children on Sunday.
- For example if he would hear that a death occurred in the family or a child’s parent was sick or in the hospitable he would make sure to call and check up on them to see if they needed anything. He made sure that those who rode his bus knew that he was genuinely interested in the welfare of their family, and if some happened not to attend for a while he would call just to see if it was something he could do to encourage them to continue to come to church.
- You see this bus driver although not a Pastor was doing the work of a Pastor, when the children was on the bus he maintained discipline to and from the church, when any of them seemed to be wandering or delinquent he stepped in to help guide them in the right direction. He was a Shepherd seeking lost sheep and in essence became a Pastor to his riders even though he wasn’t one in the formal sense, so yes people you can have the gift of Shepherding and do the work of a Pastor without being a Pastor, just like **2Tim 4:5**- says we are expected to do the work of an Evangelist without actually having the title of one, it’s the in that same sense with Shepherding.
- In the Old Testament we see this concept used for civil and spiritual leaders and in the case of Israel often when we saw the word Pastor usually it was followed with a strong rebuke for negligence > **Jer 10:21, 23:1-4, Ezek 34:1-10**. Much of what went wrong in Israel and Judah had to do with the Pastors not fulfilling their roles as Godly Shepherds of the flock and without proper spiritual leadership the entire nation went astray and today we see the exact same thing.

- When you look at the more popular Pastors who are celebrated by society and whose books and teachings are on the New York best sellers list being read by both those who profess to know God and those who don't its primary people who have the title but don't practice the gift, in fact they've led the people who do follow them away from God not closer to God. This is why one of the main functions of the gift is found in the rebuke of both Jeremiah and Ezekiel.
- **Jeremiah 23:1-4** says Woe to the Shepherds for destroying the flock by scattering them instead of tending and feeding them as they should. A vital function in Shepherding is tending and feeding, what does that mean? To tend means to watch over, and for that to happen you must make them a priority in your life, but for these Pastors that had either stopped or never happened. For **Jer 10:21** says the Shepherds had become "**dull hearted**" meaning they weren't hearing from the Lord and therefore could care less about the people of the Lord.
- So they had stopped watching over them and had left the gate open for them to wander all over the place and wander they did as they accepted strange gods, false worship, practiced ungodly deeds, and all the while the Pastors were not correcting them only using them for financial gain. Because they weren't watching over them that meant the sheep weren't eating healthy meals and one of the main components of Shepherding is feeding, and if left unprotected and reliant on ourselves we are going to gravitate toward things that are fleshly and not Godly.
- Which is why **Ezek 34:2-** says woe to the Shepherds who were feeding themselves and not the people, their concern was self and not the will of God and this led to an entire nations downfall. In **1Pet 5:2-** the word "**Shepherd**" is also translated "**feed**" for in feeding the church it helps protect the church from falling into sinful and worldly practices. In closing there are three things a Pastor is suppose to do for the body of Christ if he is to fulfill the calling of Pastoring.
- **1. To Guide-** a regular Shepherd carries a staff and a rod, both of them are used to guide the sheep, when one of them gets entangled in the underbrush the Shepherd takes his staff and hooks it around its leg and gently pulls them out, if one of them is headed for the thorns he uses his rod to beat down the briars and thistles so the sheep and lambs can safely walk the path.
- **2. To Graze-** the Shepherd was to make sure the sheep had sufficient and good healthy fields to graze on, it was his job to find these fields not the sheep. So a good Shepherd will find sufficient and proper food for the congregation to eat, and once you've been fed properly he will then teach you how to find food for yourself, this will allow you to know not only what to eat but also to begin to know where to go so that you can stay out of the thorns and briar patches.
- **3. To Guard-** A Shepherd had to protect the sheep from the predators, so he needed not only a rod but also a sling shot. to keep wild animals at a distance he needed to become very skillful and accurate or they all would be sitting ducks for not only the animals but thieves as well.

- **1Sam 17:34-37**- before Goliath David faced a lion and a bear and defeated them both with just a rod and a sling shot. **Jn 10:12-13** speaks of hirelings who when danger approaches flee rather than protect, this is why before we can be effective shepherds we must acknowledge Who the chief Shepherd is > **1Pet 5:4, Heb 13:20**- calls Jesus the Great Shepherd, at the end of the day all the sheep belong to Jesus and those of us who are privileged to care for God's sheep must always keep that in mind as were only under Shepherds but He is the chief and Great Shepherd.