

New Years Eve 2024

Nourishing The Flock

- One of the main goals after someone comes into Christianity is to see them grow, and after we grow we naturally begin to multiply, as we share our faith to those who are around us, and who we have influence in their lives. Now in order for all that to happen we need to be feeding on healthy spiritual food, and in this day and age of information being right at our fingertips, there is a lot of things that claims to be healthy spiritually but in reality is counterfeit and poisonous.
- In **1Pet 2:9** we are all called **God's Priesthood**, and the job of the Old Testament priests were to bring God to the people and the people to God, well it's the same for us today. For God in His grace and mercy has called us out of spiritual darkness and brought us into His Marvelous spiritually enlightening Light, causing the worldly scales to fall off of our eyes, that we who were once blind now can truly see, its absolutely amazing when you think about it like this.
- An example of this is found in **Jn 21:15-17** - where Jesus met the disciples on the beach and then made them breakfast, before sharing with them His final instructions before going up in glory. In the book of John there are three invitations that really stand out that Jesus made to those who would follow Him > **1st Jn 1:39**- "**Come and see**" where Jesus told the disciples to come and see where He was staying, and the more time they spent with Him, the more they wanted to stay.
- **2nd Jn 7:37**- "**Come and drink**" on the last day of the feast of Tabernacles where Israel celebrated The Lord taking care of them in the wilderness once they left Egypt to go to the promise land. On the last day of the feast they would march around the altar seven times chanting **Ps 118:25**, and each time they would draw water out of a basin and pour it out symbolizing how the Lord brought forth water out of the rock supernaturally. So on this last time Jesus stood and shouted His great invitation to thirsty sinners of a spiritual water that never runs out.
- **3rd Jn 21:1-12**- "**Come and dine**" here is Jesus inviting Peter for a meal before He tends to his spiritual needs, in this Jesus allows Peter to dry off, get warm, and have his physical hunger, and now enjoy personal fellowship. These three examples show us how we are to be when caring for others in hopes of leading them into a right relationship with the Lord. Certainly the spiritual is more important than the physical, but caring for the physical can prepare the way for spiritual ministry, as our Lord does not so emphasize "the soul" that he neglects the body.
- **Jn 21:15-17** after physically feeding the disciples now Jesus feeds them spiritually, so after their breakfast Jesus speaks directly to Peter, remember Peter had publicly denied the Lord, but privately Jesus had already forgiven Him **Mk 16:7**- but this is His way of also giving Peter a public restoration, because without this people could say he's disqualified from ministry because of his denial being known to so many, therefore Jesus deals with Peter in front of all the others.

- Jesus asks Peter a direct question: “Do you love Me more than these”? There is always a debate about what is the “**these**” is it the disciples, or the one hundred and fifty three fish they’d just caught, or even the boats, “do you love Me more than the fishing”? All can be true, as Jesus asks us this question as well > Do we love Him more than people?, Do we love Him more than stuff or what we like to do?, Do we love Him more than our jobs and occupations? It’s a valid question.
- In the conversation an interesting twist occurs, as two different words are used for “love”, in His question **V15-16** our Lord used “**Agape**” which is the Greek word for the highest kind of love, a sacrificing love, a Divine love, but Peter in answering the Lord uses the Greek word “phileo”, which is the love of a friend, a fondness for another, finally in **V17** they both use “phileo”.
- In this Peter is being broken from his self reliance and self assurance, as it was him who said that all the others disciples would betray Jesus but he would never deny Him, even though the Lord told him he would. Now we see Peter breakdown saying “Lord You know all things, You know that I love You”. In other words Jesus You can see through my words, and into my heart, I won’t fake it anymore, I need to grow into the “Agape” love, and I need Your help to do it.
- In response to Peter’s brokenness Jesus gives “three admonitions” **1. Feed My lambs, 2. Shepherd My sheep, 3. Feed My sheep.** In this we see the body has both lambs and the more mature sheep, and they both need feeding and leading. I believe most people would agree to all of this where they would differ is many think it is the task of the Pastors to do this, but scripture says is not just the Pastors job to feed and guide, it’s the entire body of Christ Job as well.
- **1Pet 5:2**- says Pastors are to feed and guide both the lambs and the sheep, which is the flock of God, but also in **Eph 4:11-12** we are told that God gives everyone gifts not just Pastors or leaders in the church, and these gifts are meant to equip and grow the entire body of Christ. **1Cor 12:4-7** says there are diversities of gifts, ministries, and activities, but it is the same God, and the same Spirit Who works in them all for the profit of everyone. In **Rom 15:14** says that all of us as we grow in God’s goodness, and knowledge, are able to correctly guide one another in truth.
- So while it is true that The Holy Spirit equips people to serve as Shepherds, and gives churches leaders to help them grow in God’s Word and in His grace, it is also true that each individual Christian must help to care for the flock, because all of us have been given a gift or gifts from the Lord, in order to use for the protecting and maturing of the flock. That is the goal for 2024, we want everyone directly involved in the growth of this body, and the spread of the gospel amen!