

"Shepherds"



Acts 20:28-30 NKJV

²⁸ *Therefore take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood. ²⁹ For I know this, that after my departure savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock. ³⁰ Also from among yourselves men will rise up, speaking perverse things, to draw away the disciples after themselves.*

I Pet 5:1-4 NKJV

I The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed: ² Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; ³ nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; ⁴ and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

Pastoral Appreciation Sunday

Intro:

Today is the day that Rochester Assembly has annually dedicated to honoring its pastoral staff. Pastoral appreciation has a long history here at Rochester Assembly and in the Assemblies of God in general. This is a biblical concept and one I believe in very much.

¹⁷ *Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. I Timothy 5:17 NKJV*

Of course, with me being the lead Pastor on staff here this is directly connected to me. So first please allow me to say **"Thank You."** I am honored and blessed to serve in this lead

role. I love you all very much and have made many personal sacrifices to serve you and yours. I also love what God is doing in and with His Church here at Rochester Assembly and this has been the greatest and most rewarding season in my ministry.

When I began to think about this day months ago and how to fill the pulpit on this special day, I went through several ideas and I eventually landed on this concept. I want to have church, I want to continue to build on the culture of honor here at Rochester Assembly, but I also want the word of God shared to explain the Biblical significances of what we are doing here today.

When I began to think about the mix of what all needed to happen today, I soon realized that this was something I didn't need to farm out to another. This is something I needed to do as the leader here. This is not about me. This is about leading our church in this matter.

It is my hope that I can speak to this **"Pastoral Appreciation"** concept as the lead pastor here in hopes of better explaining this concept to all involved. That includes both our pastors/shepherds on staff and the people/flock which they are appointed and called to care for.

Message:

The very first thing that needs to be said to help us all understand this day better is...

I. Shepherds lay down their lives, I Sam 17:12-37.

I Sam 17:12-37 ²⁸ Now Eliab his oldest brother heard when he spoke to the men; and Eliab's anger was aroused against David, and he said, "Why did you come down here? And with whom have you left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know your pride and the insolence of your heart, for you have come down to see the battle."

²⁹ David said, "What have I done now? Is there not a cause?" ³⁰ Then he turned from him toward another and said the same thing; and these people answered him as the first ones did. ³¹ Now when the words which David spoke were heard, they reported them to Saul; and he sent for him. ³² Then David said to Saul, "Let no man's heart fail because of him; your servant will go and fight with this Philistine."

³³ And Saul said to David, "You are not able to go against this Philistine to fight with him; for you are a youth, and he a man of war from his youth."

³⁴ But David said to Saul, "Your servant used to keep his father's sheep, and when a lion or a bear came and took a lamb out of the flock, ³⁵ I went out after it and struck it, and delivered the lamb from its mouth; and when it arose against me, I caught it by its beard, and struck and killed it. ³⁶ Your servant has killed both lion and bear; and this uncircumcised Philistine will be like one of them, seeing he has defied the armies of the living God." ³⁷ Moreover David said, "The LORD, who delivered me from the paw of the lion and from the paw of the bear, He will deliver me from the hand of this Philistine."

-Here we see two things...

1. David drew confidence to face the giant from his past shepherding experiences.

2. In his shepherding of both his father's flock and now God's people, he has to lay down his own life to care for them.

****This is the very message Jesus declared, "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. John 10:11 NKJV***

The next thing that needs to be said is...

II. Shepherds are different from hirelings, John 10:11-13.

John 10:11-13 ¹¹ "I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep. ¹² But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them. ¹³ The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.

-Here we also see a few things...

1. Shepherds give their lives for the flock.
 - Because they are appointed not just paid.
 - The flock is their assignment from a higher authority.
 - Their care is expressed in many sacrificial ways.
2. Hirelings flee when trouble comes.
 - Primarily because they don't care about the sheep.
 - They have no divine call or appointment.

****I am both encouraged and deeply convicted by this biblical truth. I desire to for myself and our pastoral staff to be the former and not the latter.***

****In light of this truth I commit to living and leading in such a manner. I also ask our pastoral staff today to do so as well.***

And the third thing that needs to be said is...

III. Shepherds carry a rod and a staff, Ps 23:4.

Ps 23:4 Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; For You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

-Here we can see that each shepherd is armed with two instruments...

1. A rod (of correction).

- This was a shorter instrument (close range).
- It was straight and stiff (quick work).
- It was for the flocks back (guidance not abuse).

2. A staff (or protection).

- This was a longer instrument (long range).
- It was larger in diameter and had a hook (strike a harsh blow and pull away).
- It was for the packs back and flock neck (defenses and deliverance).

****When I was younger in life and in my faith I only desired protection. I think I felt love in it that was missed from my home life as a boy.***

****Later in my life and in my faith, I began to cherish correction. We each need that person or persons in our life that can lovingly bring correction that we know for certain is only intended to protection.***

Musicians: Pastor Chad, please come.

Conclusion:

Honestly, there is so much more that I would love to share in a preaching/teaching format about the role of shepherds but for the sake of time please allow me to close out this message by briefly mentioning several other noteworthy points.

Shepherds also...

1. Tend and care for the sheep, Pro 27:23.
2. Feed the sheep, Ezk 34:1-6.
3. Strengthen the weak, Ezk 34:1-6.
4. Bind up the broken, Ezk 34:1-6.
5. Heal the sick, Ezk 34:1-6.
6. Go in search of the lost, Ezk 34:1-6.
7. Can tell the difference of sheep and goats. Matt 25:32-33.

My hope in sharing this information with our church today is twofold:

1. I would like our pastors/shepherds to know exactly what the Bible instructs and charges them to do in their roles as shepherds.
2. I would like the you/the flock to better understand their role and sacrifice in serving you in hopes that you will appreciate and honor them deeply.

I believe this will help in honoring those who labor among us as the shepherds of souls with the double honor the Bible calls for them to receive. I believe it is my job to speak to and lead us into that, and I feel I have attempted to do so integrally today.

Congregational prayer:

- Pastors
- Their families
- Their ministries

Salvation Offer:

Is there anyone here that wants to receive this love of Christ's sacrifice?

Rom 10:9-10 9 that if you confess with your mouth the Lord Jesus and believe in your heart that God has raised Him from the dead, you will be saved. 10 For with the heart one believes unto righteousness, and with the mouth confession is made unto salvation.

Benediction:

Num 6:24-26 24 "The Lord bless you and keep you; 25 The Lord make His face shine upon you, And be gracious to you; 26 The Lord lift up His countenance upon you, And give you peace."

II Cor 13:14 14 The grace of the Lord Jesus Christ, and the love of God, and the communion of the Holy Spirit be with you all. Amen.

Pastor John E. Skipworth, Jr.

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