

First slide:

“A pastor is a “shepherd” who is entrusted with the ministry of tending the flock of God - with feeding, guiding, and superintending them. Pastors need to appreciate the unique call that God has placed upon them. Few can genuinely and adequately fulfill the daunting responsibility of the pastoral office unless they are divinely called and graced to do so. Those with the gifting, ministry, and office of pastoring have a vitally important calling. However, it is slow work that requires steady patience and commitment and that often lacks the “glamour” of some of the other types of ministry.” - Robert Stone

I. God’s Heart is to Shepherd His People (Ezekiel 34:11-16)

A. “For thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I myself will search for my sheep and will seek them out. [12] As a shepherd seeks out his flock when he is among his sheep that have been scattered, so will I seek out my sheep, and I will rescue them from all places where they have been scattered on a day of clouds and thick darkness. [13] And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them into their own land. And I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, by the ravines, and in all the inhabited places of the country. [14] I will feed them with good pasture, and on the mountain heights of Israel shall be their grazing land. There they shall lie down in good grazing land, and on rich pasture they shall feed on the mountains of Israel. [15] I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. [16] I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice.”

B. Isaiah 40:11 - “He will tend his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs in his arms; he will carry them in his bosom, and gently lead those that are with young.”

II. God Uses Individuals to Shepherd His People

A. Psalm 77:20 declares, “You led your people like a flock by the hand of Moses and Aaron.”

B. Psalm 78:70–72 – “He chose David his servant and took him from the sheepfolds; from following the nursing ewes he brought him to shepherd Jacob his people, Israel his inheritance. With upright heart he shepherded them and guided them with his skillful hand.”

C. Jeremiah 3:15 - “And I will give you shepherds after my own heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.”

III. Jesus as the Shepherd of the Flock

A. John 10:11-15 – “I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.”

B. John 21:15-17 – “When they had finished 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.” 16 He said to him 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, “Tend my sheep.” 17 He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of John, do you love me?” Peter was grieved because he said to him the third time, “Do you love me?” and he said to him, “Lord, you know everything; you know that I love you.” Jesus said to him, “Feed my sheep.”

III. The Ministry of New Testament Shepherds/Pastors (1 Peter 5:1-4)

A. 1 Peter 5:1-4 - “So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: 2 shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; 3 not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. 4 And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.”

B. Acts 20:28-31- “Pay careful attention to yourselves and to all the flock, in which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to care for the church of God, which he obtained with his own blood. 29 I know that after my departure fierce wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock; 30 and from among your own selves will arise men speaking twisted things, to draw away the disciples after them. 31 Therefore be alert, remembering that for three years I did not cease night or day to admonish every one with tears.”

Shepherds care for:

**Strong sheep
Straying sheep
Sick sheep
Scared sheep
Soiled sheep
Sleepy sheep
Savaged sheep**

Talk about this type of care being a normal part of “flock life”; each shepherd learns how to do all these things. The pastor is not primarily or necessarily an expert instructor but, rather, a relational guide who walks alongside.