

The Shepherd-King We Have Always Needed

2 Samuel 5:1-5

[INTRODUCTION]

It's Mother's Day.

And I know that means very different things to different people in this room.

- For some of you, today is warm. Your mother is sitting next to you, or you're surrounded by children who made you a card this morning with too much glitter. Today feels like a gift.
- For some of you, today is hard. Your mother is gone. Or your child is gone. Or the relationship is broken in ways that a Hallmark card cannot fix. You came to church today, and it cost you something just to walk through the door.
- And for some of you — maybe more than we realize — today is complicated. You love your family. And you are exhausted by your family. Both things are true at the same time. You are grateful and you are running on empty, and no one in the house seems to notice that those two things can live in the same body on the same Sunday morning.

Wherever you are today, I want you to know something before we go any further.

The passage we are about to read is about a God who sees people exactly where they are — scattered, tired, wandering, longing for someone to take care of them — a God who says, "I will give you a shepherd."

That's what this morning is about. Not a laundry list of things to do better. A shepherd.

[PREVIEW: THREE DECLARATIONS]

We are in 2 Samuel chapter 5. And in this chapter, something happens that has been centuries in the making. All the tribes of Israel finally come to David at Hebron. And when they arrive, they don't negotiate. They don't attach conditions. They make three remarkable statements — three declarations about who David was and why they had come.

And I want us to listen carefully to those three declarations, because they are about far more than ancient politics. They are about a need that had been building in Israel for centuries. And it is a need that has never gone away.

But before we read those words, I want us to feel the weight of what came before the, what came before Hebron. Because if we don't feel the weight of what came before, we will not feel the glory of what happened there.

Let me take us back.

[BACKSTORY: FROM MOSES' PRAYER TO HEBRON]

[Moses' Prayer — Numbers 27]

Hundreds of years before this moment at Hebron, it was the time of Moses. And Moses stood at the edge of the promised land. He was old. He was tired. He was about to die. And he knew — in his bones he knew — that the people he had led for forty years would soon be without him.

So he prayed.

And this is what he asked God for. Numbers chapter 27, verses 16 and 17:

"Let the LORD, the God of the spirits of all flesh, appoint a man over the congregation who shall go out before them and come in before them, who shall lead them out and bring them in, that the congregation of the LORD may not be as sheep that have no shepherd."

Do you hear that language? Listen to it again. Slowly.

- "appoint a man who will go out and come in."
- "Who will lead them out and bring them in."
- "So that your people may not be sheep without a shepherd."

Remember those words. Hold them for a minute. Because they are about to come back.

[The Judges – Centuries Without a Shepherd]

So, Moses died.

Joshua led for a time. And then Joshua died.

And then came the judges. And the book of Judges is one long, devastating answer to the question: What happens when the sheep have no shepherd?

The nation fell apart.

"Everyone did what was right in his own eyes."

Over and over and over again. Cycles of rebellion, oppression, partial deliverance, and then rebellion again. For hundreds of years. The flock scattered. The wolves came. And no one stood between the sheep and the darkness.

[Saul – The Wrong Shepherd]

Then the people asked for a king.

"Give us a king," they said. Finally – a shepherd! Someone to go before them. Someone to lead them out and bring them in.

And God gave them Saul.

Saul looked the part. But Saul was not a shepherd. Saul was not a good King.

- Saul disobeyed God.
- Saul turned the kingdom into an instrument of his own ego.
- Saul tried to kill the very man, David, that God had chosen to replace him.

And Saul's reign ended in disaster — in his own delusional state, on the slopes of Mount Gilboa, with a sword, in the dark. So the flock was more scattered than ever.

[The Civil War — Still No Shepherd]

And then came the civil war we looked at last week. Seven and a half years of it.

- Abner's schemes.
- Ish-bosheth's puppet throne.
- Joab's vengeance.

More death. More division. More of God's people wandering — wandering — without a shepherd.

[WE ARE NO DIFFERENT FROM ISRAEL]

And we — if we are honest — we are no different from Israel.

From Moses to Hebron, Israel tried everything.

- Judges who could not hold the nation together.
- A king who looked the part but could not obey God.
- Military commanders who schemed and murdered in the name of loyalty.
- A puppet king who sat on a throne that was never his.

For centuries, Israel demanded what they wanted, instead of receiving what God had promised. And every substitute shepherd failed them.

Christian, are we any different? Do we not also look for substitutes:

- security from our career paths,
- salvation from our political leaders,
- significance from our close relationships,
- sufficiency from our own competencies,
- solace from our screens.

The Bible has a word for this. They are called *imposter shepherds*. Imposter Shepherds. They look like they can lead you. They promise to protect you. They offer you something that feels like security.

But they are not the shepherd that we need. They were never the shepherd. And when the wolf comes, imposter shepherds will never be there for you.

You see, like Israel, what we have always needed was a true shepherd. Not an imposter Shepherd. But a real shepherd.

[The Weight of the Wait]

Well, generation after generation, Israel was like sheep without a shepherd.

Until 2 Samuel, chapter 5:

[SCRIPTURE READING: 2 SAMUEL 5:1-5]

When we get to chapter 5, the mood changes. Completely.

The war is over. The scheming is done. The assassinations, the power plays, the years of grinding division — all of it is behind them. And what we find at the beginning of chapter 5 is one of the most beautiful moments in the entire Old Testament.

Let me read it to you.

"Then all the tribes of Israel came to David at Hebron and said, 'Behold, we are your bone and flesh. In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel. And the LORD said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.'"

So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel. David was thirty years old when he began to reign, and he reigned forty years. At Hebron he reigned over Judah

seven years and six months, and at Jerusalem he reigned over all Israel and Judah thirty-three years."

[The Elders Finally Came]

Do you notice the difference?

After years of resistance and delay and fighting against what God had already declared — all the tribes of Israel came to David.

Not just the tribe of Judah. Not just the one loyal tribe from the south. No, no. All of them.

- The elders who had followed Abner's puppet king.
- The tribes who had been on the wrong side for seven years.
- The people who should have come long ago but didn't.

They all came to David.

[Moses' Words Return]

And when they open their mouths, listen to what comes out.

"It was you who led out and brought in Israel."

Led out and brought in. Moses' words from four hundred years before. The very language of that centuries-old prayer.

"The LORD said to you David, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel.'"

Shepherd. The very role Moses begged God to fill.

Standing in Hebron, looking at David, the elders of Israel are seeing the answer to a prayer that was centuries old. They are looking at the man Moses asked God for. The shepherd God's people had needed since the day Moses closed his eyes and was buried in an unmarked grave in the valley of Moab.

David was the shepherd-king Israel had always needed.

And they seem to know it. You can hear it in their words. You can feel it in the brevity of the account — no negotiation, no deliberation, no conditions. They

came, they spoke, and they anointed him. Because they were not choosing a political leader. They finally recognized— the shepherd God had promised.

[DAVID WAS NOT THE FINAL SHEPHERD-KING]

Now — as we read this story, here is what we need to remember this morning.

David was a magnificent shepherd-king. But David was not the final shepherd-king.

David would reign for forty years. And many of those years would be glorious. But David would also fail.

- He would take another man's wife.
- He would arrange the death of a loyal soldier.
- He would watch his own family tear itself apart.

The man who was bone of Israel's bone would break Israel's heart.

And after David, his son Solomon would begin well, but end in idolatry, and the kingdom would split in two. And after Solomon — king after king after king. Some good. Most bad. Many terrible. And the sheep would wander again. And the prophets would cry out again.

[Ezekiel's Promise — "My Servant David"]

Fast forward a few hundred more years. Ezekiel, writing from exile centuries later, Ezekiel records God's own lament (Ezekiel 34): "My sheep were scattered over all the face of the earth, with none to search or seek for them." And then — listen, listen — God makes a promise (Ezekiel 34:23): the Lord says, **"And I will set up over them one shepherd, my servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd."**

Now wait a minute.

Wait. Read that again.

"My servant David."

David? David had been dead for over four hundred years when Ezekiel wrote those words. His body was in the ground. His tomb was in Jerusalem. Everyone knew where it was. You could walk to it.

So what is God talking about?

- Is he promising to raise David from the dead?
- Is he speaking metaphorically?
- Is this some kind of poetic nostalgia – God looking backward, wishing he could have the old days back?

No. None of that.

God is not looking backward. When the Lord says this, God is looking forward. And when he says "my servant David," he is not talking about the David who was once crowned King in Hebron. He is talking about a David who had not yet come.

- A future shepherd.
- A coming king.
- One who will carry David's name and
 - David's role and
 - David's heart –
- but who will be greater than David in every way that matters.

Long after David was dead and buried, God was still pointing forward – to a greater David, a final shepherd, a king who would do what David did at his best and never do what David did at his worst.

[Matthew's Fulfillment – Bethlehem]

So, a thousand years after Hebron, in the same little town where David had once watched his father's sheep, a child was born.

And when Matthew tells the story of that birth, Matthew reaches back to this very passage in 2 Samuel – back to the words the elders spoke that day in the hill country of Hebron – and he writes about the child who was born,

Quoting another prophet Micah, 5:2, ‘**And you, O Bethlehem, in the land of Judah, are by no means least among the rulers of Judah; for from you shall come a ruler who will shepherd my people Israel.**’ ” (Matthew 2:6)

- The same words of Moses.
- The same prayer of Moses.
- The same need they had had for all those centuries.
- Finally and fully answered.
- The hopes and fears of all the years, are met in thee tonight.

His name was Jesus. And he is everything David was – and everything David could not be.

That is what David's life and crown was for. That is what his kingship meant. Not just what it meant for Israel in 1000 BC, but what it means for you and me right now. Every time we read about David in the Old Testament, we are meant to look where David is pointing. And David is pointing to Jesus. We are reading a passage that God wrote – that God lived out in real history – so that you and I would see Jesus more clearly.

So that you and I would see that **Jesus is the Shepherd we have always needed.**

[Transition to Three Points]

And this morning, I want to show you why Jesus is the Shepherd you have always needed.

I want to help us see this from the three things those elders said when they finally came to David. Because what they said about David is true of Jesus in ways they could not yet imagine.

(POINT 1. (v. 1b))

[The Text – "Bone and Flesh"]

The first thing the elders said to David was this. Look at verse 1, the second half:

"Behold, we are your bone and flesh."

We are your bone and flesh.

Sit with that for a moment. Let it settle.

That is an extraordinary thing to say to a king. It is not the language of political negotiation. It is not the language of a treaty or a trade agreement. It is the language of family. The language of the deepest possible human identification.

"Bone and flesh" – that phrase appears for the very first time in the Bible when Adam sees Eve for the first time. "This at last is bone of my bones and flesh of my flesh," he says in Genesis chapter 2. It is the language of shared substance. Of recognition. They are saying to David, we are made of the same stuff. You belong to us. We belong to you.

[Who Is Saying This – Former Enemies]

Now think about who is saying this.

These elders represent the northern tribes – the ones who had followed Ish-bosheth. The ones who had been at war with David for years. They had fought against him. They had sided with the wrong king. And now they walk into Hebron, into the court of the man they had opposed, and the first words out of their mouths are not "let's make a deal."

The first words are: We are yours. We are your body.

"Behold, we are your bone and flesh."

That takes more than political calculation. That takes a kind of desperate trust. They were placing themselves entirely in his hands. And they did it because they believed – they had finally come to believe –

- that this king David would receive them.
- That this king would not punish them for their long delay.
- That this king would care for them as his own flesh.

[Why It Matters – We Need a King Who Knows Us From the Inside]

And it raises a question. A question I want us to consider this morning.

Why does it matter that the king is one of us?

Because, we need a shepherd-king who knows what our life is like. Not from a distance. Not from a textbook. Not from observation. But from the inside.

This is a need every human being carries. When you are suffering – really suffering, the kind that keeps you up at night, the kind that makes you feel like no one in the world could possibly understand – the most isolating feeling is the suspicion that you are alone in it. You can be surrounded by people who love you and still feel utterly alone, if you believe that none of them have been where you are.

This is why we trust people who have been through what we've been through.

- A widow trusts another widow in a way she cannot trust someone who has never lost a spouse.
- A mother struggling with a wayward child finds more comfort in five minutes with another mother who has walked that road than in an hour with a so called expert who has only read about it.

Shared experience creates a kind of trust that nothing else can.

[David Knew Their Life – He Had Lived It]

The elders at Hebron understood this about David. He was not a foreign prince imported from Egypt. He was not a stranger who showed up one day and demanded the crown. He had grown up in their fields. He had fought their wars. He had suffered under Saul alongside them – and in truth, he had suffered more than any of them.

- He had been hunted.
- He had been exiled.
- He had been betrayed.
- He had been bereaved.

When the elders said "we are your bone and flesh," part of what they were saying was: you know what our life has been. You know it because you have lived it.

David was one of them. He understood their lives from the inside.

That was the first reason they came to David.

[The Antitype — Jesus Entered Our Experience Completely]

And what was true of David is true — even more deeply true — of Jesus. This brings us reason #1:

REASON #1. Jesus is the Shepherd you have always needed BECAUSE HE IS ONE OF US.

Because when the writer of Hebrews says that Jesus was "made like his brothers in every respect," he means that Jesus entered the full range of human experience. Not selectively. Not symbolically. Not partially. Not as a visitor wearing borrowed clothes. No, Completely.

- He was hungry.
- He grew tired.
- He wept at the grave of a friend.
- He was abandoned by the people closest to him.
- He knew what it felt like to pray and hear nothing but silence.
- He knew what it felt like to be misunderstood by the very people he came to save.
- He carried the weight of a world that did not understand what he was doing for them.

Just because Jesus is not walking the earth in the 21st century doesn't mean he can't understand what you are going through.

Hebrews chapter 4, verse 15:

"We do not have a high priest who is unable to sympathize with our weaknesses, but one who in every respect has been tempted as we are, yet without sin."

Jesus is not unable to sympathize. That word "sympathize" — it doesn't mean he feels sorry for us from a comfortable distance. It means he has been inside the experience. He knows it from within. He knows the texture of it. The weight of it. The way it sits on your chest at three in the morning.

In contrast, your imposter shepherd does not sympathize, cannot sympathize, because they've never been inside your experience. Your imposter shepherd doesn't care about you. Your career doesn't know what it feels like to be you. Jesus does. Imposter shepherds are strangers; Jesus is bone and flesh.

[Application — He Is Not Far From You]

In Jesus, God says to us: I have become your bone and flesh.

- I have entered your world.
- I have worn your skin.
- I am not far from you.
- I am not watching from the outside.
- I am the shepherd you've always needed.

So, church family, if you are tired today, know that Jesus understands what being tired feels like. Or, you may feel the weight of temptation, know that Jesus felt the force of Satan's tempting schemes, especially while he was tired and hungry.

[Mother's Day Application]

And on a day when we honor mothers — let us acknowledge that mothers carry things that are often invisible to the rest of the family.

- The worry that follows you into sleep long after everyone else in the house has closed their eyes.
- The weight of decisions no one else is even aware you are making.
- The quiet grief of watching a child struggle and knowing there is nothing more you can do.
- The exhaustion — the deep, bone-level exhaustion — of giving yourself away, day after day, to people who may not notice what it costs you.

If your shepherd-king were a distant ruler on a faraway throne, that loneliness would remain. You would still be carrying it alone.

But the Shepherd-King who leads you is your bone and flesh. He has been where you are. He is not unfamiliar with weariness. He is not a stranger to the weight of loving people who don't understand what you are doing for them.

[Point I Summary]

That is the first reason Jesus is the Shepherd-King we have always needed.

Because he is one of us.

He knows our life from the inside.

But knowing that someone is one of you is not the same as knowing you can trust them. Plenty of people understand your pain. Not all of them stay with you. The elders didn't stop there. They said something else.

POINT 2. (v. 2a)

[The Text – "In Times Past"]

– something about what David had already done for them. Something they had seen with their own eyes.

Look at verse 2, the first half:

"In times past, when Saul was king over us, it was you who led out and brought in Israel."

In times past.

The elders are looking backward. They are remembering. And what they remember is David's faithfulness when he had nothing to gain from it.

"It was you who led out and brought in Israel." That is military language. Shepherd language. "Leading out" means taking the army into battle. "Bringing in" means

bringing them home alive. The elders are saying: Even when Saul wore the crown, David, you were the one who actually shepherded us through danger. You fought our battles. You led the charge. And you brought us home.

"It was you who led out and brought in Israel."

[David's Faithfulness When No One Was Watching]

Think about what they are describing.

During Saul's reign, David was not the king. He had no throne, no palace, no official position — at least not for long. For much of that period, he was a fugitive.

- He was living in caves.
- He was running for his life.
- He was eating whatever he could find, sleeping wherever he could hide, watching his back every waking hour.

And yet — even then — he was the one who led Israel out and brought Israel in.

Even then. Even when no one was rewarding him. Even when the king he served was hunting him like an animal.

[The Evidence — A Track Record]

The elders are saying: We have evidence. We have watched you. We have a track record to examine. And the track record is clear.

This matters enormously. Because the elders are not taking a blind leap into the dark. They are not coming to David on the basis of a rumor or a feeling. They are coming because they have seen, over years, what kind of man he is.

- He had killed Goliath when the entire army — including Saul — stood paralyzed with fear.
- He had fought the Philistines campaign after campaign and never lost.
- He had protected his men in the wilderness when they were hunted like animals.
- He had spared Saul's life — not once, but twice — when he had every right and every opportunity to take it.

He proved himself faithful when no one was watching. He served when serving cost him everything. He protected the people even while the people's own king was trying to kill him.

That is the most reliable kind of evidence. Not what someone does when the crowd is cheering. But what they do when the crowd has gone home. Not what they promise when it is easy. But what they deliver when it is hard.

- When it is thankless.
- When it is costly beyond measure.

The elders' willingness to come to David that day was built on what David did yesterday. Trust does not appear out of thin air. It accumulates — slowly, quietly, like dew on the grass — through consistent faithfulness over time. Especially during seasons when no one notices. Especially during seasons when it would have been easier to quit.

David had proven himself faithful. That was the second reason they came.

[The Antitype — God's Track Record Across the Whole Bible]

And what was true of David is true — even more extensively true — of Jesus. This brings us reason #2:

REASON #2: Jesus is the Shepherd you have always needed BECAUSE HE HAS ALREADY PROVEN HIMSELF FAITHFUL.

You see, the track record we have in Jesus is not just a few years in the hill country of Judah. It is the entire sweep of God's faithfulness across the whole Bible.

- Deliverance from Egypt.
- Provision in the wilderness.
- Manna every morning.
- Water from the rock.
- A pillar of cloud.
- A pillar of fire.
- Preservation through exile.

- Promise after promise after promise, kept across centuries.

Not one word has fallen to the ground.

And then Jesus himself — born in poverty, faithful through every temptation, obedient unto death, raised from the grave.

But the imposter shepherds in your life have no track record. They are faithful only as long as it's convenient. The moment it costs them something, they're gone. But Jesus has been faithful when it cost him everything. Jesus is the Shepherd you have always needed BECAUSE HE HAS ALREADY PROVEN HIMSELF FAITHFUL.

[Romans 8:32 — The Logic of Trust]

Paul makes the argument this way in Romans chapter 8, verse 32:

"He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things?"

Do you hear the logic? It is the same logic the elders are using at Hebron. If God did that — if God gave his own Son — if God did that, you can trust him with this. Whatever "this" is for you today.

[A Careful Word — Faithfulness Is Presence, Not a Guaranteed Outcome]

When I say you can trust him with this, I don't mean he will definitely give you the outcome you are asking for. He might. But he might not.

When it says that God will give us all things, it means he will graciously give us all we need for the moment. He who did not spare his own Son but gave him up for us all, how will he not also with him graciously give us all things? It means he will not waste your suffering. It means that when you walk through the valley of the shadow of death, you will not walk it alone.

[Ben Sasse quote]

Two weeks ago on 60 Minutes, former Senator Ben Sasse — who is dying of pancreatic cancer at the age of 54 — was asked if he believes God has a plan. Can you imagine being asked if you believe that God has a plan, when you are facing

imminent death. His answer was five words: *'There are no maverick molecules in the universe.'* That is what it sounds like when a man trusts the shepherd, even in the valley.

The shepherd does not promise that the valley will disappear. The shepherd promises that he will be with you in it.

- The diagnosis you are waiting on. He is with you in it.
- The child you are praying for. He has not forgotten.
- The future you cannot see. He already holds it.
- The marriage that is harder than you ever thought it would be. He is not done working.
- The loneliness that no one around you seems to notice. He notices.

He has led you out before. He has brought you in before.

He has proven himself faithful — not because he always gives us what we ask for, but because he gave us what we needed most. Himself.

[Point II Summary]

That is the second reason Jesus is the Shepherd-King we have always needed.

Because he has already proven himself faithful. And the proof is written in blood and confirmed by an empty tomb.

We have seen that he is one of us.

We have seen that he has proven himself faithful.

But now the elders say something that goes deeper than what they could see with their own eyes. They say something they could only know because God had spoken. And this changes everything.

POINT 3. (v. 2b)

[The Text — "The LORD Said"]

Look at verse 2, the second half. The elders still speaking to David:

"And the LORD said to you, 'You shall be shepherd of my people Israel, and you shall be prince over Israel.'"

The elders said, "the LORD said."

The elders are no longer making their own case. They are quoting divine revelation. They are grounding their coming to David not ultimately in what they think of David, but in what God has declared about David.

[What a Shepherd Really Was]

And notice — notice carefully — what God says.

"You shall be shepherd of my people Israel."

Now, we hear that word and our minds go immediately to green pastures and still waters. And that is not wrong. But we need to hear it the way the elders heard it, because in their world, a shepherd was not a sentimental figure. A shepherd was the man who stood between the flock and everything that wanted to destroy it.

- A shepherd fought off predators. In the dark. Alone.
- A shepherd led the flock through dangerous terrain —
 - through the ravines where the wolves waited,
 - through the wilderness where there was no water,
 - through the valleys where the shadows gathered thick.
- A shepherd went without sleep so the sheep could rest.
- A shepherd risked his own life — daily, nightly, without recognition — so the flock could survive.

David knew this better than anyone. He had been a literal shepherd in Bethlehem. He had killed a lion and a bear with his own hands to protect his father's sheep. When the elders called him "shepherd," they were not giving him a soft title. They were describing a man who would put himself

- between them and whatever threatened them.
- Between them and the predator.
- Between them and the danger.
- Between them and the dark.

["My People" – The Flock Belongs to God]

And notice the possessive in God's promise: "my people Israel." Not David's people. God's people. Israel belongs to God. David is not acquiring subjects. He is caring for God's flock on God's behalf.

One commentator puts it this way: "Shepherds are responsible for sheep, not sheep for the shepherd." The shepherd exists for the flock. The flock does not exist for the shepherd.

[Kingship Turned Upside Down]

That turns the whole idea of kingship upside down. Every other king in the ancient world – and most leaders in every age – operates on the assumption that the people exist to serve the king. The king takes. The king consumes. The king builds his own legacy on the backs of the people.

But God's king is a shepherd. And a shepherd gives. A shepherd sacrifices. A shepherd pours himself out – quietly, steadily, without fanfare – for the sake of the ones in his care. Jesus came not to be served, but to serve and give his life as a ransom.

David did not make himself king. God made him king. God chose him and gave him to Israel.

That was the third reason the elders came.

- Not just who David was.
- Not just what David had done.
- But what God had declared about David.

God himself had appointed this shepherd-king for them.

[The Antitype – Jesus, the Good Shepherd]

And what was true of David is true – in its deepest and most costly form – of Jesus. This brings us reason #3:

REASON #3: Jesus is the Shepherd you have always needed BECAUSE GOD HIMSELF APPOINTED HIM TO SHEPHERD YOU.

You see, when Jesus claimed the title of shepherd, he did not merely repeat what David had been. He completed it. He fulfilled it. He took the shepherd image and filled it with a meaning the elders at Hebron could not yet see.

In John chapter 10, verse 11, Jesus says:

"I am the good shepherd."

The same identity. The same role. The same centuries-old promise.

And then he adds a line that changes everything:

"The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep."

Lays down his life.

David, David fought for the sheep. David risked his life for the sheep. But Jesus — Jesus gave his life for the sheep. Jesus did not just stand between the flock and the predator.

- Jesus absorbed the blow.
- He took the death.
- He walked into the valley of the shadow — not alongside the sheep, but instead of them.

["Bone and Flesh" Returns — The Deepest Reason for the Incarnation]

And here is where "bone and flesh" — those words from verse 1 — come back with their full and final weight.

Earlier, I told you that Jesus became one of us so that he could understand our suffering from the inside. That is true. But now we need to see the deeper reason. The reason the writer of Hebrews says he *had* to become like us. Not merely that he chose to. But he had to.

Hebrews chapter 2, verses 14 and 15:

"Since therefore the children share in flesh and blood, he himself likewise partook of the same things, that through death he might destroy the one who has the power of death, that is, the devil, and deliver all those who through fear of death were subject to lifelong slavery."

He partook of flesh and blood — he became bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh — so that he could die, to deliver us from our imposter shepherds.

Only a human being can die a human death. God cannot die. Angels cannot die in our place. Only a human being can die a human death. And only a sinless human being can die a death that counts for others — a death that pays a debt that we owe and cannot pay.

[Hebrews 2:17 — He Had To]

And then verse 17:

"Therefore he had to be made like his brothers in every respect, so that he might become a merciful and faithful high priest in the service of God, to make propitiation for the sins of the people."

He had to be made like us. Why? To pay the penalty of our sins. To satisfy the debt of punishment that we owed. We have no hope for the forgiveness of our sins if Jesus doesn't become like us.

The incarnation was not optional. It was not one strategy among several. It was the only way. God could not stay in heaven and save us from sin. He could not forgive us by decree. The sin was human sin, committed in human flesh, and the payment had to be made in human flesh. The shepherd who would stand between guilty sinners and a holy God had to be one of our own bone and flesh — and yet without sin himself — so that his death would count not for his own guilt but for ours.

The elders needed David to be one of them so he could lead them and fight for them and represent them.

We need Jesus to be one of us so he could die for us and pay for us and represent us before God, to stand before a holy God on our behalf.

[Point III Summary]

No other king has ever done this. No other shepherd has ever gone this far. Every one of our imposter shepherds appointed itself. Nobody sent them. Nobody anointed them. They climbed onto the throne of your life uninvited – and when the wolf came, they fled – because imposter shepherds do not lay down their lives for the sheep.

And that is the deepest reason Jesus is the Shepherd-King we have always needed. Because God himself appointed him and gave him to us – and the shepherd God gave us is the one who laid down his life for the sheep.

[THE COVENANT – WHAT HAPPENED NEXT]

Verse 3:

"So all the elders of Israel came to the king at Hebron, and King David made a covenant with them at Hebron before the LORD, and they anointed David king over Israel."

The elders didn't just recognize who David was. They came. They anointed him. They surrendered.

The elders of Israel came to Hebron that day, and they surrendered.

That's the right word for it. They surrendered.

- They gave up their resistance.
- They gave up their independence.
- They gave up their allegiance to a dead king and a failed kingdom.

And they finally placed themselves entirely in the hands of the shepherd, God had chosen for them.

And why did they surrender? Because . . .

- They found that he was one of them.
- That he had already fought for them.

- That God himself had appointed him to care for them.

They found the shepherd they had always needed.

And then — this is the part I don't want you to miss — David made a covenant with them.

The king bound himself to the people. Not the other way around. The king took the initiative. The king made the commitment. The king said, in effect:

- I am yours.
- I will shepherd you.
- I will lead you.
- I will not abandon you.

[They Surrendered]

[CONCLUSION: THE SAME SHEPHERD STANDS BEFORE YOU]

And I want to say this as plainly as I know how.

The shepherd you have always needed is here before you this morning.

Not David. David is dead. David pointed to someone greater.

Jesus is here — the son of David, the son of God, the good shepherd, the great shepherd, the chief shepherd — Jesus is alive. And he is here.

- And he is not angry that you've taken so long.
- He is not surprised by the mess you've made.
- He is not keeping a record of all the years you spent following the wrong king and looking for a shepherd in all the wrong places.

He is standing with open hands. And he is saying what he has always said:

"Come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest."

Come to me.

- Not "clean yourself up and then come."
- Not "figure it out and then come."
- Not "prove yourself worthy and then come."

Just come. By faith. Surrender and come to Jesus. He will give you rest.

[Direct Appeal – Mothers]

Mothers who are weary – he sees you. He knows the weight you carry. And he is not asking you to be stronger. He is inviting you to come and let him carry you for a while. He is the shepherd. You are the sheep. And it is the shepherd's job – his deepest delight – to carry the tired ones home.

[Direct Appeal – Fathers]

Fathers who are anxious about the future – he has already been to the future. He has already conquered the worst thing that could happen there. And he has come back to tell you: "I hold all things in my hand. Including you. Come to me and I will give you rest."

[Direct Appeal – Young People]

Young people who are trying to figure out who to follow, who to trust, who to give your life to – listen to me. There are a thousand voices in your world right now competing for your allegiance. Every one of them will let you down. Every single one. There is only one King who will never fail you. And his name is Jesus.

[Direct Appeal – Older People]

And to those of you who are nearing the end of the journey – whose bodies are slowing down, whose strength is not what it was, who know that the valley of the shadow is not a metaphor for you but a road you can see from where you're standing – hear this.

The shepherd does not hand you off to someone else for the last mile. He walks it with you. He has walked it before. He knows the way through. And on the other side, he has prepared a place where there is no more pain, no more weariness, no more goodbyes. You do not need to be afraid. The shepherd who laid down his life for you will not lose you now."

[Final Word]

All who surrender to King Jesus will find the shepherd they have always needed.

Not because we deserve him.

Not because we found him.

Because God, in his relentless mercy, sent him to find us.

And he has.

[PRAYER]

Let's pray.

Lord Jesus, we are not strong enough to shepherd ourselves. We never were. Thank you for becoming one of us — bone of our bone, flesh of our flesh — not just to understand our suffering but to take it upon yourself. Thank you for your faithfulness, proven across centuries and sealed at the cross. Thank you that you are God's gift to us — a shepherd we did not choose, a king we did not deserve, a savior who laid down his life for sheep who had wandered far from home. We receive you. We belong to you. Shepherd us, Lord. Today and all our days. Amen.

[BENEDICTION]

Go now under the care of the Shepherd-King, who is still risen, still reigning, still faithful. May his grace carry you. May his word hold you. And may you rest — truly rest — in the knowledge that you are his, and he is yours. We are dismissed.

[HOW TO READ THIS STORY: TYPE AND ANTI-TYPE]

Now, before we go any further — I want to make sure we understand something about how to read this story. How to read much of the Old Testament, really. Because if we miss this, we will miss the whole point of the passage we are reading today.

[The People in the Image — That's Us]

I want us to look at the people in the image on the wall.

Notice what they are doing. They are reading. They have their Bibles open. They are doing exactly what we are doing right now — sitting with this ancient story, reading these ancient words, trying to understand what happened at Hebron and why it matters.

They represent us. We are those people. We are the ones with the text open in front of us, reading 2 Samuel 5:1-5. And we see David. **[Show second image]** The shepherd-king. The crown on his head. The staff in his hand. The people gathered around him. This is the scene at Hebron — the moment we have been reading about. The Old Testament. The historical event. And it is real. It happened. But when we see David, and we read what the elders said to David, we ask:

- What does this mean?
- Why does this matter?
- What am I supposed to see here?

[David Is Pointing — Look Past Him]

And the answer is right there in the image. Because look at what David is doing. He is pointing. His hand is raised, and he is pointing away from himself — forward, upward — to someone greater. **[Show third image]**

God's word is not saying, "Look at David." In this story, God is saying, "Look past David."

And on the right, you see the one David is pointing to. Jesus Christ. The Greater Shepherd-King.

- A crown on his head.
- A shepherd's staff in one hand.
- A lamb – one of his own – cradled in the other arm.
- And behind him, a city bathed in light. The people gathered at his feet.

When we open the Old Testament, the Old Testament takes us by the hand and walks us to Jesus. That is what the Bible is designed to do. Every time you open it – every time we open it together – the story is trying to show us the same person.

[What Is a Type?]

In literary terms, David is what we call a type. A type is a real person, a real event, a real institution in the Old Testament that God designed – on purpose, from the beginning – to point forward to something greater that was coming. The type is not a myth. It is not an illustration someone made up after the fact. It is history – but it is history with a destination. It is a shadow cast backward by a coming reality.

And what is called the antitype is the reality itself, the reality that the shadow was pointing to. The fulfillment. The arrival. The thing itself.

[David Was a Type]

David – David the shepherd-king – was a type.

A real king. A real shepherd. A real man who sat on a real throne in a real city. David was the shepherd-king Israel had always needed. But God never intended for the story to land on David and stop. God placed David on that throne to point every eye – the elders' eyes that day in Hebron, and our eyes this morning – to the Greater Shepherd-King.