

4.2.B(24).Shepherd Teaches. Mark 6:30-44.

Read Mark 6:30-44.

³⁴ When he went ashore he saw a **great crowd**, and he **had compassion on them**, because they were like **sheep** without a **shepherd**. And he began to **teach** them many things. ³⁵ And when it grew late, his disciples came to him and said, “This is a desolate place, and the hour is now late. ³⁶ Send them away to go into the surrounding countryside and villages and buy themselves something to eat.” ³⁷ But he answered them, “**You**

give them something to eat. Mark 6:34-37

Background:

³⁴ When he went ashore he saw a **great crowd**, and he **had compassion on them**, because they were like **sheep** without a **shepherd**. And he began to **teach** them many things. Mark 6:34

¹⁰ The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have **life and have it abundantly**. ¹¹ I am the **good shepherd**. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. John 10:10-11

As you enter the fourth stage of your development as a disciple of Jesus Mashiach, you are approaching the full maturity of a member of God's House and Kingdom, taking your place as a Son and Heir destined to inherit the "heavens and the earth" (Genesis 2:4) as an heir of God and a co-heir with Jesus Mashiach (Romans 8:17). For, you have a life in you reserved only for the House of God- *Elohim*, a holy life that is eternal.

But, what is the *essence* of this new life, and what would a fully-formed heir of the Kingdom look like?

Because all earthly religions, including Judaism, emerge from family traditions, they reflect their highest cultural values. So, if you are a Jew, you would expect the fully-formed disciple to be a *scholar-sage*, wizened and bearded and immersed

in hours of Torah-study, for you imagine eternal life to be an endless *shul*, forever ruminating and disputing Torah's finer points of legality. A Buddhist might expect the extinguishing of passion or an endless rebirth. An evangelical Christian, chaste and never-ending worship or endless philosophizing about the wonders of the Gospel.

But, as the parables teach us, the Kingdom of God is all about explosive and exponentially unstoppable new life.

Jesus Mashiach reveals that he has come to bring an "abundant life" that bears spiritual fruit in a cascading cycle of generational harvest. And, to be someone who cultivates, nurtures, and leads people into this "abundant new life," the ideal role that Jesus takes as Mashiach is that of *the good shepherd*, for the good shepherd is:

- **Possessive:** knowing *his* sheep,

- **Nurturing:** bringing abundant life;
- **Sacrificial:** laying down his own life for the sheep.

If God's coming Kingdom is best understood as a House established for God and David to rule the earth.



And, it is established, as we have previously seen from “household” to “household,” then the fully formed disciple developing into a *parental shepherd* makes perfect sense, since the parents of households aptly function in the home as the

family's *shepherds*, responsible for sacrificially caring for their own "flock," their *literal* **kids** as they grow up.

So, the underlying *family dynamic* of the Kingdom calls for the raising up and equipping of its sons and daughters as *shepherds* who will know how to protect, nurture, and care for other family members that they might thrive and also become shepherds themselves, multiplying the flock.

Paul understood the role and responsibility we have in the Kingdom Household to shepherd, knowing that the Lord Jesus himself sends us out as our "chief shepherd" who oversees the entire family as his people are gathered as his flock. Paul charges those reaching *maturity* as disciples to serve well as shepherds

² **shepherd** the **flock of God** that is among you, exercising **oversight**,^[a] not

under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you;^[b] 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. 1 Peter 5:2-3

Knowing that shepherding and raising up shepherds is the generational work that must continue that the Kingdom of God flourishes on this earth, Peter exhorts we who shepherd to keep working until we see the “Chief Shepherd appear” and we finally are rewarded for our labor (1 Peter 5:3). Until then, we continue in this good work of being *shepherding disciples*.

So, as you read this passage in Mark, be sure to look for these characteristics of a *Biblical shepherding disciple* who, like Jesus, “lays down his life for the sheep” (John 10:11).



- Love:** As Jesus Mashiach displays, a shepherd is driven by his heart of “compassion” for the sheep. In the kingdom, this *love* is a *sacrificial love*, so the good shepherd is willing to “lay down his life” for his sheep. Such sacrificial love, even the love the Lord has for us, his people, only makes sense

because we who serve and we who are being served are of one family.

- **Gather:** As the *Father* of his household, God arranges the family as he wishes. So, God will “call” you as a shepherd to your people, and he will “give” them to you for their care and protection. So, your first task as a shepherd is to “gather” your people into the safety of God’s kingdom as the flock under his care!
- **Empowered:** The Lord equips you and furnishes you with his authority to care for your sheep. That he will work powerfully through you as you protectively pray for your people and ask the Lord to keep the enemy far from them.
- **Feed growth:** Remember, the Kingdom is a place of spiritual life and real growth and

fruitfulness. In the Kingdom, the Word of God is active, so you are nurturing, strengthening, and giving life to your people when you *feed* them with the Word of God. Do not aspire to simply teach or pass on information. Seek the Lord that you may feed their growth by teaching the Word of God (Jeremiah 3:15).

- **Lead/Be Led:** Finally, as Peter said, you are called to provide “oversight” to the sheep, to seek the Lord for his direction for the flock assigned to you. As a shepherd, the Lord will give you vision for your flock, making known to you his will and purposes. What you hear from the Lord, communicate this to the sheep that you may all walk according to his leading and will.

Shepherding Faith:

“And I will give you shepherds after **my own heart**, who will **feed you** with **knowledge** and **understanding**.

Jeremiah 3:15

As you are *charged* by our Lord Jesus to shepherd his flock, remember that it is by *faith* that we draw near to our Lord and live and labor in his Kingdom family. That is, your calling to *shepherd* your people is the call to care for and cultivate *faith* in their souls.

Remember that you have seen how the Word planted in the lives of your people will either grow or be choked.

When you feed your people and

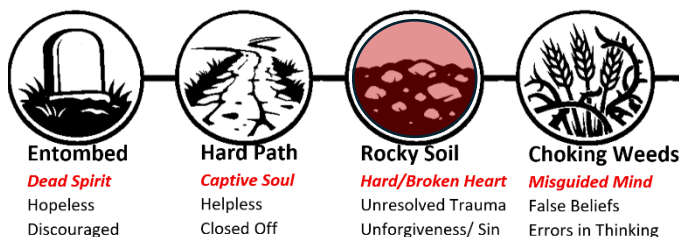


help free them from their bondages so that *faith* grows freely, they will bear the fruit of the kingdom households will abound, and the rule of Jesus will be established as his Kingdom rescues captives from the darkness.

But, all the enemies that war against faith arise from the *flesh*, the old and sin-corrupted part of each one of us from which we were all called to repent. However, the flesh is not an *alien force* calling us from afar. No, the *flesh* is our old nature that defined who we were, the natural life nurtured by this world. So, the *flesh* is as close to us as the *memory* of who we were and what we had living apart from God, and it re-awakens with the smallest choice or the slightest turn of mind and decision to act.

And, the flesh is willing to *fall back* into spiritual deadness, soul captivity, hard-heartedness, or an

errant mind. All these are drawn to this dark world, and by these our enemy *deadens faith* and re-inserts his dark hand in our lives.



So, we will see that the Lord trains you as a shepherd with the tools to help your people continue to *walk by faith* to grow spiritually and to rebuke the flesh, especially the hardness of unbelief that starts in your heart and defiles your whole body. For now, just know that your calling to grow up as a shepherd is the readiness to strengthen and nurture your people that they

might always *crucify* the flesh and walk by the Spirit's sanctifying power:

For if you live according to the **flesh** you will **die**, but if **by the Spirit** you put to **death** the **deeds of the body**, you will live. ¹⁴ For all who are led by the Spirit of God are **sons of God**. Romans 8:13-14

*Good shepherds help their people crucify
their fleshly nature to walk by faith and the
Holy Spirit's cleansing power!*

Focus:

1. Accountable to Lord: told him actions and teaching. Mark 6:30.

2. d his Shepherd's Rest: Spend time with the Lord to Reconnect). 6:31-33

3. Align with Shepherd's Heart and Responsible Feeding. 6.34-44

Consider:

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1. Accountable to Lord: told him actions and teaching. Mark 6:30.

When the Lord Jesus Mashiach sent out his twelve in pairs as *shepherds* on his behalf, calling to the "lost sheep" of Israel to come home to the Kingdom of God, he then gathered them upon their return that they might "tell him all that they had done and taught" (6:30). The disciples were accountable to the Lord Jesus, for no one in the Kingdom goes out on his or her own authority,

individually, isolated and acting in their own self-interests. This “accountability” shows that even when we as disciples mature and *serve* as Shepherds of the Kingdom, we are always serving as *subject* and servants “under authority.”

Remember, when you start to minister as a shepherd for the Kingdom, regularly “telling Jesus all that you have done and taught” (30), a regular debriefing and reporting to the Lord, you give Him the opportunity to give you a healthy response, *commendation* of having pleased him; or the lighting of the impact or further need for what you have just taught; or cautions to monitor going forward. The more accountable you are to the Lord, the more power and grace you will be given in your ministry.

For, as you gather *lost people* back home to the Kingdom, you are connecting them not to yourself

or your team, but you are grafting them into Jesus Mashiach himself, as branches are *re-grafted* back into the vine or as limbs are re-attached to the body. So, it is important you, your team, and your people *stay subject to and under the direction and life-giving source of* Jesus Mashiach as the Head of his Body, the household of God.

Case Study: Detached from the Head.

Speaking as a shepherd called to raise up shepherds to care for the Lord's flock, I confess that our greatest failure in the church was to lose our *accountability to the Lord Jesus Mashiach*. Eventually, we became only accountable to men, so that entire households, home groups, churches, and denominations were cut off from our rightful Head, the Lord Jesus Mashiach.

The creep was gradual, as we neglected this very basic routine of *debriefing* and *reporting* to

the Lord all that we “did” and “taught.” We were not accountable to the Lord. But, in this age, *why should we be?* We let our hearts be seduced by the lie that we were only accountable to ourselves. Maybe to a higher leader or the other men in power. But, never to the Lord himself.

This *slide* from *accountable faith* to self-justifying *flesh* were rooted in deeper failures. First, our teachings did not *nurture nor protect the hearts of our hearers*, so the stones of unbelief because great boulders *impenetrable* to the reach of faith. Assumptions *about proper and popular theologies*, traditions of doctrines, and ecclesiological and societal seemliness crowded out any chance of the Word affecting these vast expanses of the heart now reserved for the flesh and its human interests. We left the heart untouched and second, we neglected

to encourage our people to *crucify the flesh* to walk by the holy cleansing of the Spirit. Instead, the flesh covered itself in religion and became untouchable. Until the churches were run by the powerful, the popular, and the ones most supported by and defending the *fleshly institutions of man*.

2. Accept his Rest: Spend time with the Lord to Reconnect). 6:31-33

As shepherds, not only did these first disciples report to the Lord all they “did” and “taught,” keeping their shepherding under the *authority* and *headship* of the Chief Shepherd. But, they were willing to accept the Lord’s invitation to *rest* in Him.

In the same way that Jesus Mashiach drew near to His Father God in devoted prayer, so he invites

his disciples to draw near to him in *rest*. Jesus as “the Son of Man” is the “Lord of the Sabbath,” so he restores us when we let his peace “rule in our hearts” (Colossians 3:15).

By resting in the Lord after we have given ourselves in Kingdom Service, we honor him as the Lord who gives “rest” to our souls and carries our burdens for us (Matthew 11:28-30).

3. Align with Shepherd’s Heart and Responsible Feeding. 6.34-44

But, the Lord Jesus and his disciples never make it to their place of rest. For, as Jesus and his disciples were nearing their destination, the “great crowd” of needy sheep surrounded them.



#1: First Mark of a Shepherd: Love.

and Jesus Mashiach was quick to teach his growing disciples the first and greatest reason to serve as disciples in the Kingdom: Love. Seeing the crowds, Jesus “had **compassion** on them because they were like **sheep** without a **shepherd**” (Mark 6:34). The *shepherd's heart* of Jesus was moved within him, and he could not but help them.



This is the reason true shepherds of the kingdom must never be *ruined by the flesh*, for the life ruled by the flesh will never be willing to *sacrifice* to advance God's Kingdom. The Kingdom becomes against the very *nature* of the one ruled by the flesh.

#2: Feeding for Growth:

So, moved by *love*, Jesus then gives these *lost sheep* what they need the most, spiritual food. Remember, *shepherds after God's own heart* will "feed the people with knowledge and understanding" (Jeremiah 3:15)—that is, the "spiritual words" which alone give life (John 6:63).

#3: Responsibility for People Gathered.

But, the care of Jesus does not simply end with the lesson. When his disciples urged him to "send them away" (36), thinking that their responsibility

for the people ended when they have discharged their duty to teach, Jesus tells them: “You give them something to eat” (37)—the Lord has entrusted these people to you to shepherd, it is as if Jesus was saying to them, so you step up and take responsibility to care for them! So, Jesus first directed the disciples to *gather* these needy ones into “groups of fifties and hundreds” (40) to be fed.

Likewise, as a disciple facing the crowds of needy sheep who are hungry for *food* they have never yet tasted, first feel the Lord move your heart for them and then accept the responsibility for them that the Lord is offering. He will give you insight on how to “gather them” to be fed.

#4: Pray Protectively.

Jesus then modeled for them how to overcome the impossibility of the shepherd’s task by praying

(41). Taking the little that they had, “five loaves and two fish,” Jesus looked up to “heaven” to let God pour out his gracious power to meet the needs of these sheep.

As a shepherd, you will surely come before the Lord with your team, holding only “five loaves and two fish.” But, you come before the Lord God knowing two certainties by faith: “You O Lord have given these people here to our care. And you, O Lord, have the power to provide for them. So glorify your name!” And all the people were satisfied! (42).

#5: Lead/ Be Led.

Finally, notice that it was the Lord Jesus himself who fed the sheep, for he first commanded the sheep to be gathered, he broke the bread, looking to heaven for grace, and he gave the bread to the disciples to then give it to the people. In every

stage of the miraculous process, step by step, Jesus commanded and the disciples obeyed. In the process, they never said, “Oh, we get it. We’ll take over from here!” They led the people but they were being led at the same time!

So, as a Shepherd, avoid the trap of “fleshly religion” which is eager to say, “Thanks for the input but we’ll take it from here.” Or, “We get the idea. Let us take over.” As a fruitful shepherd, you have the Lord’s authority, but only proceed until his next command. Sometimes, he will “send you out” and you will go and accomplish the task in his power. At other times, he will need to lead you step by step.

Case study: Leading until his next command.

Long vision: In my life, I have had several *long seasons of ministry* when the Lord *called me* to a

people, putting them on my heart. As a graduate student at the university of Hawaii, I felt a burden for *my people* for whom I only had a vague sense. Graduate and international students, I knew, but I knew very few of these. So, walking by faith through my 20's, I eventually teamed up with other disciples, and we felt led to host *dinners* for our fellow students. Several years later, after hundreds attended the dinners and sixty people developed a faith in God and a dozen became disciples. At our last dinner before I left Hawaii for Chicago, I remember sitting and eating, surrounded by a house full of friends. As I looked around me, I thought: "I remember when you didn't know the Lord, and I remember when you were lost. God had touched all these people, and he said to me, "Behold, these are the people that I called you to so many years ago!" I felt the same way about

the Jewish people and the obstacles keeping them from Mashiach. At punctuated moments in this calling, the Lord would open a door, give me an insight, and show me what had to be done. I remember the moment in my transcripts of conversation, I had the word “evum” written down, before I knew it was “yibbum” they were talking about and the “raising up of Seed.”

Task vision: Before preaching or teaching, I would wait on the Lord to know his heart for what the people needed to hear. After the prep, I would pray and ask for his power to help me speak to the people. Once, I walked on to the stage and the Lord said, “I have something else for you to say.” Putting away my notes, the Lord gave me the message I wanted the people to hear.

Point-to-point Guidance: Once, my two favorite young disciples whom the Lord had brought

together and were a week or so away from marriage called me to tell me that the marriage was off. Rushing to meet with them, I only brought three dinners to share, having no idea what anyone could do. As I drove, I threw myself at the Lord's feet for mercy. For them, for me—none of us had anything good going on. After dinner, praying frantically to the Lord for help, one thing at a time came to me, I said or asked a question, shared a verse, listened a lot, prayed through it all. Slowly, the knot began to untangle until all was better.

Question:

Further Discovery:

Shepherding Heart: