



Editor's Note

Last issue, we concluded an important and hopefully helpful series of articles on some major Bible subjects that began back in 2017: Warren Henderson's seven articles summarizing the books of the New Testament; Jim Fleming's seven articles on restoring missions emphasis in the assembly; and earlier, Bob Spender's nine articles summarizing the books of the Old Testament.

In reading through this material, the

thought gripped me, *This wealth of information is the result of lifetimes of study in the Holy Scriptures!* I thought about the promise in Isaiah 55:11: "So shall my word be that goeth forth out of my mouth; it shall not return unto me void, but it shall accomplish that which I please, and it shall prosper in the thing whereto I sent it." Our desire is to equip the Lord's servants so that each may have the joy, through the Word, of accomplishing what pleases God!



Leadership Principles

Principles of Shepherding from the Life of Moses, Part 1

The Object of Shepherding: Caring for What God Cares For

by Ed Anthony

Moses and Christ are noted as shepherds (Ex. 3:1, Matt. 2:6, John 10:1-16, Heb. 13:20, 1 Pet. 2:25 & 5:4). Both had unique positions as heads of a people. Moses (the leader of Israel) as shepherd provides some helpful principles on how elders shepherd in the church. The Lord Jesus Christ is the great antitype of Moses as a shepherd and head of the church (Eph. 1:22, 5:23; Col. 1:18). There is no need, as some churches do, to put another Moses or man over the local church based on some special calling of God. In this series, we will glean some great principles of shepherding to help those who seek to lead and care for God's people.

In this first article, we look at the principle of caring for what God cares for—the object of shepherding, the sheep. God cares for His sheep (Jer. 23:3-4, Matt. 9:36) and desires elders to be shepherds who have the same care and compassion that He does for the sheep. The sheep reflect and represent the Chief Shepherd. When one sees the sheep, the shepherd's tireless work is evident. Since the sheep reflect the Lord Jesus as Chief Shepherd, the elders as under-shepherds become guardians of the Lord's name and honor (Ex. 32:11-13, Num. 14:13-19, John 8:54). Moses was such a man and took his service seriously to the point that, at his time of departure, he desired another to replace him (Num. 27:17). We will consider

from the life of Moses four points about caring for God's special object, His sheep, to help us as shepherds of His people today:

- 1) Moses' call out of Egypt
- 2) His preparation in the wilderness
- 3) His faithfulness in the household of God
- 4) His meekness and blessing among the sheep

Moses' Call Out of Egypt

From his birth, Moses was a figure of deliverance. His name, given by Pharaoh's daughter (Ex. 2:10), means "to draw out." He was delivered from the river (Ex. 2:3-10) to eventually be used by God to deliver His people from Egypt. The phrase "out of Egypt" is mentioned 76 times in the Bible and the event is referenced over 100 other times. Moses brought the people out of Egypt with the intent of getting them to their inheritance. Egypt is a picture of the world and its physical enticements (Heb. 11:25)

and yet is a place of bondage (Ex. 30:2). Notice how often, once having left Egypt, the people thought about it (Ex. 16:3, 17:3, 32:1-8; Num. 11:5, 18; 14:2-4).

As shepherds today do we see the great importance

of being called out of Egypt? Moses was among the people leading them. Moses worked tirelessly to keep the people on the journey to the inheritance. Can you imagine if there was no Moses to shepherd the

Notice how often, once having left Egypt, the people thought about it

(Continued on page 3)

If your home is a Christian home in the true sense of the word, you may wonder how the Lord's light can make a difference in your neighborhood. The question is suggested by a statement in Exodus 10:23 describing the plague of darkness in Egypt during God's judgments: "the children of Israel had light in their dwellings." Years ago, I remember a book titled, *Your Home a Lighthouse*. A Christian home should be a place of light within, but also a source of light in the neighborhood or the community. Using your home for the Lord can be a valuable disciple-making tool for both saints and sinners. Let's think about some foundational principles.

If a Christian hands out tracts in a public place, for example, we'd call that doing the work of an evangelist. That simply means that he or she is taking the initiative to bring light to where the people are. If a Christian answers questions about spiritual things asked by an interested neighbor, we'd call that being a witness. That simply means that he or she is responding to a question with light from the Word (1 Pet. 3:15).

But suppose a few believers gather in a home for Bible study and fellowship, and a neighbor visits to "check it out?" He isn't necessarily asking anything, and we don't want to be pushy and preach at him, so we just welcome him as a visitor. What do we call that? There's no need to get bogged down in terminology, but it does make the point that not all sowing of seed is verbal! Actually, we're creating an environment where both evangelism and witness can occur naturally. This is a wonderful work as the saints can be edified and those who don't know the Lord can be drawn to Christ as we simply carry on our "light bearing" without aiming at the visitor. The Holy Spirit works better when we don't interfere.

Guidelines from the Lord's Ministry

The Lord Jesus often spoke to mixed groups. There were true dis-

ciples, curious neighbors and even religious critics. We can learn from His example. There is an interesting paragraph from His ministry in Mark 3:6 – 12. The details are different, but we can find timeless principles in the account. I'll mention several, and further study would likely suggest others.

1. Know your priorities (v. 7)

The Lord Jesus knew His priorities. When the religious and political leaders confronted Him, we read, "but Jesus withdrew Himself with His disciples." He left one group to work with another, the "great multitude" from surrounding areas. His explanation given earlier was simple: "They that are well have no need of the physician, but they that are sick" (Mark 2:17). Before that, when the disciples reported His growing popularity, He told them it was time to move on to other towns, "that I may preach there also, for therefore came I forth" (Mark 1:38). We can't do everything, but we can do a few things well.

2. Stay Christ-centered (v. 8)

No matter what our subject material, there is no attraction like the Lord, and He is carefully revealed in the Scriptures! When the people heard the great things that He did, our text says, "they came to Him." How does this

*How does this news
circulate? One powerful
way is the testimony of
those He has helped—
you and me.*

news circulate? One powerful way is the testimony of those He has helped—you and me. And note that the Lord used temporal things to win a hearing for spiritual things. Those who came to Him never went back home empty. He used bread or healing to open doors to hearts. Faith comes by hearing, so they must hear, but it's easier to listen when

your stomach isn't growling. There are lots of ways to be practical about this!

3. When needed, be willing to separate (v. 9)

Sometimes the crowds pressed in on Him, but this time He got into a boat, and moved off shore. He was never aloof from the people, but this allowed Him to speak to more people than just the few who thronged Him. As He prayed later, "And for their sakes I sanctify [separate] myself, that they also might be sanctified through the truth" (John 17:19). Time alone, time to build a stronger marriage, time to pray might mean we need to set some boundaries.

4. Be patient with imperfect perspectives (v. 10)

If only the people had come to Him because He had the words of eternal life, or because He could reveal the Father, but they didn't. They heard about free food, and free help for their maladies. Can we fault them? How much of our prayer life is still centered on material needs and problems? It takes patient and loving work to teach young believers the value of Ephesians-type prayers (see Paul's prayers in Eph. 1 and 3). We who are older in the Lord can set an example for those who are young in the faith. This happens as we, following Him, become "meek and lowly in heart" (Matt. 11:29).

5. Don't depend on the world's help (v. 11)

But wasn't the testimony of the unclean spirit true, "Thou art the Son of God."? Yes, but the Lord silenced it. We do not need the might or power of the gates of hell in any way, but only "by my Spirit saith the Lord of hosts" (Zech 4:6). We may not often have evil spirits to contend with, but we are bombarded by the world's values and attractions. The Lord has promised to supply *all* of our needs, not just most of them. This includes laborers, finances, energy, protection, direction, fruitfulness, and

(Continued on next page)


so much more, if we only ask Him.

Conclusion

Of course all of the above presuppose that we have the Lord's light in our dwelling! If the light has grown dim, like it's low on oil or the glass hasn't been cleaned, that's the place to

start. Let Proverbs 4:18 encourage you: "But the path of the just is like the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day."

But if your home is a place where "the true light now shineth" (1 John 2:8), then no matter how humble,

consider opening it for the Lord to use. A simple beginning with one or two invited in for coffee and friendship can grow. The Lord can still do as He often did, take bread, bless it, break it, and give it back, but now able to bless countless others! 

Shepherding (continued from page 1)

people once they were out of Egypt? How long would it have been before they returned? Let us shepherd in such a way that we minimize the influence of the world in the lives of the sheep. The sheep are saved from Egypt with lives full of the world.

Reintroducing Egypt among the people of God and their gatherings in the wilderness is not the answer to helping the sheep overcome all that they bring with them once saved. Elders must be among the sheep and the sheep need to hear the voice and see the actions of the shepherds, uninfluenced by the world, so they have a model to follow. Jesus often saw and interacted with the sheep and they followed (John 10:14, 25, 27). Moses and our Lord both separated from Egypt (Hos. 11:1, Matt. 2:13-15). As elders let us also show forth that same truth. Moses cared for what God cared for by focusing on the sheep, helping them to see the future inheritance and blessing of God, and not turning back.

Preparation in the Wilderness

Moses learned that trying to deliver the people in the flesh almost led to disaster (Ex. 2:11-15; Acts 7:22-29). It took Moses forty years of preparation in the wilderness (shepherding his father-in-law's sheep) before receiving God's call (Ex. 3:1-9; Acts 7:30). Our Lord was no different as to preparation (Matt. 4:1-11). How much time do we spend in preparation to shepherd the Lord's people? As elders, we need not only to be among the sheep but we need to be with the Chief Shepherd as well. We should constantly hear His

voice and see His actions so that they become the basis for how we function among the sheep (reading, studying, praying, learning, etc.). If elders know the desires, voice, and actions of the Chief Shepherd then they will exhibit to the sheep a corresponding life. Moses shows us that we must prepare while young so that we might be used by the Lord to shepherd His people.

Faithfulness in the Household of God


Hebrews notes that Moses was faithful in all his house (Heb. 3:1-3). Moses was not perfect but he demonstrated by his efforts, on behalf of the sheep, his faithfulness to God's work and His people (Ex. 40:16; Num. 12:7). In a world where there are so many things seeking our time and energies, it is important that, like Moses, priority must be given by the shepherds of God's people to the Lord and the work among His people. Notice how often Moses was with God on the journey (Ex. 3:4-4:19, 5:22-6:13, 19:3, 24:13,

to which He has called us is foreign to scripture (Luke 2:49, John 10:25, 32; Eph 2:19). The last forty years of Moses' life are a demonstration of his faithfulness to God's call. Are we faithful?

Meekness and Blessing Among the Sheep

Another great attribute of Moses and our Lord Jesus was their humble desire to see the people blessed (Ex. 39:43, Lev. 9:23, Num. 6:22-23, Deut. 33, Matt. 23:37, Luke 24:50, Phil. 2:8). That can be difficult when one is given authority among the Lord's people. Some thought Moses was serving for himself (Num. 12:1-8, 16:1-3). How wrong they were! Like our Lord, he was meek (Num. 12:3, Matt. 11:29 & 21:5) and always sought the welfare of the sheep over whom he had been set (Ex. 32:32; John 10:11,15). His motivation was to please the one who had set him over them. We then, as elders, ought in meekness to seek the blessing of the Lord's people.

Summary

The first great principle to be learned from Moses and that of our Lord is showing their interest in the object of God's love—His sheep. They cared for what God cared for by demonstrating their desire to be among His people, being in constant communion with the one who sent them, displaying faithfulness to Him and His work as a priority in life, and showing a humble spirit that seeks to bless God's people. May these thoughts motivate us to a renewed desire and commitment to care for what God cares for—His sheep. 

The idea that one can make the Lord a priority and yet neglect the work to which He has called us is foreign to scripture

33:8-11). The Lord Jesus was no different. He was in constant communion with the Father (Luke 6:12, 10:21; John 5:19). The idea that one can make the Lord a priority and yet neglect the work

Wives' Corner

Forgiveness by Marsha Blair

One of the most difficult things we may face as believers is to forgive someone who has hurt or offended us. The Scripture is full of instruction and admonition to forgive. One form of the Greek word is found 48 times in the New Testament. But how can we forgive another when we have been offended?

I have faced this issue in the past, and the best encouragement I received from the Scripture was in Matthew 18:21-35. This portion tells us, in the words of the Lord Jesus, that we must forgive others even, if necessary, to “seventy times seven.” Also, it is a reminder that we have been forgiven an immeasurable amount (ten thousand talents), and must forgive those who have sinned against us a comparatively small amount (one hundred denarii). When I contemplate how much I have been forgiven by the death of the Lord Jesus for my sins, it makes me more willing to forgive others.

But is it easy to forgive? Not at all! Even though we know that we must, and that it is a command of the Lord, our thoughts and feelings don’t often help us to even consider forgiveness. But we are instructed in Colossians 3:12-13, “bearing with one another, and forgiving one another, if anyone

has a complaint against another; even as Christ forgave you, so you also must do.” And Ephesians 4:32: “And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.” The common denominator in these verses, and in Matthew 18 and others, is that we are to forgive *as Christ has forgiven us*. That is a sobering thought, and one that convicts me when I hold on to unforgiveness in my heart.

So how do we go about forgiving someone? A few thoughts from William MacDonald’s *Believer’s Bible Commentary* on Ephesians 4:32 are helpful in this regard:

The moment a man wrongs me I must forgive him. Then my soul is free. Whether the man repents, makes amends, asks my pardon or not, makes no difference. I have instantly forgiven him. But whether this succeeds or not and before this even begins, I must forgive him.

I appreciate these thoughts about forgiving whether there is repentance from the offending party or not. When I am able to forgive from the heart, I am

also able to move on from the offense. If I am not able to forgive, and wait for the other person to come to me and confess the wrong, I may wait a long

time before that happens. Meanwhile, I bear resentment and anger, which not only affects my relationship with the person but also with God. In an ideal world, if there is an offense

between brothers and sisters, or friends, it would be dealt with immediately. But we do not live in an ideal world, and we are sinners with hearts that are “deceitful and desperately wicked.” We’ve all known of situations where offenses and lack of forgiveness dragged on for years to the detriment of all involved, including the local assembly.

Lastly, when we have forgiven someone, we should not remind them of the offense again in the future. Although we forgive, we may not *forget* the offense, and if we bring it up again, especially in a time of anger or confrontation, it is an indication that we may not have really forgiven it in the first place.

May the Lord help us to love and forgive one another as He has forgiven us, to His glory.



If I wait for the other person to come to me and confess, I may wait a long time

THE SMALL PRINT

Elders’ SHOPNOTES is published bimonthly in English and Spanish. We seek to serve elders by publishing short articles that can be read in brief sittings and that are intended to provide practical teaching from a biblical perspective.

E-mail subscriptions. Visit our web site at: www.eldersshopnotes.com. Issues will be sent via e-mail as an attachment which can be printed down or read online. Feel free to pass ESN on to others. E-mail subscriptions (as opposed to postal mail) help us reduce the costs in publishing ESN.

Postal mail subscriptions. If you are unable to access the internet conveniently, write us at the address below and

we will send it via postal mail. Group subscriptions are also available via postal mail. Please indicate how many your group wishes to receive.

Spanish subscriptions. Go to www.apuntes-para-ancianos.org.

Subscription fee. We trust the Lord for the funds to publish ESN. If you would like to be one of the instruments God uses to support this ministry, please mail your gifts to the address below, payable to: Jack Spender. Feedback/comments are welcomed.

Back issues of ESN can be found in the online archives at www.eldersshopnotes.com.

Contact Info. Elders’ ShopNotes, c/o 112 Doolittle Dr. Bethany, CT 06524, USA
E-mail: alan7s@yahoo.com
Phone: 203-393-0078.

Publisher/Editor: Jack Spender
Editorial assistance: Ruth Rodger
Layout: Ryan Farrington

Specific Bible versions used are indicated at the first quotation in each article.

Note: All words referring to God have the initial letter capitalized. While the original languages of the Bible do not use capitalization, this is the convention in some translations but not in others. So at times there may be inconsistencies in usage in ESN articles.