



Servant's Retreat 2013

Shepherd of Shepherds

Importance of Shepherding

- Sheep are among the most important animals in the Bible (mentioned 400+ times)
- Used for wool, clothing, milk, skins, and burnt sacrifices
- Sheep could be raised on farms, but a large flock needed to move constantly from pasture to pasture and required a full-time shepherd.



Nature of Shepherding

- "The dryness of the ground made it necessary for the flocks of sheep and cattle to move about during the rainless summer and to stay for months at a time in isolated areas, far from the owner's home. Hence, herding sheep was an independent and responsible job; indeed, in view of the threat of wild beasts and robbers, it could even be dangerous. Sometimes the owner himself or his sons did the job. But usually it was done by hired shepherds, who only too often did not justify the confidence reposed in them." (Joachim Jeremias)

Shepherds Not Trusted

- "Most of the time they were dishonest and thieving; they led their herds onto other people's land and pilfered the produce of the land." (Jeremias)
- Months at a time without supervision - often accused of stealing some of the increase of the flock.
- People warned not to buy wool, milk, or kids from shepherds (stolen property).

Hireling - John 10:12-13

- “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. The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.”



The Life of a Shepherd

- Preparation
- Calling
- Service
- Repentance
- Failure
- Reward



Preparation: Trials

- Threatened as an infant
- Separated from his family at a young age
- God allows trials to teach us about Himself and rely on Him.



Preparation: Education

- **Acts 7:22** - And Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians, and was mighty in words and deeds.
- **Daniel 1:17** - As for these four young men, God gave them knowledge and skill in all literature and wisdom; and Daniel had understanding in all visions and dreams.



Preparation: Inner Life

- **1 Peter 2:5** - you also, as living stones, are being built up a spiritual house, a holy priesthood, to offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God through Jesus Christ.
- Seeking God above recognition and praise
- Content with what God gives
- Those faithful with little will be given more
- Successful in small trials in preparation for larger ones
- Learning to trust God and see our weaknesses

Preparation: Unexpected Turn

- **Acts 7:25** - For he supposed that his brethren would have understood that God would deliver them by his hand, but they did not understand.
- Moses did not understand either.



Preparation: Unexpected Turn

- Fled to Midian
- Married a Midianite
- Became a shepherd
 - Tried to be a spiritual shepherd by force
 - God made him a physical shepherd
- 40 years



Calling: An Encounter with God

- **Exodus 3:1-2** - Now Moses was tending the flock of Jethro his father-in-law, the priest of Midian...And the Angel of the LORD appeared to him in a flame of fire from the midst of a bush.
- Moses was working



Calling: An Encounter with God

- **Luke 2:8-9** - Now there were in the same country shepherds living out in the fields, keeping watch over their flock by night. And behold, an angel of the Lord stood before them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them.



St. Cyril of Alexandria

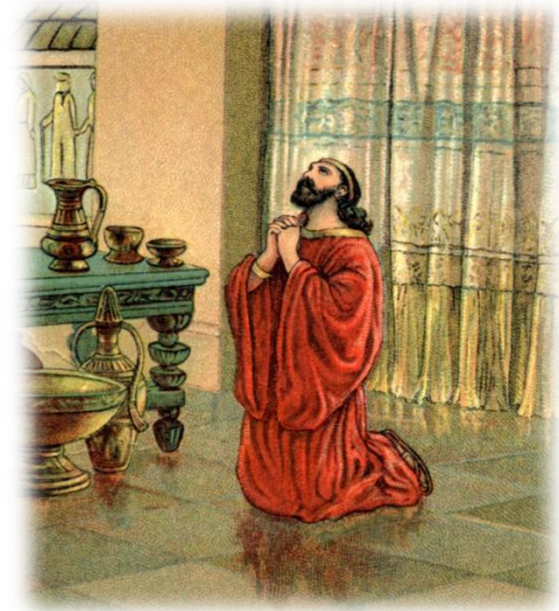
- “The rational powers of heaven bring the glad tidings of His manifestation and appearance in this world, to shepherds first of all at Bethlehem, who were thus the earliest to receive the knowledge of the mystery. And the type answers to the truth: for **Christ reveals Himself to the spiritual shepherds, that they may preach Him to the rest**, just as the shepherds also then were taught His mystery by the holy angels, and ran to bear the glad tidings to their fellows.”

Calling: The Call

- **Exodus 3:7,8,10** - And the LORD said: "I have surely seen the oppression of My people who are in Egypt, and have heard their cry because of their taskmasters, for I know their sorrows...So I have come down to deliver them out of the hand of the Egyptians, and to bring them up from that land to a good and large land, to a land flowing with milk and honey...Come now, therefore, and I will send you to Pharaoh that you may bring My people, the children of Israel, out of Egypt."

Calling: Conviction

- **Nehemiah 1:3-4** - And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire." So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.



Calling: Separation

- **Acts 13:2**

As they ministered to the Lord and fasted, the Holy Spirit said, "Now **separate** to Me Barnabas and Saul for the work to which I have called them."

- **Romans 1:1**

Paul, a bondservant of Jesus Christ, called to be an apostle, **separated** to the gospel of God

- **Galatians 1:15**

But when it pleased God, who **separated** me from my mother's womb and called me through His grace,

- *aphorizō* - To mark off from others by boundaries, to limit, to separate. To set apart for some purpose.

Calling: Trust in God

- **Exodus 4:10** - Then Moses said to the Lord, "O my Lord, I am not eloquent, neither before nor since You have spoken to Your servant; but I am slow of speech and slow of tongue."
- Moses before and after 40 years in the desert



Service: Obedience

- **Exodus 4:19** - Now the Lord said to Moses in Midian, "Go, return to Egypt; for all the men who sought your life are dead." Then Moses took his wife and his sons and set them on a donkey, and he returned to the land of Egypt.
- Move from pasture to pasture



Service: Sacrifice

- **1 Samuel 17:34-35** - 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, 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.

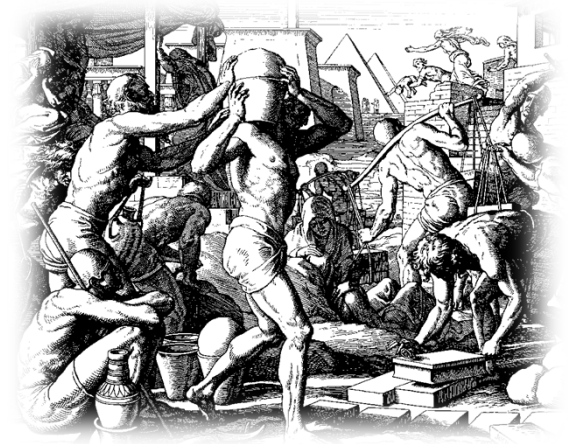


Service: Sacrifice

- **Ezekiel 4:4-12** - "Lie also on your left side, and lay the iniquity of the house of Israel upon it...For I have laid on you the years of their iniquity, according to the number of the days, three hundred and ninety days; so you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Israel. And when you have completed them, lie again on your right side; then you shall bear the iniquity of the house of Judah forty days. I have laid on you a day for each year... Also take for yourself wheat, barley, beans, lentils, millet, and spelt; put them into one vessel, and make bread of them for yourself...And you shall eat it as barley cakes; and bake it using fuel of human waste in their sight."

Service: Obstacles

- **Exodus 5:22** - So Moses returned to the Lord and said, "Lord, why have You brought trouble on this people? Why is it You have sent me? For since I came to Pharaoh to speak in Your name, he has done evil to this people; neither have You delivered Your people at all."
- **Psalms 146** - He will not take pleasure in the strength of a horse, nor will He be well-pleased with the legs of man. The Lord will take pleasure in those who fear Him, and in those who hope in His mercy.



Service: Knowledge of God

- Power: 10 plagues
- Patience
- Love for the people
- God's goal is different than our own



Service: Complaints

- **Exodus 14:11-12** - Then they said to Moses, "Because there were no graves in Egypt, have you taken us away to die in the wilderness? Why have you so dealt with us, to bring us up out of Egypt? Is this not the word that we told you in Egypt, saying, 'Let us alone that we may serve the Egyptians'? For it would have been better for us to serve the Egyptians than that we should die in the wilderness."

Service: Intimacy with God

- **Exodus 14:13-14** - And Moses said to the people, "Do not be afraid. Stand still, and see the salvation of the LORD, which He will accomplish for you today. For the Egyptians whom you see today, you shall see again no more forever. The LORD will fight for you, and you shall hold your peace."
- What separated Moses from the rest?



Repentance

- **2 Samuel 12:7-9,13** - Then Nathan said to David, "You are the man! Thus says the Lord God of Israel: 'I anointed you king over Israel, and I delivered you from the hand of Saul. I gave you your master's house and your master's wives into your keeping, and gave you the house of Israel and Judah. And if that had been too little, I also would have given you much more! Why have you despised the commandment of the Lord, to do evil in His sight? ... So David said to Nathan, "I have sinned against the LORD."

Failure



- **1 Samuel 15:22-23** - "Has the Lord as great delight in burnt offerings and sacrifices, As in obeying the voice of the Lord? Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice, And to heed than the fat of rams. For rebellion is as the sin of witchcraft, And stubbornness is as iniquity and idolatry. Because you have rejected the word of the Lord, He also has rejected you from being king."

Reward

- **Genesis 15:1** - After these things the word of the Lord came to Abram in a vision, saying, "Do not be afraid, Abram. I am your shield, your exceedingly great reward."
- Greatest reward is intimacy with God (Heaven)

