

Shepherd or Hireling Workshop – Group 1

“But a hireling, he who is not the shepherd, one who does not own the sheep...” (John 10:12)

Who is the hireling? There are some in office in the church, of whom the Apostle Paul say:

¹⁹But I trust in the Lord Jesus to send Timothy to you shortly, that I also may be encouraged when I know your state. ²⁰For I have no one like-minded, who will sincerely care for your state. ²¹For all seek their own, not the things which are of Christ Jesus. (Philippians 2:19-21)

Discussion Questions:

1. What does the St. Paul mean by “Who seek their own”? How does a “servant” seek his own?
2. What kinds of things are loved by an “overseer” which would make him a hireling and not a shepherd?
3. How can we as servants avoid this problem?

Shepherd or Hireling Workshop – Group 2

“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.” (John 10:12)

The following passage provides some insight to help distinguish between hirelings and shepherds.

“And He Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers, ¹²for the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4:11-12)

Discussion Questions:

1. What is the key goal of a true shepherd, according to St. Paul?
2. What would be the goal of a hireling, which would make him unfit to be a shepherd?
3. How can we as servants avoid this problem?

Shepherd or Hireling Workshop – Group 3

“The hireling flees because he is a hireling and does not care about the sheep.” (John 10: 13)

We believe that the Apostles were shepherds, not hirelings, yet the following verses seem contrary:

“Then they all forsook Him and fled. Now a certain young man followed Him, having a linen cloth thrown around his naked body. And the young men laid hold of him, ⁵²and he left the linen cloth and fled from them naked.” (Mark 14: 50-52)

“Then the disciples took [Paul] by night and let him down through the wall in a large basket.” (Acts 9:25)

¹¹Now when Peter had come to Antioch, I withstood him to his face, because he was to be blamed; ¹²for before certain men came from James, he would eat with the Gentiles; but when they came, he withdrew and separated himself, fearing those who were of the circumcision. (Gal 2:11-12)

Discussion Questions:

1. How can we reconcile that the apostles were shepherds, yet they escaped at times?
2. What were the Apostles escaping from? Is it justifiable?
3. Under what circumstances is it acceptable for the shepherd to flee?

Shepherd or Hireling Workshop – Group 4

“[The hireling] sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees; and the wolf catches the sheep and scatters them.” (John 10:12)

From: Tractate 46 (John 10:11-13), By St. Augustine: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701046.htm>:

“Look, someone or other has sinned— grievously sinned; he ought to be rebuked, to be excommunicated: but once excommunicated, he will turn into an enemy, hatch plots, and do all the injury he can. At present, he who seeks his own, not the things that are Jesus Christ's, in order not to lose what he follows after, the advantages of human friendship, and incur the annoyances of human enmity, keeps quiet and does not administer rebuke. See, the wolf has caught a sheep by the throat; the devil has enticed a believer into adultery: you hold your peace — you utter no reproof. O hireling, you have seen the wolf coming and hast fled! Perhaps he answers and says: See, I am here; I have not fled. You have fled, because you have been silent; you have been silent, because you have been afraid.

Discussion Questions:

1. According to St. Augustine, how does the hireling “flee”?
2. Under what circumstances is it acceptable for the shepherd to rebuke or even excommunicate?
3. How can we as servants avoid this problem?

Shepherd or Hireling Workshop – Group 5

“I am the Good Shepherd, and know My sheep, and am known of Mine. As the Father knows Me, even so know I the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.” (John 10:14)

From: Homily 60 on the Gospel of John, By John Chrysostom: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/240160.htm>

For in this the shepherd differs from the hireling; the one always looks to his own safety, caring not for the sheep; the other always seeks that of the sheep, neglecting his own. Having therefore mentioned the marks of a shepherd, Christ has put two kinds of spoilers; one, the thief who kills and steals; the other, one who does not these things, but who when they are done does not give heed nor hinder them. By the first, pointing to Theudas and those like him [heretics]; by the second, exposing the teachers of the Jews, who neither cared for nor thought about the sheep entrusted to them.

Discussion Questions:

1. According to St. John Chrysostom, What are the two kinds of destroyers of the sheep?
2. How is neglecting the sheep just as bad, or perhaps worst, than killing and stealing the sheep?
3. How can we as servants avoid this problem?

Shepherd or Hireling Workshop – Group 6

“To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out.” (John 10:3)

From: Tractate 45 (John 10:1-10), By St. Augustine: <http://www.newadvent.org/fathers/1701045.htm>:

*For who else calls His own sheep by name, and leads them hence unto eternal life, but He who knows the names of those that are fore-ordained? Hence He said to His disciples, Rejoice that your names are written in heaven; **Luke 10:20** for from this it is that He calls them by name. And who else puts them forth, save He who puts away their sins that, freed from their grievous fetters, they may be able to follow Him? And who has gone before them to the place whither they are to follow Him, but He who, rising from the dead, dies no more; and death shall have no more dominion over Him*

Discussion Questions:

1. The Lord is the True Shepherd, and we are called to follow his shepherd-hood. We cannot offer salvation, but what can we offer our sheep, so that the Doorkeeper (God) may open to us?
2. How would the voice of a hireling differ from that of a shepherd?
3. How would the voice of a thief differ from that of a shepherd?
4. What should the voice of a shepherd sound like?