

Monday 11/27**Related Verses****John 21:15-17(16)**

15 Then when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, Simon, son of John, do you love Me more than these? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Feed My lambs.

16 He said to him again a second time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? He said to Him, Yes, Lord, You know that I love You. He said to him, Shepherd My sheep.

17 He said to him the third time, Simon, son of John, do you love Me? Peter was grieved that He said to him the third time, Do you love Me? And he said to Him, Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You. Jesus said to him, Feed My sheep.

Acts 20:28

28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

Matt. 9:36

36 And seeing the crowds, He was moved with compassion for them, because they were harassed and cast away like sheep not having a shepherd.

John 10:10b-11, 16

10b ; I have come that they may have life and may have it abundantly.

11 I am the good Shepherd; the good Shepherd lays down His life for the sheep.

16 And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold; I must lead them also, and they shall hear My voice, and there shall be one flock, one Shepherd.

Related Reading

In John 10:10, 11, and 16 the Lord unveiled to the disciples that He was the good Shepherd who came that the sheep might have life abundantly and that He had other sheep (the Gentiles) that He must lead to join with them (the Jewish believers) to be one flock (one church) under one Shepherd.

First, the Lord's shepherding was in His earthly ministry (Matt. 9:36). The Lord saw the Israelites as

sheep harassed by their leaders; they were cast away like sheep not having a shepherd. The Lord as the Shepherd of God's elect prayed, and God told His sent One to appoint twelve apostles that they might take care of the sheep of God (10:1-6).

Second, the Lord's shepherding is in His heavenly ministry (1 Pet. 5:4) to take care of the church of God, issuing in His Body. When He was on the earth, He was shepherding. After His resurrection and ascension to the heavens, He is still shepherding.

When the Lord stayed with His disciples after His resurrection and before His ascension, in one of His appearances, He commissioned Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in His absence, while He is in the heavens (John 21:15-17)...To shepherd is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock.

This is to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to take care of God's flock, which is the church that issues in the Body of Christ. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, "Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John," pp. 446-447)

Peter was so impressed with this commission of the Lord that in his first book he tells the believers that they were like sheep being led astray, but they have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer (Christ) of their souls (2:25). Christ's shepherding of His flock includes His caring for their outward things and also their inner being, their souls...He shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our soul, our real person.

Peter exhorts the elders to shepherd the flock of God among them so that when the Chief Shepherd is manifested, they, the faithful elders, will receive the unfading crown of glory (5:1-4).

Peter's word indicates that the heavenly ministry of Christ is mainly to shepherd the church of God as His flock, which issues in His Body.

This matter of shepherding God's flock for the main purpose and ultimate consummation of the eternal economy of God is referred to even in Song of Songs.

In Song of Songs 1:7a the seeker says, "Tell me, you whom my soul loves, Where do you pasture your flock [for satisfaction]? / Where do you make it lie down at noon [for rest]?"

The Shepherd responds to the seeker by saying, "Go forth on the footsteps of the flock, / And pasture your young goats / By the shepherds' tents" (v. 8b). Under the Lord as the Chief Shepherd there are many other shepherds. The many shepherds pasture their young by their tents, that is, where they live.

Song of Songs 2:16 says, "My beloved is mine, and I am his; / He pastures his flock among the lilies [the seekers of Christ who live a life of trusting in God with a single heart]." The Lord is pasturing all His seekers as lilies, taking care of them, feeding them, and shepherding them that they may grow.

To shepherd the believers is very crucial for their growth in life. (CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, "Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John," pp. 448-449)

Further Reading: CWWL, 1994-1997, vol. 4, "Crystallization-study of the Gospel of John," ch. 13; *Life-study of John*, msg. 22, 49

Tuesday 11/28**Related Verses****Acts 2:42**

42 And they continued steadfastly in the teaching and the fellowship of the apostles, in the breaking of bread and the prayers.

Col. 1:28

28 Whom we announce, admonishing every man and teaching every man in all wisdom that we may present every man full-grown in Christ;

Matt 28:19-20

19 Go therefore and disciple all the nations, baptizing them into the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit,

20 Teaching them to observe all that I have commanded you. And behold, I am with you all the days until the consummation of the age.

Acts 20:28

28 Take heed to yourselves and to all the flock, among whom the Holy Spirit has placed you as overseers to shepherd the church of God, which He obtained through His own blood.

Eph 4:11-12

11 And He Himself gave some as apostles and some as prophets and some as evangelists and some as shepherds and teachers,

12 For the perfecting of the saints unto the work of the ministry, unto the building up of the Body of Christ,

1 Tim 5:17

17 Let the elders who take the lead well be counted worthy of double honor, especially those who labor in word and teaching.

Related Reading

In order to shepherd the saints, the elders must be apt to teach. In shepherding others by teaching, we do not give them lectures or messages. Rather, we give them edifying and nourishing instructions.

According to Ephesians 4, the shepherds and the teachers are one category. This indicates that anyone who would be a shepherd must also be a teacher. Likewise, a good teacher is also a shepherd. Some so-called teachers, however, do not know anything about shepherding. They may give sermons, but they do not shepherd anyone. However, in the Bible a shepherd is a teacher, and a teacher is a shepherd. Just as a mother shepherds her children by feeding them and caring for them, so we also need to shepherd God's children...No matter how many elders we may have, they are not sufficient to fill the gap. For the shepherding, there is the need for all the brothers and sisters to function. (*CWWL*, 1977, vol. 2, "All Ages for the Lord's Testimony," pp. 30-31)

We teach others by what we do. Suppose a new one sitting next to you in a meeting cannot find the book of Haggai. By helping him find this book, you teach him. Perhaps someone else is not familiar with a certain term that is used. By having fellowship with him, you may help him understand the significance of this term. This is shepherding. All the weak ones, new ones, and young

ones need a great deal of such teaching. Whenever someone renders them this kind of help, they are built up. Eventually, through receiving this kind of help, they also become useful. This is the way to build up the church.

I encourage you all to do the shepherding. Sisters, some of you have been in the Lord and in the church life for years, and you have attended many conferences and trainings. Surely you have received something from the Lord. Now is the time to exercise yourselves to use the grace you have received and the gift you have been given to care for others. (*CWWL*, 1977, vol. 2, "All Ages for the Lord's Testimony," p. 31)

Among the four kinds of gifted persons [Eph. 4:11], the ministry of the first three,...of the apostles, prophets, and evangelists, depends upon shepherding. This is confirmed by the Lord's charge to Peter in John 21:15-17. The functions of these leading gifted persons depend upon shepherding. Without shepherding, the apostles, prophets, and evangelists cannot function.

The elders are...obligated to teach to strengthen the shepherding and carry out its goal (1 Tim. 3:2b; 5:17b) according to what Christ taught in the four Gospels and what the gifted persons taught in the Epistles. First Timothy 3:2 says that the elders must be apt to teach. This means that teaching is their habit. Some elders have a quiet disposition. These ones especially must deny themselves to be apt to teach, and to be apt to teach is to be apt to talk. This is to talk not about vain things but about the truths of God's economy. We have to be equipped by the Lord's grace to speak for Him. We should speak the high peaks of the truth of God's eternal economy. Paul also says in 1 Timothy 5:17 that the elders who labor in word and teaching are worthy of double honor. In 1 Timothy 1:3-4 Paul charged Timothy to remain in Ephesus to tell certain ones not to teach anything different from God's economy. He also charged the Corinthians to speak the same thing so that there would be no divisions among them (1 Cor. 1:10). We all should speak the same thing—God's economy. (*CWWL*, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," pp. 113, 117)

Further Reading: *CWWL*, 1977, vol. 2, "All Ages for the Lord's Testimony," ch. 4; *CWWL*, 1994-1997, vol. 5, "The Vital Groups," ch. 7

Wednesday 11/29

Related Verses**1 Pet. 2:21, 25**

21 For to this you were called, because Christ also suffered on your behalf, leaving you a model so that you may follow in His steps;

25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

Psa. 23:3

3 He restores my soul; He guides me on the paths of righteousness For His name's sake.

John 14:16-18

16 And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Comforter, that He may be with you forever,

17 Even the Spirit of reality, whom the world cannot receive, because it does not behold Him or know Him; but you know Him, because He abides with you and shall be in you.

18 I will not leave you as orphans; I am coming to you.

2 Cor. 1:3-4

3 Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, the Father of compassions and God of all comfort;

4 Who comforts us in all our affliction that we may be able to comfort those who are in every affliction through the comforting with which we ourselves are comforted by God.

Eph. 3:17

17 That Christ may make His home in your hearts through faith, that you, being rooted and grounded in love,

Heb. 13:17

17 Obey the ones leading you and submit to them, for they watch over your souls as those who will render an account, that they may do this with joy and not groaning; for this would be unprofitable to you.

Related Reading

Christ was our Redeemer in His death on the tree. Now He is our soul's Shepherd and Overseer in the resurrection life within us. Therefore, He is able to guide us and supply us with life that we may follow His model

in His steps of suffering (1 Pet. 2:21)...Our soul is our inner being, our real person. Our Lord, as the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul [v. 25], shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our inner being and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our real person. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, p. 190)

A shepherd takes care of the physical needs of his flock, and Christ our Shepherd takes care of the needs of our soul. He is not the Shepherd of our body; He is the Shepherd of our soul, our inner being. We all have a spirit, and the spirit is our inward organ. But our being is a soul. Therefore, Christ mainly shepherds us by taking care of our soul. He takes care of our mind, emotion, and will.

We may think that our problems are with the body. No doubt, the body does give us many problems. Nevertheless, our real problem is in our soul. Our mind, emotion, and will all have problems. Unbelievers are wanderers in the soul, and they do not have a shepherd to take care of them. But our situation is different in that we have a Shepherd who takes care of our soul. Not only do we have the Lord's life within us, but we also have Him as our Shepherd. He is now shepherding us in our soul.

Consider this matter of the Lord's shepherding according to your experience...Where is the Lord's comfort, in our spirit or in our soul? If you say that His comfort is in the spirit, your answer is not according to the Bible...Many times we speak of turning to the spirit, perhaps expecting that when we turn to the spirit, everything will be all right. Actually, even after we turn to the spirit, many things may not be all right. From experience Peter knew to say that Christ is the Shepherd of our souls. Therefore, Peter does not tell us in 1 Peter 2:25 that Christ is the Shepherd of our spirit or of our body; he clearly says that Christ is the Shepherd of our souls.

Because it is our soul that suffers, it is our soul that needs the Lord's shepherding. It is not our body that needs this kind of care, nor is it mainly our spirit. It is our soul—our mind, our emotion, and our will—that needs the Lord as the Shepherd.

In our experience sometimes we just do not know what to think about. We do not know where to direct our thoughts. This is an indication that our mind needs the Lord Jesus as the Shepherd. I can testify that many times in this kind of situation the Lord Jesus has been a Shepherd to me. As a result of His shepherding, our mind is directed and set in the right way.

Our emotion, being complicated, is easily upset. This is especially true of the sisters' emotion. Therefore, we need the Lord Jesus to shepherd us in our emotion. His shepherding comforts our emotion.

Our will also needs the Lord's shepherding. As human beings, we often find it difficult to make the right decision. Sometimes the hardest thing to do is to make a decision. Unbelievers have no one to lead them and guide them in making decisions. But we have a Shepherd to lead us and guide us. The Lord's leading and guiding are primarily related to our will. As the living Shepherd, the Lord continually directs our will. I cannot tell you how many times I have experienced this. The Lord is truly the Shepherd of our soul. He directs our mind, comforts our emotion, and leads and guides our will. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, pp. 190-192)

Further Reading: *Life-study of 1 Peter*, msg. 21; *CWWL*, 1984, vol. 5, pp. 343, 346-348, 353-355; *CWWL*, 1988, vol. 4, pp. 315-321

Thursday 11/30

Related Verses

1 Pet. 5:2

2 Shepherd the flock of God among you, overseeing not under compulsion but willingly, according to God; not by seeking gain through base means but eagerly;

2 Pet. 1:4

4 Through which He has granted to us precious and exceedingly great promises that through these you might become partakers of the divine nature, having escaped the corruption which is in the world by lust.

John 14:6

6 Jesus said to him, I am the way and the reality and the life; no one comes to the Father except through Me.

John 6:57

57 As the living Father has sent Me and I live because of the Father, so he who eats Me, he also shall live because of Me.

Col. 3:4

4 When Christ our life is manifested, then you also will be manifested with Him in glory.

1 Cor. 6:17

17 But he who is joined to the Lord is one spirit.

John 15:4

4 Abide in Me and I in you. As the branch cannot bear fruit of itself unless it abides in the vine, so neither can you unless you abide in Me.

Related Reading

To shepherd the flock of God [1 Pet. 5:2] requires suffering for the Body of Christ, as Christ suffered (Col. 1:24).

Literally, the Greek word rendered "flock" [in 1 Peter 5:2] is "little flock." This refers to the church of God (Acts 20:28), which is small in number (Luke 12:32) compared to the world.

According to 1 Peter 5:2, elders are not rulers; they are shepherds. Sometimes a shepherd may have to rule the flock, but that is not the ruling of a king. It is a ruling of someone who cares for the flock...The flock needs to be cared for, protected, and led in the right direction. They need to be brought to a place where they can eat and drink. This is shepherding.

Peter...charges [the elders] to shepherd the flock of God. The flock is not the elders' possession but God's possession. In a sense, the elders are employed by God to shepherd His flock. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, p. 291)

The word *overseeing* in 1 Peter 5:2 means "taking the oversight, looking diligently to be aware of the situation." Years ago I thought that the overseeing was to observe who is wrong and who is right, who is doing well and who is doing poorly. Later I came to realize that to oversee is mainly a matter of overseeing the need...A shepherd...is concerned with the need of the flock. His oversight is related to protecting the flock, leading the

flock, and feeding the flock. The shepherd exercises oversight in order to supply the flock with whatever is needed.

As Peter says, the elders should oversee “willingly, according to God.” To oversee according to God means according to God’s nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to man’s preference, interest, and purpose. The elders should not oversee according to their opinion, concept, or likes or dislikes. Instead, they should oversee according to God’s choice, desire, intention, and preference. The elders must oversee the church altogether according to God’s thought, feeling, will, and choice. They must oversee according to God’s likes and dislikes.

In 5: 2 Peter warns the elders not to seek gain by base means but to eagerly exercise oversight. This means that the elders should not take advantage of the eldership and use it as a means to gain money. They should eagerly take the oversight like parents who eagerly exercise care over their children. (*Life-study of 1 Peter*, pp. 292-294)

In his first Epistle, Peter speaks of Christ being the Shepherd and Overseer of our soul, our inner being and real person (2:25). Then in 5:1-2 he tells the elders that their obligation is to shepherd God’s flock according to God. *According to God* means that we must live God. We must have God on hand. We have God in our understanding, in our theology, and in our teaching, but we may not live God when we are shepherding people. When we are one with God, we become God. Then we have God and are God in our shepherding of others. To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes. God is love, light, holiness, and righteousness. “According to God” is at least according to these four attributes of God. We must shepherd the young ones, the weak ones, and the backsliding ones according to these four attributes. Then we will be good shepherds.

Without shepherding, there is no way for us to minister life to others...If we want to enjoy life and minister life to others, we must shepherd them. The real ministering of life is shepherding by visiting and contacting people. (*CWWL*, 1994-1997, vol. 5, “The Vital Groups,” pp. 114-115)

Further Reading: *Life-study of 1 Peter*, msg. 32; *CWWL*, 1994-1997, vol. 3, “The God-man Living,” ch. 2

Friday 12/1

Related Verses

2 Cor. 6:11, 13

11 Our mouth is opened to you, Corinthians; our heart is enlarged.

13 But for a recompense in kind, I speak as to children, you also be enlarged.

1 Kings 4:29

29 And God gave Solomon wisdom and very much understanding and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the seashore.

1 Cor. 6:3

3 Do you not know that we will judge angels, not to mention things of this life?

Prov. 25:15

15 By forbearance a ruler may be persuaded, And a soft tongue can break the bone.

Luke 15:4, 8, 10

4 Which man of you, who has a hundred sheep and has lost one of them, does not leave the ninety-nine in the wilderness and go after the one which is lost until he finds it?

8 Or what woman having ten silver coins, if she loses one silver coin, does not light a lamp and sweep the house and seek carefully until she finds it?

10 In the same way, I tell you, there is joy in the presence of the angels of God over one sinner repenting.

Related Reading

The apostles, all-mature and all-fitting, as depicted in 2 Corinthians 6:3-10, had their mouths opened and their hearts enlarged to the believers. With an enlarged heart they were able to embrace all believers regardless of their condition, and with an opened mouth they were free to speak to all believers frankly concerning the real situation into which they had been misled. This kind of openness and enlargement is needed to reconcile, to bring back, the misled or distracted believers to God. (2 Cor. 6:11, footnote 1)

No doubt, Joseph [the son of Jacob in the Old Testament] is the perfect type of Christ because he portrays the constituted aspect of a mature saint...In us who are fallen, saved, called, redeemed, and regenerated there is nothing perfect except the constituting Christ...Joseph represents the constitution of Christ in Jacob’s mature life.

This aspect...perfectly typifies Christ. This perfect aspect is a shepherd. Joseph, like Abel, was a shepherd (Gen. 37:2). This typifies the aspect of the constitution of Christ in the mature life that is the shepherding life to take care of others. In chapter 37 Joseph not only fed and shepherded the flock; although he was the second youngest brother, he was sent by his father to shepherd his brothers. Thus, Joseph shepherded not only his father’s flock but also his father’s sons. The Lord Jesus also came as a shepherd (John 10:11).

Although you may be new in the church life,...Christ has been constituted into you, and this becomes the constitution of Christ in your spiritual life. This is what gives you the burden to take care of others. This is shepherding. The constitution of Christ in our spiritual life has a shepherding aspect. It is vain to encourage people to shepherd others. The more I charge you to shepherd others, the less you will shepherd them. Shepherding is not a matter of our instigating others to do something but of Christ’s constitution within them. The part of our being that has been constituted of Christ is the part that shepherds others. I have full confidence in that part of you. We cannot shepherd anyone, but Christ constituted into us is the Shepherd.

The reigning aspect is first the shepherding aspect. If you do not have the burden to shepherd others and to feed them, you will never be able to reign. Reigning authority comes from the shepherding life. Eventually, Joseph reigned over his brothers. But he did not reign over them until he had already shepherded them. He was sent by his father to shepherd his brothers and to feed them. In like manner, Jesus came not as a King to rule others; He came as a Shepherd.

As the Shepherd, Christ was killed by His own people. This is revealed in John 10, where we are told that the good Shepherd gives His life for the sheep. Jesus came as the Shepherd and was killed, giving His life for

His flock. In principle, the same thing happened to Joseph in Genesis 37. Although he was sent to shepherd his brothers, they nearly killed him. Joseph gave his life in order to carry out this kind of shepherding. It is good that we have a shepherding life within. But if you are to shepherd others, you must be ready to be killed by those you are caring for. The very ones you desire to shepherd will not appreciate your shepherding. Instead, they will kill you. They may think of you as a strange, peculiar person, and they may call you a “holy” brother. Many have said to me, “Brother Lee, if I stay by myself and do not love the church and care for the saints, I have no problems. But when I begin to love the church and take care of the saints, the saints kill me.” They kill you because you shepherd them. (*Life-study of Genesis*, pp. 1410-1411)

Further Reading: *Life-study of Genesis*, msg. 110; *CWWL*, 1994-1997, vol. 5, “A Word of Love to the Co-workers, Elders, Lovers, and Seekers of the Lord,” chs. 1-3

Saturday 12/2

Related Verses

1 Cor. 12:24-26

24 But our comely members have no need. But God has blended the body together, giving more abundant honor to the member that lacked,

25 That there would be no division in the body, but that the members would have the same care for one another.

26 And whether one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; or one member is glorified, all the members rejoice with it.

Eph. 4:16

16 Out from whom all the Body, being joined together and being knit together through every joint of the rich supply and through the operation in the measure of each one part, causes the growth of the Body unto the building up of itself in love.

Eph. 2:21-22

21 In whom all the building, being fitted together, is growing into a holy temple in the Lord;

22 In whom you also are being built together into a dwelling place of God in spirit.

Eph. 1:22-23

22 And He subjected all things under His feet and gave Him to be Head over all things to the church,

23 Which is His Body, the fullness of the One who fills all in all.

Related Reading

We must learn to minister life to others. In order to do this, we ourselves must have life...We must learn the lessons of life. Then we will know how to minister to others. In fact, if we have life, there is no need to purposely minister life to others. Life will already be ministered to them. When visiting others to take care of them, the proper principle is to minister life to them.

We need to pray with others and help them to pray...We should simply help people to put their trust in the Lord and depend on Him for everything. To this end, we should bring with us a spirit and atmosphere of prayer to help others to come into a prayer life. We need to create an atmosphere so that whatever happens to people, they will pray, look to the Lord, and rely on Him for His presence and clear leading...If we ourselves are not persons with a prayer life, we will not be able to build up others as this kind of person. We ourselves need to take the lead. (*CWWL*, 1973-1974, vol. 2, “The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church,” pp. 613-614)

We should not expect that someone who is newly saved or recovered will immediately be in a proper condition...A weaker one may require our patience to contact him again and again. This kind of continual, patient contact will shepherd people. This takes time...The church grows through shepherding. If we have gospel preaching without shepherding to take care of the new ones, many of the newly saved ones will fall away. This will spoil and damage our appetite for gospel preaching. Many will say, “We brought so many to the Lord, but most of them are not here anymore.” We will be like a family that has lost its children. Therefore, we need the proper shepherding for the proper child raising. It is impossible for only the leading brothers in a church to take care of the shepherding. Everyone must pick up

the burden to take care of others. This requires our patience.

We must learn to trust and rely upon the ones who are under our care. This is to have a proper fellowship. In one sense, we are the parents nourishing our children, but in another sense, we are all brothers and sisters. Therefore, we should show others that not only do they rely on us, but we also rely on them. This mutual reliance creates much profit. It causes others to be open to us, trust us, and have confidence in us...All the members must be open to one another. Then the circulation will do its proper work. We have seen that some of the ones who are under our care do not open to us, regardless of how much time we spend with them. This means that they have no confidence in us. We need to behave in a way to build up a mutual confidence; this will cause them to open to us. This requires us to depend on them, rely on them, and show them that we need their help.

We should never give anyone under our care the sense that we are forcing them to do anything. We must all learn the attributes of God. From the beginning, God never forced people...In shepherding,...we should allow people to have a free choice.

Whatever we fellowship with the dear ones must be according to our own experience...We need personal experiences [of all the foregoing detailed items] to be able to testify to the younger ones...The more we pick up the burden to shepherd others, the more things we will need to learn. (*CWWL*, 1973-1974, vol. 2, “The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church,” pp. 614-616)

Further Reading: *CWWL*, 1973-1974, vol. 2, “The Normal Way of Fruit-bearing and Shepherding for the Building Up of the Church,” chs. 8-9

Lord's Day 12/3**Related Verses****Luke 15:11-14, 17-24**

11 And He said, A certain man had two sons.

12 And the younger of them said to the father, Father, give me the share of the estate that falls to me. And he distributed to them his living.

13 And not many days after, the younger son, having gathered everything together, went abroad to a distant country and there squandered his estate by living dissolutely.

14 And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want.

17 But when he came to himself, he said, How many of my father's hired servants abound in bread, but I am perishing here in famine!

18 I will rise up and go to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you.

19 I am no longer worthy to be called your son; make me like one of your hired servants.

20 And he rose up and came to his own father. But while he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was moved with compassion, and he ran and fell on his neck and kissed him affectionately.

21 And the son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I am no longer worthy to be called your son.

22 But the father said to his slaves, Bring out quickly the best robe and put it on him, and put a ring on his hand and sandals on his feet.

23 And bring the fattened calf; slaughter it, and let us eat and be merry,

24 Because this son of mine was dead and lives again; he was lost and has been found. And they began to be merry.

Further Reading:

Further Reading: *Life-study of 1 Peter*, msg. 21

Hymns, #1221

1 Jesus, our wonderful Shepherd
Brought us right out of the fold
Into His pasture so plenteous,
Into His riches untold.

Glorious church life,
Feasting from such a rich store!
Here where we're dwelling in oneness
God commands life evermore.

2 In the divisions He sought us,
Weary and famished for food;
Into the good land He brought us,
Oh, to our spirit how good!

3 Jesus Himself is our pasture,
He is the food that we eat;
We as His sheep are fed richly
Each time, whenever we meet.

4 Dwell we here on a high mountain,
Wet with the morning-fresh dew,
Slaking our thirst at the fountain,
Water so living and new.

5 Christ is our rest and enjoyment,
Here we have nothing to fear;
Here all the sheep dwell securely,
Kept by His presence so dear.

Churchwide Truth Pursuit of Romans**Level 1—Romans Sequential Study**

Scripture: Rom. 14:1-12

Assigned Reading: *Life-study of Romans*, msgs. 62-63

Level 2—Romans Topical Study

Crucial Point: The Kingdom of God as Righteousness, Peace, and Joy in the Holy Spirit

Scripture: Rom. 14:17

Assigned Reading: *Life-study of Mark*, msg. 15; *What the Kingdom is to the Believers*, chs. 1-3

Supplemental Reading: None

Hymn: 947

For study questions and additional materials, please visit the church website at churchinnyc.org/bible-study