

Crystallization-Study of Jeremiah and Lamentations

#11 Shepherds according to God's Heart (11/16-22)

OL Summary:

I. Jehovah spoke through the prophet Jeremiah concerning the shepherds, the rulers: **A.** The shepherds, the rulers, transgressed against Jehovah; they did not seek Jehovah, and their flock was scattered. **B.** The shepherds destroyed and scattered the sheep of Jehovah's pasture. **C.** Jehovah promised that He would gather the remnant of His flock and bring them back to their pasture and that He would raise up shepherds over them who would shepherd them, and they would be fruitful and multiply. **D.** Jehovah promised to give Israel shepherds according to His own heart; such shepherds would give the people of God proper knowledge and understanding of God.

II. Both the Old Testament and the New Testament reveal Christ as the Shepherd according to God's heart: **A.** As the mighty One, the ruling and judging One, Christ comes to be a Shepherd; He cares for His flock by ruling and correcting His sheep and by feeding His flock, gathering the lambs in His arm, carrying them in His bosom, and leading those who are nursing the young. **B.** Ezekiel 34:11-31 prophesies that the Lord Himself will come as the Shepherd to search for His sheep and seek them out: As the Shepherd, the Lord will gather His people, His sheep, out of the nations and bring them back to the land of Canaan, which typifies the all-inclusive Christ as the allotted portion of God's people, to dwell on the high mountains, signifying the resurrected and ascended Christ. /When the Lord Jesus comes as the Shepherd to care for us, He comes also as the King to govern us; the issue of the Lord's caring for us as our Shepherd is that we obey Him as our King and come under His kingship and His throne within us. **C.** Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls: As the good Shepherd, the Lord Jesus came that we may have life and may have it abundantly. /He laid down His soul-life, His human life, to accomplish redemption for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life. /He leads His sheep out of the fold into Himself as the pasture, the feeding place, where they may eat freely of Him and be nourished by Him. /The Lord has formed the Jewish and Gentile believer into one flock (the church, the Body of Christ) under His shepherding. /God raised up from the dead "our Lord Jesus, the great Shepherd of the sheep, in the blood of an eternal covenant". /The eternal covenant is the covenant of the new testament to gain a flock, which is the church issuing in the Body of Christ and consummating in the New Jerusalem. /As the great Shepherd, the Lord is making real to us the contents of the new covenant and is leading us into the experience and enjoyment of all the positive matters revealed in the book of Hebrews. /As the Chief Shepherd, Christ shepherds His flock through the elders of the churches. /Without the elder's shepherding, the church cannot be built up. /The elder's shepherding should be Christ's shepherding through them. /As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being. /He

shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being. /Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds. /As the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord restores our soul and gives rest to our soul. /In eternity future Christ will be our eternal Shepherd guiding us to springs of waters of life. /Under Christ's shepherding in eternity, there will be no tears, no hunger, and no thirst—only enjoyment.

III. In His heavenly ministry the Lord Jesus continues the shepherding that He began in His earthly ministry: **A.** In John 21:15-17 the Lord commissioned Peter to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in His absence, while He is in the heavens; this was to incorporate the apostolic ministry with Christ's heavenly ministry to shepherd God's flock: Regarding shepherding, the apostolic ministry cooperates with Christ's heavenly ministry. **B.** The apostle Paul is a pattern of shepherding the saints in cooperation with Christ's shepherding in His heavenly ministry: Paul shepherded the saints as a nursing mother and an exhorting father. /Paul shepherded the saints in Ephesus by teaching them "publicly and from house to house" and by admonishing each one of the saints with tears even for as long as three years, declaring to them all the counsel of God. /Paul had been enlarged in his heart to have the intimate concern of the ministering life. /Paul came down to the weak one's level so that he could gain them. /As a lover of the church in oneness with the church-loving Christ, Paul was willing to spend what he had, referring to his possessions, and to spend what he was, referring to his being, for the sake of the saints in order to build up the Body of Christ.

IV. Those who shepherd the flock of God should shepherd according to God: **A.** To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to what God is in His attributes. **B.** To shepherd according to God is to shepherd according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory, not according to our preference, interest, purpose, and disposition. **C.** In order to shepherd according to God, we need to become God in life, nature, expression, and function: We need to be the reproduction of Christ, the expression of God, so that in our shepherding we express God, not the self with its disposition and peculiarities. /We need to become God in His function of shepherding the flock of God according to what He is and according to His goal in His economy. /When we are one with God, we become God in life and nature and are God in our shepherding of others.

V. The shepherding that builds up the Body of Christ is a mutual shepherding: **A.** To shepherd is to take all-inclusive, tender care of the flock. **B.** All believers, regardless of their stage of spiritual growth, need shepherding. **C.** All of us need to be under the organic shepherding of Christ and be one with Him to shepherd others. **D.** We need to shepherd the flock of God according to the Father's loving and forgiving heart and according to the Son's seeking, finding, and shepherding spirit. **E.** We are both sheep and shepherds, shepherding and being shepherded in mutuality; through this mutual shepherding, the Body builds itself up in love.

CP1: Lord Jesus as a Shepherd sought you out according to God the Father's choosing. He still cares for you as a Shepherd

OL1: As the mighty One, the ruling and judging One, Christ comes to be a Shepherd; He cares for His flock by ruling and correcting His sheep and by feeding His flock, gathering the lambs in His arm, carrying them in His bosom, and leading those who are nursing the young. Jer. 3:15 And I will give you shepherds according to My own heart, who will feed you knowledge and understanding. Isa. 40:11 He will feed His flock as a Shepherd; in His arm He will gather the lambs; in His bosom He will carry them. He will lead those who are nursing the young.

OL2: As the Shepherd, the Lord will gather His people, His sheep, out of the nations and bring them back to the land of Canaan, which typifies the all-inclusive Christ as the allotted portion of God's people, to dwell on the high mountains, signifying the resurrected and ascended Christ.

In the past, we may have been wild persons who would not listen to the gospel or to the word of God. But in His ruling, Jesus did something to regulate us. His regulating is His shepherding. Many of us were saved because of Jesus' regulating. His regulating shepherds us to bring us into the flock, to get us on the right way, and to adjust us to the proper pace. He is adjusting us not to go too fast or too slow but to take the pace of the flock.

When we were fallen as sinners or when we became backsliders, we were among the nations living like Gentiles. Although we were living like unbelievers among billions of others on earth, the Lord Jesus sought us out and brought us out of the nations, out of the unbelievers. You might have been a school teacher among many others, but you alone were sought out and brought back by the Lord Jesus, who then caused you to be different from the Gentiles. Formerly you were the same as the unbelievers, but one day the Lord Jesus as the Shepherd sought you and brought you out from among the unbelievers and brought you to Himself.

Since the Lord Jesus is our Shepherd taking care of us, we should not worry about our problems or about our living. Instead, we need to learn to put our trust in Him. At the end of the day, it is very good to pray to the Lord as our Shepherd. There is no need to pray at length in a formal, religious way. Simply say, "Lord Jesus, I thank You that I am under Your care. Now I am going to sleep, and I ask You to come and take care of me." Such a simple prayer is good enough. When you wake up in the morning, you say, "Lord, I thank You that I am still under Your care." There is no need to be religious, asking the Lord to protect you and do many other things for you. If you pray in a religious way, the Lord might say, "Child, I know what you need. Do not waste your time.... Simply enjoy My care." The Lord Jesus truly is our Shepherd....Wherever I have gone and wherever I have worked, I have been under His shepherding care.

Application: New ones and Youth/College students

Lord Jesus, as a Shepherd, has sought you and me out among billions of others according to God the Father's choosing. He did not seek many others around you but He sought you. When you think about it, you'll wonder how marvelous it is. And you will bow down to the Lord and give Him thanks and praises for the grace of His salvation.

A brother's testimony: Before I was saved, I had very little experience of volunteering for something and getting elected by people. I gradually became passive and apathetic, thinking, "I'm not going to get elected anyway". My grades in school gradually declined from the first year of elementary school, and I failed my high school and college entrance exams. I heard the gospel on May 13 (Lord's Day) of my first year in college, met the Lord, and was baptized on the next Lord's Day, May 20. After I was saved, I knew that I had been chosen by the Father in the eternal past, based on the Father's choosing, Lord as the Shepherd, sought me out based on His redemption, and the Holy Spirit enlightened all my inward being and sought me based on the Father's choosing and the Son's redemption. I remembered my descent and unelected history of my eighteen years. I wondered, "I was nobody, but why did God choose me and why did Lord seek me out? One hymn says, "God has chosen me, and Lord has sought me out:

1. I prostrate, Lord, before Thee, Marvel at boundless grace
That I, though chief of sinners, Am saved, brought to Thy face.
World-loving as a sinner, I never thought of Thee;
Encompassing with mercy, Thou sought and came to me
2. Tangled and troubled daily By sins that filled my heart,
I never sought Thy freedom, All seeking's on Thy part.
Though I did hear Thee calling, I never cared for Thee;
I even fought Thy working, Became an enemy
5. Midst men, then, am I better? More noble, then, was I
That Thou should'st so be willing To suffer, bleed, and die?
When I myself consider, There's nothing to be praised;
I wonder at such ransom, And by such love amazed.
12. O Lord, Thy love in vastness I cannot understand;
Not seemly I would worship, Nor can I comprehend.
Though glory's joy I've tasted, My heart is much too small;
I'll sing Thy praises ever, Before Thy throne I'll fall.

Later, during junior year of college, I prayed a consecrating prayer on the veranda of the meeting hall of Church in Taichung, where I was visiting. At that time, I consecrated myself and my whole life to the Lord. Although I sometimes forgot this consecrating prayer, the Lord remembers and has led every day until today and will continue leading me. The Lord is my Shepherd. Hallelujah! Praise the Lord!

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, out of billions of people, the Father has chosen me. And Lord Jesus has sought me as a Shepherd, and the Holy Spirit enlightened all over my heart, seeking me out and bringing me back to the church. I thank the Triune God for the amazing care. As a Shepherd, Lord Jesus still cares for me, so I don't have to worry about my problems, my life, wherever I go or work. Let me learn to trust in the Lord as my Shepherd, Amen!"

CP2: Exercise your spirit and put your mind on the spirit, deny your soul life and experience Christ as a Shepherd who takes care of your complicated soul

OL1: Christ is the good Shepherd, the great Shepherd, the Chief Shepherd, and the Shepherd of our souls.

OL2: Because our soul is very complicated, we need Christ, who is the life-giving Spirit in our spirit, to shepherd us in our soul, to take care of our mind, emotion, and will and of our problems, needs, and wounds.

John 10:10 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. 1Pet. 2:25 For you were like sheep being led astray, but you have now returned to the Shepherd and Overseer of your souls.

A sheep is a regenerated person with the divine life. We all must live by the divine life and thus become genuine, real, and pure sheep.... The flock is produced, kept, maintained, and formed by the divine life. How good it is for brothers to dwell together in unity. However, dwelling in unity simply means to dwell in the divine life. Praise the Lord that in the divine life we are truly one and love one another. This is not possible in our human, psuche life, but only in the divine, zoe life. We receive this zoe life through the redemption accomplished by our Shepherd who laid down His psuche life. He sacrificed His psuche life to accomplish redemption for us all that we might receive Him as our zoe life.

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...we have a Shepherd who takes care of our soul.

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.

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.

Application to business person/graduate students

John 10:11FN "His life":Gk. Psuche, soul-life. As a man, the Lord has the psuche life, the human life, and as God, He has the zoe life, the divine life. He laid down His soul, His psuche life, His human life, to accomplish

redemption for His sheep that they may share His zoe life, His divine life (v.10), the eternal life, by which they can be formed into one flock under Himself as the one Shepherd.

The Bible distinguishes the life of man's soul and the eternal life of God. The soul life is psuche life and God's eternal life is zoe. This distinction is very important in the spiritual experience. As a young business person or researcher, please distinguish psuche, the soul life. And understand that only by forsaking psuche, the soul life, can you supply zoe, God's life to others. Because the life of zoe in man's spirit is surrounded by soul, without denying the soul life, God's life in the spirit cannot come out.

If you can deny the soul life, your soul will be conquered, and the function of the soul will be renewed and uplifted. Please learn as a business person to deny psuche, the soul life and work by zoe, God's eternal life. For example, although you enjoyed the Lord in the morning revival, during the day, in the matter of the business decisions, your soul gets complicated and wander and you cannot make decision or make a wrong decision by being panic.

1Cor. 2:11 For who among men knows the things of man, except the spirit of man which is in him? In the same way, the things of God also no one has known except the Spirit of God. 14 But a soulish man does not receive the things of the Spirit of God, for they are foolishness to him and he is not able to know them because they are discerned spiritually. 16 For who has known the mind of the Lord and will instruct Him? But we have the mind of Christ.

Even in your business, call on the name of the Lord in your heart, exercise your spirit, fellowship with the Lord and put your mind on the spirit. These practices may take time to be skillful, but it is not difficult to learn. To make progress by doing is easy and anybody can do this. May the Lord heal the sickness of your old concept of "it is too difficult"! If you put your mind on the spirit and consider the project in your business, you can decide with the mind of Christ. The important point is to stand against your old customs, and practice calling on the Lord's name and short prayer day by day. Doing work out is so easy but it is difficult to practice every day and make it your habit. The exercise of the spirit is the same thing. By this exercise of spirit, your mind, emotion and will can be adjusted, letting you have the mind of Christ and it blesses you. Please exercise your spirit and experience Christ as the Shepherd of the soul.

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, let me learn to deny psuche, the soul life and work by zoe, God's eternal life. By calling on the name of the Lord and practice short prayers daily and exercise my spirit. Heal the sickness of my old concept "It is too difficult" in the soul. Christ as the life giving Spirit in my spirit can shepherd my complicated soul and heal it. Let me consider the business project by putting my mind on the spirit and let me make decision with the mind of Christ."

CP3: Cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry to shepherd the flock of God according to God

OL1: In His heavenly ministry the Lord Jesus continues the shepherding that He began in His earthly ministry.

OL2: Those who shepherd the flock of God should shepherd according to God. [Luke 15:4](#) 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? [5](#) And when he finds it, he lays it on his shoulders, rejoicing.

You shepherd me, and I shepherd you....This is mutual shepherding. In shepherding others, we should first cherish them in order to make them happy, and then we should feed them. This kind of feeding is the real 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. Shepherding implies feeding, but it includes much more than feeding. To shepherd is to take all-inclusive tender care of the flock.

We do not have such a loving spirit that loves the world, the worst people. We classify people, choosing who are the good ones....Do not classify people. Who can tell what they will be? When I was playing mah-jongg [behind my mother's back] at the age of eighteen or nineteen, who would have thought that this mah-jongg player would sit in America many years later to talk to people about the Lord? Who brought me here? It was Christ as the heavenly ladder.

While I was playing mah-jongg, [Pastor Yu] came to me every week....Finally, at the end of December he said, "...I will not come to you next week. I will wait until the New Year is over."...The second day of the Chinese New Year is a day of rottenness, gambling, and all manner of entertainment. On that day...I said, "I shall go to Pastor Yu's church."...Then I went to that denominational church. That was my first time to climb the heavenly ladder. Christ went to a house full of sinners and tax collectors. The vital groups, the co-workers, and the elders should pick up this spirit, the spirit of God loving the world, the spirit of Christ coming to the worst homes in order to gain people and put them upon Him as the heavenly ladder so that they may ascend on Him.

Paul said, "Faithful is the word and worthy of all acceptance, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am foremost" (1 Tim. 1:15). Paul could say this because he was the top sinner opposing Christ. He rebelled against Christ, but while he was rebelling, Christ knocked him down, called him, and saved him. Jesus Himself said, "Those who are strong have no need of a physician, but those who are ill....I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners" (Matt. 9:12-13). ...If we lose this spirit, whether we are elders, co-workers, or serving ones, we are finished. This is the main reason why we are so barren, bearing no fruit for so many years.

Application to the serving ones

In the book "Words of Love for Co-workers, Elders, Lovers of the Lord, and those who Pursue the Lord," Brother Lee pointed out that the serving one's lack of the Father's loving and forgiving heart, and the seeking, finding, and shepherding spirit of Christ the Savior. When Brother Lee was 18 or 19, he played mahjong behind his mother's back. But Pastor Yu visited such a person every week.

Also, Luke chapter 15 contains the salvation of the prodigal son, and chapter 23 contains the salvation of the criminals. Even the criminals who were crucified with the Lord were saved. [Luke 15:14](#) And when he had spent all, a severe famine occurred throughout that country, and he began to be in want. [16](#) And he longed to be satisfied with the carob pods which the hogs were eating, and no one gave him anything. [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! ... [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.

FN "saw him": This did not happen by chance; the father went out of the house to look for the prodigal's return.

FN "ran": God the Father ran to receive the returning sinner. What eagerness this shows!

[23:32](#) And two others also, who were criminals, were led with Him to be executed. [33](#) And when they came to the place called The Skull, there they crucified Him and the criminals, one on the right and one on the left. [34](#) And Jesus said, Father, forgive them, for they do not know what they are doing. ... [35](#) And the people stood by, looking on. And the rulers also sneered, saying, He saved others; let Him save Himself if this is the Christ of God, the Chosen One! ... [39](#) And one of the criminals who were hanged there blasphemed Him, saying, Are You not the Christ? Save Yourself and us! [40](#) But the other, answering, rebuked him and said, Do you not even fear God, since you are in the same judgment? [41](#) And we justly, for we are receiving what we deserve for what we did, but this man has done nothing amiss. [42](#) And he said, Jesus, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. [43](#) And He said to him, Truly I say to you, Today you shall be with Me in Paradise.

[John 3:16](#) For God so loved the world (fallen people) that He gave His only begotten Son...

Prayer: "Oh Lord Jesus, forgive me for not shepherding with the Father's loving and forgiving heart, and the seeking, finding, and shepherding spirit of Christ the Savior. I repent that I shepherded not according to God but according to my choice. In His heavenly ministry the Lord Jesus continues shepherding that He began in His earthly ministry. I will cooperate with Christ's heavenly ministry to love and shepherd the worldly people, the worst people, and eat with them. Lord, give the remaining fruit to the church. Amen!"