

# The Great Shepherd and His Undershepherds

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Our ministry as shepherds of  
Ezekiel 34 and Psalm 23

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## The Call for Disciple Shepherds

All of us should have caring shepherd hearts! “A God Who cares can’t be represented by people who don’t!” Yet the Scriptures makes clear that some have a special calling as Undershepherds to the Great Shepherd.

“Be shepherds of God’s flock ... when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” (I Peter 5:2-4)

“The Lord tends His flock like a shepherd.” (Isa. 40:11)

“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord ... so surely as I live, declares the Sovereign Lord, because My flock lacks a shepherd ....” (Ezek. 34:7 The whole chapter (Ezekiel 34:1-31))

gives us the Lord's Mind on what He desires and will judge about His shepherds! The shepherd's duties are clear from this passage and in Psalm 23.

In Ezekiel 34 the Undershepherds are to:

1. Take care of the flock before themselves.
2. They are to strengthen the weak.
3. They are to seek the healing of the sick.
4. They are to build up (restore) the injured physically and emotionally.
5. They are to minister to drifters (strays) and bring them back to the flock's safety.
6. They are to look and search for people who are lost and have no true shepherd.
7. They are to shepherd gently and not be harsh or brutal.
8. They must not allow the sheep to be scattered and then victimized in the world.
9. They are to give the flock good pasture, feeding on the Chief Shepherd's rich truth.
10. They are to rescue all the sheep they can wherever they can find them.
11. They are to teach them to be mature, remain, enjoy and possess their own pasture.
12. They are to protect God's sheep from the ravages of Satan and evil men.

### **The Ministry of God's Kind of Shepherd**

#### **Psalm 23**

As the Chief Shepherd calls us to be His Undershepherds, we should focus on the marks of Messiah Love shepherding. What should we be and do? What effects should we aim to accomplish? How do we take our measure? The sum is that we should care and help every one of the Lord's flock as we can! Note these 8 considerations:

1. We should meet people's needs with the authentic Christ. When a person is truly filled with the purpose, power and presence of Jesus, he or she has no other wants. Christ actually is all we need. When we discover this, we shall not want! (Ps. 23:1) Remember Peter and John in Acts 3:1-10. The crippled man wanted alms! Peter said, "We have no gold or silver, but, in the name of Jesus, rise and walk!" The man did! **Truth:** Our many wants are not our true needs!
2. The Undershepherd reveals to others the hopelessness of life without grazing and eating the truth of God. The green grass of living and healthy truth brings contentment and rest. (Ps. 23:2a) All of our idols are dead grass. We eat and eat, but deep nourishment eludes us. **Truth:** Life's greatest mistake is to ignore Jesus. To turn away from His truth and not constantly want more of it is to open the door of your life to evil and the lie. Many will do so, but, like Peter in John 6:60-71, we know only Jesus has the message of eternity!
3. The shepherd knows where quiet waters are found. Sheep fear turbulent streams and rushing waters as a seaman fears hurricane winds and giant waves. God's truth enables us to set the chaos, turbulence and churn of the world's storms aside and drink from the Lord's living waters! (Ps. 23:2b) **Truth:** "If you drink My water of "grace and truth," you will never thirst again." (John 1:14; 4:10, 13-14)
4. None of us can live on this earth and survive without the energy of comeback! All of us experience weariness, loss, disappointment, drudgery and despair. We need to be constantly restored to spiritual, mental, emotional and physical health. The Shepherd tells

you how: “restore” in Hebrew also means to “exchange.” Restoration can be immediate when we quit living by our own ideas, thoughts and purposes and exchange them for God’s ideas, thoughts and purposes. (Ps. 23:3a) **Truth:** The greatest sports stories are those of impossible comebacks for the winner. The Lord wants us to inspire and challenge other people with our “comebacks.”

5. Messiah Jesus is going somewhere “big,” and He wants us to go with Him. He wants to righteously honor Himself through our lives. He has a special mission for each of our lives and will guide us to its fulfillment if we trust and obey Holy Spirit leadership. The Undershepherd teaches and shows us how to hear God’s Voice and respond accordingly. (Ps. 23:3b) **Truth:** All of us are lost, and navigating a booby trapped and unfamiliar fallen earth is beyond us. We must have a “guide” to find our way and do what we were sent to do. See the great Apostle in Acts 20:22-24. “... I consider my life nothing to me, if only ... I complete the task the Lord Jesus has given me ...!”
6. The effective Undershepherd of the Great Shepherd knows how to bring comfort to all members of the flock regardless of the satanic evil and human sin agonies that surround them. He convinces the true Disciples that death is but a shadow and illusion. None of us escape the tragic and seemingly hopeless valleys of fear, but fear is like pain and can be dealt with, even as it warns us that something is wrong. We run to the One Who can calm all fears and will begin healing all pain. He throws his heavy and deadly “defensive rod” at the evil which attacks us in order to kill it! He pushes back the presence of deadly lies with “the truth staff” He holds in His hand. His rod is the Scriptures (Luke 1:1-13) and His staff represents our spiritual armor and weapons. (Eph. 6:10-18) None of us who truly seek to follow Jesus can “short cut” Psalm 23:4! **Truth:** Our greatest strength is learning what it is to recognize, enter and experience the Presence of God! If He is truly “with us,” then everything else that is “with us” is secondary, trivial or irrelevant! Everything ... everything ... changes when you “cross learn” how to regularly “see the Face of God.” It will not happen unless we have our own Peniels! See Jacob in Genesis 32:22-32! (In this account, Jacob called the place where he “wrestled with God, saw His face and still lived,” Peniel.)
7. No matter how many enemies, conflicts, challenges, impossibilities, betrayals, disappointments, losses and/or failures in your present circumstances, the Lord will still feed you enough truth to not only endure them but overcome them! The Undershepherd explains how the Father puts His hand on us and chooses to put His Holy Spirit into us! The Undershepherd demonstrates the exceeding and exulting satisfaction and contentment that Jesus Christ truly gives us! (Ps. 23:5) **Truth:** Life runs over with abundant confidence, purpose and joy. The heart knows bursts of praise and thanksgiving that exceeds words and even thoughts. The reason is Hebrews 1:9, “You have loved righteousness and hated wickedness; therefore God, Your God, has set You above Your companions by anointing You with the oil of joy.”
8. The primary message of the Undershepherd is to “cross followers” of the Master Shepherd. The power of it sustains and overwhelms. In essence, it is an absolute certainty that the “goodness (truth) and love (grace) of Jesus will pursue His own flock every day,

hour and minute of their life. Experiential evidence will increasingly confirm their wondrous eternal destination ... the Presence of the Godhead in the heavenlies.” (Ps. 23:6) **Truth:** We shall finally, fully know how much love the Father has lavished upon us! (John 3:1) Joy! We will finally see with our eyes, hear with our ears and grasp with our minds the eternal realities that have been prepared us because we loved Him! (I Cor. 1:9) Praise!

And, finally, we shall see how the Lord Jesus has all of us and how, glory, we shall have all of Him! (Rev. 22:12-16) High praise! For the glory and significance of the Savior, true Undershepherds take the lead and point the way to the words all Disciples live to proclaim, “Let the high praise of God be in my mouth, and His double edged sword in my hands!” (Ps. 149:6)

After about 63 years of seeking to follow the Master, I can see most clearly that He called me, prepared me, guided me and used me as one of His Undershepherds! As never before, I see now how inadequate I was for it all. But praise the Savior for Paul’s words in II Corinthians 3:5-6, “We know we are not competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God! He has made us competent as ministers [servants, Undershepherds] of a new promise ... from the Spirit Who gives us life!

Therefore, my beloved friends, I end these thoughts with the words of Peter with a combination of humility and pride ... and, above all, gratitude to my merciful and loving Messiah Jesus: “I am a chosen person ... that I may declare the praises of Him Who called me out of darkness into His wonderful light! Once I was a nobody, but now I belong to God. Without even knowing the meaning of mercy, the Lord of Love Himself gave me mercy.” (I Peter 2:9-10) As His under shepherd I am yielding, praying and striving to magnify this message as long as I live!