

Message Three

**Making Ourselves Ready for the Lord's Coming
by Having a Revived Living and a Labor of Shepherding**

Scripture Reading: 2 Cor. 4:16-18; John 21:15-17

- I. In order to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming, we need to maintain our victory by having a revived living, a living of being renewed day by day (2 Cor. 4:16-18); this renewal has to be refreshed every morning (Matt. 13:43; Luke 1:78-79; Prov. 4:18; Judg. 5:31):**
- A. We must enjoy the Lord early in the morning to have a new start of each day—Psa. 119:147-148.
 - B. Every morning we should allow the Lord Jesus, our Sun, to rise up in us so that we can be renewed—Luke 1:78-79; Mal. 4:2; Judg. 5:31:
 - 1. We should rise up early in the morning to fellowship with the Lord, and we can pray, "Thank You, Lord, for a new beginning; may this day be a memorable day in my life"; this is what we call a morning-by-morning revival.
 - 2. Every morning we should offer up Christ as our burnt offering and peace offering, based upon His being our sin offering, so that we may have a new beginning; not only must we do this every day, but we must also do it with sweetness and depth—Lev. 6:12-13.
 - 3. To take Christ as our burnt offering every morning is to take Him as the One who lived a life absolutely for God's satisfaction and as the life that enables us to have such a living—1:9; 6:12-13; John 5:19, 30; 6:38; 7:18; 8:29.
 - C. In order to have a revived living, we must be those who love the Lord to the uttermost and live to Him with the daily goal of having the fullest enjoyment and gaining of Christ—1 Cor. 2:9; 2 Cor. 5:14-15; Phil. 3:14.
 - D. We must be those who live the life of the altar and the tent—Gen. 12:7-8; 13:3-4, 18:
 - 1. God's appearing to us issues in our consecration, causing us to build an altar; an altar is for worshipping God by offering all that we are and have to God for His purpose; building an altar means that our life is for God, that God is our life, and that the meaning of our life is God—8:20-21a; Exo. 29:18-22.
 - 2. To live the life of the tent is our declaration that we are strangers and sojourners on the earth who are seeking a better country and eagerly waiting for the God-built city, the New Jerusalem—Heb. 11:9-10, 13, 16.
 - E. To have a revival that is renewed daily is to have a transformation that is fresh daily; if we remain in this transformation our whole life, we will grow in the life of the Lord until we are matured—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18; Heb. 6:1a.
 - F. We are renewed day by day through four items: the cross (2 Cor. 4:10-12, 16-18); the Holy Spirit by which we are reconditioned, remade, and remodeled with the divine life (Titus 3:5); our mingled spirit (Eph. 4:23); and the holy word of God (5:26).
 - G. We need to come to the Lord's table in newness (Matt. 26:29); the Lord never takes an old table; we need to be renewed by learning to say, "I'm sorry; forgive me."
 - H. While we are in the midst of suffering, we need to receive the Lord's new compassions every morning so that we may experience His renewing; otherwise, we will remain the same, and the suffering we pass through will be in vain—Lam. 3:22-24; 2 Cor. 4:16-18.
- II. In order to make ourselves ready for the Lord's coming, we need to maintain our victory by participating in Christ's heavenly ministry to feed His lambs and shepherd His sheep in order to take care of God's flock, which is the church that issues in the Body of Christ—John 21:15-17; 1 Pet. 2:25; 5:1-4; Heb. 13:20-21:**

- A. We need to shepherd people according to the pattern of the Lord Jesus in His ministry for carrying out God's eternal economy—Matt. 9:36; John 10:11; Heb. 13:20; 1 Pet. 5:4:
1. Our not having the Father's loving and forgiving heart and the Savior's shepherding and seeking spirit is the reason for our barrenness—Luke 15:1-24.
 2. We need to cherish people (to make them happy and to make them feel pleasant and comfortable) in the humanity of Jesus (Matt. 9:10; Luke 7:34); we need to nourish people (to feed them with the all-inclusive Christ in His ministry of three stages) in the divinity of Christ (Matt. 24:45-47).
 3. Christ had to pass through Samaria, purposely detouring to Sychar to gain one immoral woman, cherishing her by asking her to give Him something to drink in order to nourish her with the flowing Triune God as the river of water of life—John 4:3-14.
 4. As the One without sin, He did not condemn the adulterous woman but cherished her for the forgiveness of her sins judicially and for the setting free from her sins organically (8:1-11, 32, 36); it is also significant that the first one saved by Christ through His crucifixion was a robber sentenced to death (Luke 23:42-43).
 5. The Lord went to Jericho just to visit and gain one person, a chief tax collector, and His preaching was a shepherding (19:1-10); He also cherished the parents by laying His hands on their children (Matt. 19:13-15).
 6. In His caring for the churches as the golden lampstands, the ascended Lord is the "walking Christ" and the "speaking Spirit"; by His walking in the midst of the churches, He gets to know the condition of each church, and then according to what He sees, He speaks to us so that all the saints in the churches might be metabolically and organically transformed with the aim of making them His overcomers—Rev. 1:12-13; 2:1, 7.
- B. We need to shepherd people according to the pattern of the apostle Paul, who shepherded the saints as a nursing mother and an exhorting father in order to take care of God's flock—1 Thes. 2:7-8, 11-12; 1 Tim. 1:16; Acts 20:28:
1. Paul shepherded the saints in Ephesus by teaching them "publicly and from house to house" (v. 20) and by admonishing each one of the saints with tears for three years (vv. 31, 19), declaring to them all the counsel of God (v. 27).
 2. Paul had an intimate concern for the believers (2 Cor. 7:2-7; Philem. 7, 12), and he came down to the weak ones' level so that he could gain them (2 Cor. 11:28-29; 1 Cor. 9:22; cf. Matt. 12:20).
 3. 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 (2 Cor. 12:15); he was a drink offering, one with Christ as the wine producer, sacrificing himself for others' enjoyment of Christ (Phil. 2:17; Judg. 9:13; Eph. 3:2).
 4. Paul walked by the Spirit to honor God so that he could minister the Spirit to honor man—2 Cor. 3:3, 6, 8; Gal. 5:16, 25; Judg. 9:9.
 5. Paul indicated in his teaching that the church is a home to raise up people, a hospital to heal and recover them, and a school to teach and edify them—Eph. 2:19; 1 Thes. 5:14; 1 Cor. 14:31.
 6. Paul revealed that love is the most excellent way for us to be anything and to do anything for the building up of the Body of Christ; love prevails—8:1; 12:31; 13:4-8a; Eph. 1:4; 3:17; 4:2, 15-16; 5:2; 6:24; Rev. 2:4-5; Col. 1:18b; 1 Thes. 1:3.