

Sincere Failures

Managing as Junior Shepherds

October 23, 2022

Today we're talking about managing and tending to those entrusted to our care.



So, **do you care?** And **can the Lord trust you?** Or do you *shrug off* your sin against those you're to *tend*, as no big deal? Cuz **that's what we tend to do if we're full of our self instead of God's love.** We talked about how *bad* waiters make *others* wait on *them* – **uncaringly craving to be served rather than to serve.** But do you know why Jesus is called **the Chief Shepherd?** Because **He shepherds His junior shepherds,** like Peter who then urges us to:

Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, [How? By] serving as ... examples to the flock; and [then] when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory ... [so in the meantime we must] be submissive to one another, and be clothed with humility – 1 Peter 5:2-5 NKJ

[But] *"Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but underneath are ravenous wolves."* – Matthew 7:15 NAB

"He who is a hired hand and not a [true] shepherd ... sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep ... because he is a hired hand [just in it for what he can get] and cares nothing for the sheep." – John 10:12-13 ESV

"But he who enters by the Door is a shepherd ... This figure of speech Jesus spoke to them, but they did not understand ... [So Jesus said] 'I am the Door ... if anyone enters through Me, he will be saved, and will go in and out [to lead] and find pasture. [to feed]' – John 10:2, 6-9 NAS

"And the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. [That's you; His apprentice shepherds] ... I am the Good Shepherd." – John 10:4, 14 NKJ

The Good Shepherd is the Chief Shepherd of us junior shepherds of God's flock. We enter into a relationship with Him, through Him, and then we're sent out by Him to lead and feed **those among us, who know us, don't fear us, and follow us as we follow Jesus.** For example, Paul said:

Follow my example, as I follow the example of Christ. – 1 Corinthians 11:1 NIV

[Which means you need to] Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. **[So don't abandon sheep!]** Be shepherds of the church of God, which He bought with His own blood. – Acts 20:28 NIV

The Shepherd's junior-shepherds are reflected in Jesus' story of the Master's *junior-master* who *falls asleep* when he's supposed to keep his fellow servants awake, eagerly waiting and watching for their master to return to serve them wedding-feast-food. And we ended with Jesus' warning.



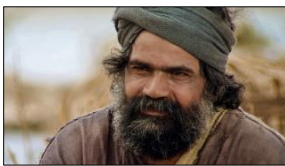
If the [junior] master of the [Master's] house had known what hour the thief would come, he would have [stayed awake and] watched ... [So] be ready, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect." [That's where we ended; but it's not where the story ends. It's just where Peter interrupts] Peter asked, "Lord, are you telling this parable to us, or to everyone?" The Lord answered, [in classic fashion with a question] "Who then is the faithful and wise [and sleepy] manager, whom the master puts in charge of his servants to give them their food allowance at the proper time? – Luke 12:39-42 NKJ

Which, in the story means keeping them waiting and watching for their true master and friend, till the second or third watch at 3:00 AM! (Lk 12:38) So Jesus says, "Who is a faithful junior servant? Tell Me, Pete." Cuz in real life (spoiler alert) it's gonna be Pete!

But what about you? What are you doing to keep your sheep awake, alert, and eagerly waiting, or preparing, to open up to our one-of-a-kind Savior, Father, and Friend? Your flock being your family and friends and all who wander into your field of vision. "But I'm just a lil' lamb. I'm not ready." Oh. So maybe you're off the hook. Have you done foolish things? "Yes!" Weak things? "Yes!" Lowly things? "Yes! That's me!" Oops. You're back on the hook! Because:

God chose the foolish things of the world to shame the wise; God chose the weak things of the world to shame the strong. He chose the lowly things of this world and the despised things — ["But I'm still not ..."] and the things that are not — to nullify the things that are, so that no one may boast before Him. – 1 Corinthians 1:26-29 NIV

[Jesus goes on] Blessed is that [junior-master] servant [in charge of getting the others to wait to eat till the proper time] whom his master will find so doing when he comes. Truly, I say to you that he will make him ruler over all that he has. – Luke 12:43-44 NKJ



Which Jesus does when He comes to the shore, after He rose, to eat with His apprentices, and to ask Peter, three times, if he truly loves Him.

[Well then] Jesus said, "Feed my lambs." [Jesus said to the seventy-two, "I send you out as lambs among wolves." (Lk 10:3)] ... Jesus said, [to Peter] "Take care of My sheep." [He'd also said, "I have other sheep ... not of this sheep pen. I must bring them also." (Jn 10:16)] ... [And lastly] Jesus said, [to Peter] "Feed My sheep." [Jesus said to the Twelve, "I send you out as sheep among wolves." (Mt 10:16)] – John 21:15-17 NIV

But Peter isn't the only apostle hearing the junior-servant story that day. There's a Judas in the flock. And "he was a thief; as keeper of the money bag, he used to take from [it]", (Jn 12:6) cuz His Master's money was his master; cuz that's what he cared about. So Jesus turns and says:

But suppose the [junior-master] servant says to himself, 'My master is taking a long time in coming,' and he then begins to beat the menservants and maidservants and [Why?! Well, the faithful wanted to wait; while he wanted] to eat and drink and get drunk. [Matthew (24:49) adds: "with drunkards"; so he abuses the faithful and leads the vulnerable astray]

[So] The master of *that junior-master* servant will [later] come on a day when he does *not* expect him and at an hour he is *not* aware of. [And catch him abusing the faithful and his authority; and] He will cut *him* to pieces and assign him a place with the *unbelievers*. [YAY!] [However] That servant who [follows him; but] knows his [Chief] master's will and does not get ready or does not do what his [Chief] master wants will be beaten with many blows. [For following a bad junior shepherd when he knew better] But the one who does not know [better; and follows along] and does things *deserving* punishment will be beaten with *few* blows. [Point is: everyone takes a beating from the leading of a self-serving junior shepherd! And] From *everyone* who has been given much, [authority] much [wisdom and faithfulness] will be *demand*ed; and from the *one* who has been entrusted with [those the master loves so] much, much more will be asked. – Luke 12:43-48 NIV



In the end, I think we'll beat *ourselves* up when we realize how we *failed* the *infinite, intimate love* of our *Creator-Father-Friend*. But **it's a parable, so it won't be an actual beating ... I'll bet. But it will be actual suffering.** The *third* time Peter *disowned* and *denied* Christ *publically* ...



The *rooster* crowed. [And] The Lord *turned* and looked *straight* at Peter. Then Peter ... went outside and *wept bitterly*. – Luke 22:60-62 NIV



Three days later, when Peter had to *face* Jesus *again*, what would he have given to go back and take a beating instead of what he *cock-a-doodle-did*? So the **good-news is: we aren't really beaten. Bad news is: we'll probably wish we were.** Ever know someone who threw a party at their *parents' house*, in their *parents' absence*, against their *parents' instructions*? Ever *been* that *person*? Well, *watch* yourself, or you could end up like the *self-serving junior master* who really went to *pieces* in the *end*. *Because*:



The *earth* is the *Lord's*, and everything *in* it, the *world*, and *all* who *live* in it – Psalm 24:1 NIV

[So we better] Be *devoted* to *one another* ... *serving* the *Lord*. – Romans 12:10-11 NIV

Which can't be forced or manufactured and please Jesus; because the *Chief* doesn't want us junior-shepherding out of *guilt, fear*, or even *obligation*. **It's gotta overflow from a heart full of appreciation.** Cuz in the end, **self-centered self-serving will reveal itself as the curse it really is.**



So, Peter turns out to be the sleepy junior master whom Jesus puts in charge. But is *anyone* caught off guard *more* than *Peter* ... *other* than *Judas*? *No!* In fact, the night before the crucifixion, Jesus asks Peter, James, and John to *wait for* Him and *watch*, and returns to find them *sleeping* ... *three times!* Yet He *only* singles out *Peter*. (Mt 26:40)

"Simon," He said to *Peter*, "are you asleep? Could you not keep watch? ... [And] He *again* found them sleeping ... [And then] the *third* time, He said ... "The *hour* has come!" ... [And] Just as He was speaking, *Judas [the thief]* [appeared]. – Mark 14:37-43 NIV

And just the night *before*, Jesus had *repeated* this parable to them *privately*, with an *addition*.

If the [junior] master of the [Master's] house had known what *hour* the *thief* would come, he would have *watched* ...[So] *be ready*, for the Son of Man is coming at an hour you do not expect ... in the *evening*, at *midnight*, at the *crowing* of the *rooster*, or in the *morning*—lest ... *He find you sleeping*. [And one year after Peter asked who He was talking to, Jesus says] And what I say to *you*, I say to *all*: **WATCH!**" – Mt 24:43-44; Mk 13:35-37 NKJ



And yet **Peter fails Him so soon, and in so many ways**. Jesus called Judas a *demon*; (Jn 6:70-71) but He called *Peter, Satan!* (Mt 16:23) So **what's the big difference between Judas and Peter?** It's *all* in the *failing*. At the Last Supper, Jesus says to *Peter*:



"Simon, Simon, Satan has asked to sift you as wheat. But I have prayed for you, Simon, that your faith may not fail. And when you have turned back, strengthen your brothers." But he replied, "Lord, I am ready to go with You to prison and to death." Jesus answered, "I tell you, Peter, before the rooster crows today, you will deny three times that you know Me." – Luke 22:31-34 NIV

You see, **our faith doesn't fail when we fail**. From *time to time* we *all* do *dumb stuff*. And we do *unloving things* to those we *most love*. However, **our faith only fails if we fail to turn back and undo them**. Peter's *behavior*, like the faithful, wise, but sleepy manager, was *often* off the mark, but never his *heart*. Whereas, **it was Judas' insincere, arrogant, self-serving heart that prevented him from repenting** and in the *end*, brought him *down* by stringing him *up*. Because:

The *wicked* are brought *down* by their *own wickedness*. – Proverbs 11:5 NIV

And his own counsel shall cast him down. – Job 18:7 KJ21



Judas didn't have the relationship to fall back on like Peter – who *literally* fell back on *Jesus* at the Last Supper to ask who was going to betray Him. (Jn 13:25) And it was only *after* the *fact* that **the Lord's insincere junior-shepherd and self-serving money manager realized what a curse his self-serving success actually was**.



Why do you think God *indelibly* linked Peter's *failure* to that rooster? Well, He's about to make Pete His junior-master, and *that* puffs up *pride*. So **what better than a daily wakeup call, literally, to remind him to stay humble and true**, and to keep watch over himself *and* his flock?

[Know why] [Jesus] *emptied* himself, taking the form of a *servant* – Philippians 2:7 RSV

Because, **you can't be a servant if you're full of yourself**.

So let's *take* it from *Jesus*, and shepherd *those* He *chose* to *graze* on His *grace* in our *field*.