

Message Four

Becoming a Reproduction of Christ and Experiencing Christ as the Shepherd of Our Souls

Scripture Reading: 1 Pet. 2:21-23, 25; Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 1:27; 2:2

I. As believers in Christ, we may become a reproduction of Christ as our model—1 Pet. 2:21:

- A. The living of the Lord Jesus under the government of God is a model so that we may follow in His steps by becoming His reproduction—vv. 21-23; Eph. 4:20-21.
- B. The Greek word for *model* in 1 Peter 2:21 denotes a master copy used in the teaching of writing—a writing copy, an underwriting, for students to use in tracing letters as they learn to draw them:
 1. The Lord Jesus has set His life before us as an underwriting for us to copy by tracing and following His steps—Matt. 11:28-30.
 2. It is not God's intention that we try to imitate Christ by our own effort; what we need is not imitation but reproduction—Rom. 8:29; 2 Cor. 3:18.
- C. We need to become Christ's reproduction, copies of Christ, by a process that involves the riches of the divine life; when this process is completed, we will become a reproduction of Christ—John 3:15; Eph. 3:8.
- D. The making of xerox copies may be used to illustrate what Peter means by Christ being a model for us.
- E. In order to become a reproduction of Christ as our model, we need to experience Christ as the One living in us, being formed in us, and making His home in our hearts—Gal. 2:20; 4:19; Eph. 3:16-17a:
 1. The New Testament reveals that Christ is deeply related to our inner being—Gal. 1:16; Col. 3:10-11.
 2. The pneumatic Christ—Christ as the life-giving Spirit—is living in us—1 Cor. 15:45b; Gal. 2:20:
 - a. God's economy is that the "I" be crucified in Christ's death and that Christ live in us in His resurrection—John 14:19.
 - b. We are one spirit with the Lord, we have one life with Him, and we should now be one person with Him—1 Cor. 6:17; Col. 3:4; Phil. 1:21a.
 - c. Since Christ dwells in us as the Spirit, we need to let Him live in us—John 14:16-19; Gal. 2:20.
 3. To have Christ formed in us is to have Christ fully grown in us—4:19:
 - a. Christ was born into us at the time we repented and believed in Him, then He lives in us in our Christian life, and finally, He will be formed in us at our maturity—John 1:12-13; 3:15; Gal. 2:20; 4:19.
 - b. To have Christ formed in us is to allow the all-inclusive Spirit to occupy every part of our inner being, to have Christ fully grown in us—Col. 2:19; Eph. 4:15-16.
 - c. To have Christ formed in us implies that we are being constituted with Christ organically—Col. 3:10-11.
 - d. *Formed* in Galatians 4:19 corresponds to *image* in 2 Corinthians 3:18; Christ will be formed in us so that we may express Him in His image.
 4. The Christ who lives in us and who is being formed in us is making His home in our hearts—Eph. 3:16-17a.

5. As Christ lives in us, is formed in us, and makes His home in our hearts, we become a reproduction of Christ for the corporate expression of God—Rom. 8:29; 12:4-5; Rev. 21:2.

II. As we become a reproduction of Christ, we can experience and enjoy Christ as the Shepherd of our souls—1 Pet. 2:25; Matt. 11:28-30; Phil. 1:27; 2:2:

- A. As the Shepherd of our souls, the pneumatic Christ oversees our inward condition, caring for the situation of our inner being:
 1. Christ's organic shepherding primarily takes care of our soul—Psa. 23:3.
 2. Christ shepherds us by caring for the welfare of our soul and by exercising His oversight over the condition of our inner being—cf. Heb. 13:17.
 3. This kind of shepherding is an inward, intrinsic, organic comforting.
- B. 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 our problems, needs, and wounds—John 14:16-17; 1 Cor. 15:45b; 6:17:
 1. As our pneumatic Shepherd, Christ takes care of us from within our spirit.
 2. His shepherding begins from our spirit and spreads to every part of our soul.
 3. From our spirit Christ reaches all the parts of our soul and takes care of us in a tender, organic, all-inclusive way.
- C. As the Shepherd of our souls, Christ restores our soul—Psa. 23:3a:
 1. For our soul to be restored means that we are revived.
 2. Restoring our soul also includes renewing and transforming—Rom. 12:2; 2 Cor. 3:18.
- D. As the Shepherd of our souls, the Lord gives rest to our soul—Matt. 11:28-30:
 1. The Lord calls those who are striving to keep the law or struggling to be successful in any work to come to Him for rest—v. 28.
 2. This rest refers not only to being set free from the toil and burden under the law or religion or under any work or responsibility but also to perfect peace and full satisfaction.
 3. To take the Lord's yoke is to take the will of the Father—12:50.
 4. The Lord lived such a life, constrained by and caring for the will of His Father (John 4:34; 5:30; 6:38); He was fully satisfied with the Father's will and had rest in His heart.
 5. The rest that we find by taking the Lord's yoke and learning from Him is an inward rest, a rest for our souls—Matt. 11:29-30.
- E. As the Lord shepherds our soul and restores our soul, we not only experience Christ but also enjoy Him—Phil. 2:2; 3:1a:
 1. The experience of Christ is a matter primarily in our spirit, but the enjoyment of Christ is in our soul—1:27; 2:2.
 2. If there is a problem with our soul, we may have the experience of Christ without the enjoyment of Christ.
 3. Regarding Christ, our taste is mainly with our soul; this is the reason that in order to have the enjoyment of Christ, we need the Lord to shepherd every part of our soul, especially our mind.