

Devotions with Matt

March 31, 2020

UNDER-SHEPHERDS TO THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Jesus tells a parable in Luke 15 about a shepherd who has 100 sheep and one of them goes astray. Rather than letting it go, the shepherd looks high and low for it until he finds it, puts it on his shoulders and returns it to the fold. That Good Shepherd is Jesus and it's a story that reveals the depth of His love for us and the extent in which He will go to find all of us.

If you have been on Facebook lately you probably have seen so many posts and videos of pastors from so many churches. Some of these pastors you haven't seen post anything for a long time and now you see something every day from them. Maybe you are thinking that it is too much. You might be thinking that each pastor that is posting is either trying to get famous or poach people from other churches to fill their sanctuaries.

I have heard that about pastors recently. In fact, I saw a post (reposted by another pastor no less) from a person who thinks negatively about pastors in this time of the covid-19 virus. Here is what this person said on Facebook: "The most entertaining part of the coronavirus quarantine is watching all the pastors trying to out pastor each other. If ever there was evidence that Christian leadership is made up of toxic 3s and they're all basically losing it, it's now!" (Can someone please tell me what a toxic 3 is?).

While there may be some pastors posturing for position and recognition, the majority of the pastors that I know are not doing this. In sharing our posts and videos we are looking for ways to encourage and stay connected to our congregations. It's not about ego or prominence, it's about love and encouragement. As a pastor, we miss seeing and having a close connection to the people in the churches in which we pastor. We want to help instill hope and peace in other's lives during this hard time. We don't just want people to get through this time, we want them to thrive in it. We want them to draw close to Jesus, feel His presence and obey His promptings. We want the churches in which we pastor to be His Church in the world around us. Since we can't see each other face to face, the best way for us to connect to the most people is through posts and videos on social media.

As pastors we have a calling. We are called to be under-shepherds to the Great Shepherd. As under-shepherds our desire is not to be The Shepherd, but rather to help lead to where the food is- which is Jesus. Jesus is the Bread of Life and the Living Water. Whoever eats and drinks of Jesus will never be hungry or thirsty again. He is the nourishment for our souls. He is the giver of hope, the instiller of peace and the author of love. No under-shepherd can give those things to you, but can help lead, point and guide in His direction. That is why we post and share videos online these days when we are not meeting face to face.

A pastor is no better than anyone else. We have just been given a gift from God to pastor. But all Christians have also been given gifts (Romans 12, 1 Corinthians 12, Ephesians 4) and are to be used in service of the One who gave them to us. All gifting by God, when used for Him, will be used for Kingdom growth. That is our hope in what we do as pastors.

We don't know what is going to happen next after the quarantine time is over, we don't know how the church will be different after this virus and we don't know how this time will affect the future or the lives of our people. So we pray and post and share videos and make phone calls and text and do live streaming services in the hope to be an encouragement to those whom we are connected to. Our hope is that each one who is will be encouraged to draw closer to the Good Shepherd. Our desire is that, when this is all said and done, the church will be stronger as we all follow the Good Shepherd wherever He leads.

Jesus said "I am the gate; whoever enters through me will be saved. They will come in and go out, and find pasture. The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." John 10:9-10

