

Welcome friends to another broadcast of “Morsels for Zion’s Poor”

Paul warned the Ephesian elders of two things: 1. That grievous wolves would raid the flock with the intention of preaching some other message than JESUS CHRIST and HIM crucified. 2. That some of those who were numbered with them and seeming to be in good standing, would nonetheless seek places of preeminence among the flock in order to gain a personal following. We live in an era which is characterized by the “cult of the pastor (or preacher)” wherein congregations depend on the ministry of individuals rather than the ministry of the body. There is no shortage of those who desire to fill these positions of prominence, privilege, and honor. Just like Israel of old, who desired a king like the other nations, many today desire to have these “pastor kings”, “worship leaders”, and all sorts of other “professional” positions. They gravitate to fixed orders of “worship”, preselected hymns, and scoff at the concepts laid out by Paul to the Corinthian church; believing that human order is the same as that of the HOLY GHOST.

Ezekiel brought a very similar message to the nation of Israel. *“Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.”* Men willingly allow themselves to be fleeced by hucksters and charlatans, with a Bible in one hand and the other in people’s pockets. Those who are called of GOD are not seeking the wealth of those to whom they are sent nor are the sons of GOD pursuing the world.

The LORD has a vested interest in those whom HE is pleased to call, *“my flock”*. HE distinguishes them from those who belong to another shepherd. *“But ye believe not, because ye are not of my sheep, as I said unto you. My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.”* The distinguishing characteristic of those who are “HIS flock”, is that when they are called, they will follow HIM, for they are given faith to believe that HE is the GOOD SHEPHERD who gives HIS life for the sheep. They will not follow another shepherd, because they are made to know that HE alone has the words of eternal life as Peter confessed. They may not be able to sufficiently explain how or why they know this to be true, but each will make the same confession. *“So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.”*

The Psalmist David, wrote, *“The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.”* Many who, in reality, are not HIS sheep often quote this verse with presumptive “faith”, thinking that HE is some sort of universal SHEPHERD trying HIS best to round up as many sheep as HE can get. They even figure that they will let HIM be their shepherd whenever they need HIM. They take comfort in this sentimental consideration, quoting it at funerals, and beside sick beds. Those who truly, are HIS sheep take delight in what David said in the next verses, *“He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters. He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”* David said, *“For a day in thy courts is better than a thousand. I had rather be a doorkeeper in the house of my God, than to dwell in the tents of wickedness.”* The sheep have no desire to feed in a pasture that is not HIS. They desire those *“green pastures”*, which HE has planted and tended specifically for that flock which is the object of HIS everlasting love. *“Therefore if any man be in Christ, he is a new creature: old things are passed away; behold, all things are become new.”* *“Now if any man have not the Spirit of Christ, he is none of his.”* The delight of the sons of GOD is not simply to find pasture but to be led by HIM into HIS pasture. *“And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.”* *“I was glad when they said unto me, Let us go into the house of the LORD.”*

David said, *“he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name’s sake.”* The LORD makes no apology for being jealous of HIS own glory. And well HE should, for HE is the GREAT I AM, who does according to HIS will in the army of heaven and among the inhabitants of the earth. HE does all things *“for HIS NAME’S sake”*. HE has a NAME which is above every name. The sheep will bow down before HIM and worship at HIS footstool. HE is the GOOD SHEPHERD who gives HIS life for the sheep and knows HIS own sheep by name. HE is the GREAT SHEPHERD who has risen from the dead and triumphed over it, breaking its grip as HE became the FIRST FRUITS of them that sleep. HE is the CHIEF SHEPHERD who comes again to receive that possession which HE has purchased. Is HE your SHEPHERD? *“Thy free grace alone,”* #11 ***If you would like a free transcript of this broadcast email us at forthepoor@windstream.net***