

**Introduction:**

- A. Choosing a pastor is one of the most important decisions you'll ever make (1 Tim 4:13–16).
  - B. Good and bad shepherds lead. The question is, to where are they leading you?
  - C. Commitment to a church analogous to commitment to your spouse
  - D. What are four questions that every member or prospective member should ask concerning the duties of the elders in the Church of Christ?
- I. Who is the primary target of your shepherding?**
- A. The flock of God that is among you (5:2)
  - B. Believers, not unbelievers (Acts 20:28)
    - 1. Atonement defines the church
    - 2. We orient our worship services and church life toward believers
    - 3. If shepherds are doing their job, unbelievers should feel uneasy in a worship service
  - C. What does “gaining the whole world” profit a man? (Matt. 16:26)
  - D. Church as re-salination plant and pastor as minister of salt  
*The church is a re-salination plant from which we go out and salt the world (Matt 5:13)*
- II. With what will you feed my soul?**
- A. Elders Shepherd with the Word of God (Jer 3:15; Mark 6:34)
  - B. Accept no substitutes
  - C. The Shepherds feed, but the sheep must eat
- III. Will you protect my soul from harm?**
- A. Elders exercise oversight and protection (5:2)
    - 1. Physical Protection when the People of God are Assembled
    - 2. Spiritual Protection through sound doctrine (Acts 20:29)
- IV. Will you come after me if I stray?**
- A. Ezekiel rebuked the shepherds of Israel for their negligence of the sheep (Ezek 34:4, 5)
  - B. What every Christians should desire, when they are in their right mind, is that pastors will come after them if they stray
  - C. Good shepherding is not just damage control, it is faithful attendance to the spiritual needs of the saints on a regular basis
  - D. What does a good shepherd give to the sheep after she has repented and believed? (1 Pet. 2:24-25)
  - E. Jacob's limp, a rising sun, and a procured blessing (Gen 48:15; 32:24; Hos 12:3, 4)

Questions for Application:

- 1. How is joining a church like entering into a marriage?
- 2. Why is choosing your pastor one of the most important decisions you'll ever make?

3. Who are the flock of God?
4. How does our view of the atonement of Christ define our view of the church of Christ?
5. Is the pastor supposed to be an agent of change in the community? Why or why not? If so, what kind of change is he supposed to make?
6. Why is it so important that shepherds preach the word of God?
7. What is the responsibility of the sheep once the shepherd has brought her to green pastures and still waters?
8. In what sense do the shepherds provide physical protection? Spiritual protection?
9. Do I need spiritual protection from false ideas?
10. Do I need spiritual protection from myself?
11. How do I react when my pastor asks about my spiritual well-being? Do I wish to be held accountable? What does this reaction say about the state of my soul?
12. How is the picture of Jacob limping away from his encounter with God with a blessing, while the sun rises behind his back, a helpful picture of the Christian life?