



Welcome Home



(From the sermon on October 18, 2015)

All We Need - a Study

We can learn a lot from nature. If we look closely at nature we can figure out our nature in some ways. Not that we are on the same level as animals, but infants in the animal kingdom tell us a lot about our own development and needs.

Chicks, for instance, want to huddle close but find themselves wandering; they need warmed, protected, nurtured and cared for – but because of their nature to wander off, their instinctive notion to find something to peck at while they can't seem to stay near the one place where they can get all they need.

The bible uses the sheep simile in **Isaiah 53:6** saying “All of us, like sheep, have strayed away. We have left God's paths to follow our own.”

Then when we find the great grace of God we share the same attitude of David in the Shepherd's **Psalms (23)**: “The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.”

We want all the necessities of life; i.e. the security, comfort, nourishment, refreshment and hope. But, because we are immature we want to find it ourselves. The impossible journey for those staples of life begin and end with what we think we need which are more times than not, disguised in wants. We live in the cold of our isolation from the very One who wants to provide the best for us. We begin to long for what only the Lord can give us – peace, hope and ultimate love. David's **Psalms (42:1)** nails it; “As the deer longs for streams of water, so I long for you, O God.” (Like how yet another animal is used?)

It's time to follow the lesson from last week and move toward maturity in our faith as it is measured through Christ Jesus (**Ephesians 4:13**). **Psalms 25:14-15** says, “The Lord is a friend to those who fear Him. He teaches them His covenant. My eyes are always on the Lord, for He rescues me from the traps of my enemies.” He is all we need!

How does the Lord guide and teach us? God works through the Body of Christ in us.

Peter became the solid foundation for the church's beginning, both metaphorically and literally. His voice bore the presence of the Holy Spirit when answering the question from the Lord Himself, “Who do people say that I am?” (**Matthew 16:15-16**) “And having responded, Simon Peter said ‘You are the Christ, the Son of the living God.’” So, when Jesus appeared to Peter after the

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resurrection on the shore (**John 21:15-19**) He was instructing the church from its very foundation how to move forward and be the very presence of God in the world.

Let's take a look at this passage. **John 21:15-19** (the Disciples Literal New Testament):

¹⁵ Then when they ate-breakfast, Jesus says to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of John, do you *devotedly-love Me more than these?*" He says to Him, "Yes, Lord. You know that I *affectionately-love You*". He says to him, "**Be feeding My lambs**".

¹⁶ He says to him again a second time, "Simon, son of John, do you *devotedly-love Me?*" He says to Him, "Yes, Lord. You know that I *affectionately-love You*". He says to him, "**Be shepherding My sheep**".

¹⁷ He says to him the third time, "Simon, son of John, do you *affectionately-love Me?*" Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you *affectionately-love Me?*". And he says to Him, "Lord, You know all things. You recognize that I *affectionately-love You*". Jesus says to him, "**Be feeding My sheep**".

¹⁸ Truly, truly, I say to you, when you were younger you were girding yourself and walking where you were wanting to go. But when you become-old, you will stretch-out your hands and another will gird you and bring you where you are not wanting to go". ¹⁹ Now this He said signifying by what kind of death he will glorify God. And having said this, He says to him, "**Be following Me!**"

There are many questions that come from this lesson, but for the sake of our focus on the church I want to share a few things that stand out to me about how the Lord has positioned the church to be leading and feeding His followers.

Jesus commands Peter (and, subsequently, the church) to seek to love Him above all ("devotedly love" Him) and disciple those who love Him from their infancy through the stages of life ("be feeding my Lambs" and "be feeding My sheep"). Sandwiched in between the *feeding* command was His command to "be shepherding My sheep" (**v. 16**). The church was commissioned by the Lord to be the home for all things relative to the value of growing in our faith. This is our place, our purpose and our opportunity.

¹¹ Now these are the gifts Christ gave to the church: the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, and the pastors and teachers. ¹² Their responsibility is to equip God's people to do his work and build up the church, the body of Christ. ¹³ This will continue until we all come to such unity in our faith and knowledge of God's Son that we will be mature in the Lord, measuring up to the full and complete standard of Christ." Ephesians 4:11-13 NLT