

Message Two

Being Witnesses, Priests of the Gospel, Fruit-bearers, and Shepherds

I. The life of God that we are constituted with will enable us to pick up a burden to care for people;

- A. The Lord's witnesses are, literally, martyrs; they bear a living testimony of the resurrected and ascended Christ in life, differing from preachers who merely preach doctrines in letters (Acts 1:8, footnote 3; 2 Cor. 5:20; 2 Tim. 2:2).
- B. Priests of the gospel minister Christ to others as a service to God; once people are gained through gospel preaching, they can be presented as a sanctified, acceptable offering to God (Rom. 15:16; Eph. 3:8).
- C. Fruit-bearers are the chosen branches who abide in Christ and, as an outflow of the riches of the inner life, go forth to bear remaining fruit as Christ's multiplication (Matt. 28:19; Mark 16:15; John 15:4-5, 16).
- D. Shepherds feed the lambs and shepherd the sheep; by faith and love they care for God's flock according to God's nature, desire, way, and glory. (Luke 15:4-5; John 21:15-17; 1 Thes. 2:7; 1 Pet. 5:2).

II. It is normal and healthy to allow life to flow out and be ministered to others for the increase, propagation, and spread of God's life:

- A. We should be before the Lord in the light to be saved from our indifference toward others that we may have a heart for people.
- B. We need to deny ourselves and our disposition in order to become useful to the Master (2 Tim. 2:21).
- C. We should learn to be interested in and involved with people, not simply in a natural or social way but in the way of life.
- D. We can make a list of people's names to keep before us and pray for them one by one.
- E. We are not short of ways to contact others but are short of heart; having a heart of love for others will open a way for our care in life to flow out.
- F. We can pick up a burden for believers in the church as well as for our unbelieving relatives, friends, neighbors, classmates, colleagues, etc.
- G. As we enjoy Christ, grow in life, and develop skills through practice and some perfecting, we will have more burden to contact people, care for them, and minister life to them.

III. The first steps of the God-ordained way involve preaching the gospel (begetting) and feeding the new believers (nourishing):

- A. We can contact people with sufficient prayer to gain remaining fruit as the overflow of life (Luke 10:3-6; 19:10).
- B. We can follow up by nourishing the newly saved ones through visiting them in their homes or elsewhere (Acts 2:46).