

# How Can We Lie Down in Green Pasture?

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Over 100 years ago, my grandfather whose name was Cole Railston, was a foreman on one of the largest ranches in New Mexico. It was in the center of the state in the black range and was seventy-five miles in one direction and thirty-five miles in another direction; a big ranch and he was the foreman for that. After he retired, he bought a little ranch which was twenty-five sections—twenty-five square miles—near Magdalena, New Mexico. As boys would go and visit him on the ranch—my dad would take us up there—and we would get to ride his horses. That of course was a dream for a kid; Roy Rogers was my hero and I loved to watch cowboy movies so to ride horses on a real ranch was something really special.

Then as teenagers, my brother and I had the opportunity to herd sheep and cattle in West Texas for a couple of spring roundups. It was a wonderful experience for young kids—boys growing up, to be able to do that. The problem is, most members of society today—modern day society—have not even had that limited experience. They are so removed from the land that they have never experienced a closeness to the land or to the sea or to the creatures that live in the land and the sea. Most grow up today in the city and think food comes from grocery stores. As a society, we are just so far removed from the land and the water and the sky, that it's hard for us to relate to some of the lessons in God's Word.

The Bible was written at a time and by individuals who were “outdoors” people. They were in tune with God's creation; they were fisherman, farmers, orchardists, herdsman. They were very familiar with outdoors husbandry, animals, in ways that are foreign to, certainly the recent generations in modern society.

In God's Word, as we know, He often refers to shepherds and sheep and He uses such analogies to teach us spiritual lessons that we need to know. Yet, because we are so far removed from day to day contact with the land and the animals, sometimes we have a hard time grasping these lessons—harder than we should actually. With that in mind let's go to Psalm 80:1. God Almighty is painting pictures for us and using analogies that relate to nature and relate to the animals and relate to the land.

**Psalm 80:1** [We are told] *Give ear, O Shepherd of Israel, thou that leadest Joseph like a flock* [we have a song to that effect]; *thou that dwellest between the cherubims, shine forth.* (KJV)

We know that Yehovah, God the Almighty, God the Father, dwells between the cherubim. If anyone has any doubt about that, there are numerous sermons in our archives and papers on our website to that affect. We see here that the Father is referred to as the Shepherd of Israel. Take that concept and now turn to Psalm 100 and

we'll read verse 3 and see an elaboration of that concept, Yehovah being the Shepherd of Israel. Notice Psalm 100:3.

**Psalm 100:3** *Know ye that the LORD [Yehovah] he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (KJV)*

We see that the Father is called the “Shepherd of Israel” and we are called the “sheep of His pasture” drawing on these analogies. But why sheep? We often ask, why did God Almighty pick the analogy of sheep to portray His children. In general, if you have been around sheep, they are generally peaceful. They are generally very meek, even to the point of being timid. All of us have heard of cat fights, of dog fights, but I don't think anyone has heard of or seen a sheep fight, because they don't. They have other characteristics; they make their presence known in other ways but they don't fight. I think there is a purpose in our Father picking sheep. Let's go to Ezekiel 34:11 now. The Father is referred to as the Shepherd of Israel, we are referred to as the Father's sheep. I'm going to read this out of the NIV.

**Ezekiel 34:11** *For this is what the Sovereign LORD says: I myself will search for my sheep and look after them. (NIV)*

We are told we are our Father's sheep and we are told that our Father is going to look after us. What a concept. Now look at verse 15 out of the New Living Translation. Now Yehovah speaks.

*15) I myself will tend my sheep and give them a place to lie down in peace, says the Sovereign Lord. (NLT)*

So, we see here, that again we are our Father's sheep, we belong to Him, He is our Shepherd and He will take care of us and cause us to lie down in peace. We are building a concept here. Now in Zechariah 13:7, God Almighty is talking about His Son. This scripture is generally acknowledged that it is referring to Jesus Christ.

**Zechariah 13:7** *Awake, O sword, against my shepherd, and against the man that is my fellow ... (KJV)*

The Hebrew word for *fellow* can mean “comrade” or “kindred man—a relation”.

*7 continued) ... saith the LORD of hosts: smite the shepherd, and the sheep shall be scattered: and I will turn mine hand upon the little ones. (KJV)*

We see here the concept that Jesus Christ is the shepherd of His Father. Meaning God Almighty is saying, My Shepherd is Jesus Christ and He calls Christ, His Shepherd. Christ tells us the same thing in John 10. This is all by way of introduction. In John 10:11 Christ is now speaking of Himself in regards to being a Shepherd—His Father's Shepherd—as we use found out.

Now Christ is talking about himself.

**John 10:11** *I am the good shepherd: [and then He elaborates] the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (KJV)*

Remember the sheep belong to the Father—we are our Father’s sheep. Now go to verse 14, He says it again.

*14) I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. (KJV)*

Meaning I am known of My own sheep. So, we see that Christ called Himself the “Good Shepherd” and we are His sheep also; we are the sheep of the Father and the Son, which makes perfect sense. With that in mind go to 1 Peter 5:1 out of the New King James. All of these are references to shepherds and sheep and they involve the Father and His Son and all of us.

**1 Peter 5:1** *The elders who are among you I exhort, I who am a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that will be revealed:*

*2) Shepherd the flock of God ... (NKJV)*

The Greek word for God is Theos, and that refers to “God the Father”, “God Almighty”.

*2 continued) ... which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion [not because you have to] but willingly, not for dishonest gain [not as a hireling] but eagerly;*

*3) nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; (NKJV)*

Peter refers to all of us—the brethren—as the flock. There is a Greek word that in English is translated *being lord over* and that is Strong’s #2634 and it means “to exercise dominion over”. Certainly, in the Pacific Church of God, the elders advise, counsel and show the brethren what scripture says about a certain subject, but we also know that each one of us has to stand individually before God. Therefore, we have to make our own decisions because we are responsible for our own decisions. So, when elders shepherd the flock, yes, we counsel, show what the scriptures say, give advice but then it’s up to the individual to make their own decision. Going on in verse 4, notice what we see here.

*4) and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away. (NKJV)*

Who is this Chief Shepherd? The Greek word for *chief* is Strong’s #750 and the root word for #746, but let’s take Strong’s #750 that is translated as *chief* here. It means, a “head shepherd” or “a chief shepherd”. It derives from Strong’s #746 which says

“concretely the chief; in various applications of order, time, place or rank”. So the Chief Shepherd is going to come and we will receive a crown of glory. If the Father is the Shepherd of Israel—we read that in Psalms 103—and Christ is His Shepherd, which we read in Zechariah 13:7. Then it’s obvious that the Father must be the Chief Shepherd, just as He is the Most High, just as He is the Almighty. When God Almighty who is the Chief Shepherd comes—when He appears—we will receive a crown of glory.

Notice Isaiah 40:10, talking about Yehovah, God Almighty coming. We can tie these two scriptures together in 1 Peter 5:4 and then Isaiah 40:10, out of the King James.

**Isaiah 40:10** *Behold, the Lord GOD [Yehovah] will come [Yehovah is the name of God the Father, God the Almighty, God the Most High] with strong hand, and his arm shall rule for him: behold, his reward is with him, and his work before him. (KJV)*

Now the reference to being a Shepherd and to us being the flock.

*11) He shall feed his flock like a shepherd [just what we’ve been told; we belong to the Father, He is the Chief Shepherd]: he shall gather the lambs with his arm, and carry them in his bosom, and shall gently lead those that are with young. (KJV)*

What a time to look forward to. It helps us understand who God the Father is and who Christ is by drawing this analogy—God’s Word drawing this analogy—between His Shepherd and the flock of His Shepherd. Putting all the scriptures that we have read so far, putting them all together, it is apparent that the Father is the Chief Shepherd, His Son Jesus Christ is the Good Shepherd and we are Their sheep. When the people reading these words back, whether it was early in the New Testament or in the Old Testament, people of the time when these words were written, understood this without any question because many of them were involved in cattle, sheep and the land. This was firsthand knowledge for them. For most in the modern world, we don’t have that firsthand knowledge because people live in cities and are far removed.

With all of this mind, let’s read the beginning of Psalm 23. David is writing to us, using this same analogy between a shepherd and sheep. David knew absolutely who was the Shepherd and who are the sheep.

**Psalm 23:1** *The LORD [referring to God Almighty] is my [“He’s my personal shepherd”] shepherd; I shall not want [because He’s going to take care of me and look after me].*

*2) He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: (KJV)*

He’s using an analogy here of a sheep lying down in green pastures. The Hebrew literally means “pastures of tender grass”. You can picture a meadow with green, lush grass and sheep calmly either munching on the grass or calmly resting in that field. With most of us, because we are not tied to the land, it’s easy for us to just read right over

this statement without understanding its full meaning. When David says he makes me lie down in green pastures we can blow right through it and not understand the full extent of those words.

In his book titled, A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23, Philip Keller—the author—makes the following points. I'll read these points to you.

*It's almost impossible for sheep to lie down or stay down and be at peace until four requirements are met.*

In my limited experience of herding sheep, my observation agrees with everything that he says. Let me just read to you these four points. We are going to go through them in detail. His first point says this:

First point he makes

*Because of their timidity, sheep cannot lie down until they are free from fear.*

Second point he makes:

*Because of their social nature, sheep cannot lie down until they are free from friction with the other sheep.*

They won't lie down and be at peace if there is some contention between them and other sheep.

The third point he makes:

*Sheep cannot lie down in peace if they are tormented by flies or ticks or other pests.*

They can't lie down comfortably and bed down at night if they are being eaten alive by pests.

The fourth point he makes:

*Sheep cannot lie down in peace if they are hungry.*

If they are hungry, they need to search for food and they won't rest. They will continue to forage for food if they're hungry. They won't lie down and be at peace.

So, the point is, sheep can only be at peace when these four conditions are met. What we're going to do is relate these four conditions to the church today, since we are our Father's sheep, we're going to take these four points and analyze them from the viewpoint of looking at the church. And also looking at sheep and see what comparisons

we can draw between what our Father is trying to tell us and what we know about sheep.

Since we are our Father's sheep, we're going to begin by asking the question, which is the title of the sermon today:

### How Can We Lie Down in Green Pastures?

As God's people, wouldn't it be wonderful to lie down in green pastures with no fear, no worry, no oppression, no opposition and be at peace? How can we lie down in green pastures?

Let's take the first of Philip Keller's points.

#### **1. Like sheep, God's people cannot lie down in green pastures and be at peace if they are afraid.**

It is a fact that if you have a herd of sheep, even if they are bedded down at night, if a jack rabbit startles them, they will bolt. Even a jack rabbit, not to mention a cougar or some other predator. If they sense a predator, they will stampede if they are afraid. If one sheep starts running in fear, the entire flock can be stampeded because fear permeates the entire flock. Looking at the church today, looking at us as individuals, as our Father's sheep, who and what can cause us to be afraid? To be fearful, as part of God's flock? We won't turn there, we know it by heart, 1 Peter 5:8, tells us that:

*Our adversary the Devil, as a roaring lion, walks about seeking whom he may devour.*

If you can picture a herd of sheep in a quiet pasture but there is a lion circling on the outside, you can guarantee those sheep are not going to be sleeping that night, they are not going to be at rest because they are going to be afraid. Scripture tells us that Satan is as the lion and we just read that we are our Father's sheep. The reality is, Satan is always there ready to attack—always there to broadcast fear and anxiety and worry and distress, to broadcast feelings of being unsettled and ill at ease.

Let's look at Satan's mission. We've covered this recently but let's look at Satan's mission from the analogy of our being the sheep and Satan being the roaring lion that wants to eat the sheep alive. Go to John 10:1; this is another analogy of sheep. Christ is speaking and He is using this analogy, referring to Himself as the Good Shepherd and all of us as His sheep. We were there earlier for one verse.

**John 10:1** *Verily, verily, I say unto you, He that entereth not by the door into the sheepfold [this is a pen that holds the sheep, generally rectangular in nature, made of rock and high enough so the sheep can't jump over], but climbeth up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber.*

*2) But he that entereth in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep.*

3) *To him the porter openeth; and the sheep hear his voice: and he calleth his own sheep by name, and leadeth them out. (KJV)*

We get a graphic picture of Jesus Christ, leading His flock, the church of God, because He is the head of the Church of God.

4) *And when he putteth forth his own sheep, he goeth before them [He lived a perfect example, led a sinless life and is the forerunner of our salvation], and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice.*

5) *And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers.*

6) *This parable spake Jesus unto them [If you read the context of the chapters before, He is talking to the Pharisees] but they understood not what things they were which he spake unto them.*

7) *Then said Jesus unto them [the Pharisees] again, Verily, verily, I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep.*

8) *All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers [who might He be referring to?]: but the sheep did not hear them.*

9) *I am the door: by me if any man enters in [meaning through Jesus Christ], he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (KJV)*

Remember what David said: Help me to lie down, you provide pastures of green, lush grass. He shall find pasture; he will be taken care of.

10) *The thief [He's referring to the ultimate thief, Satan] cometh not [we've talked about this before], but for to steal, and to kill, and to destroy [that is Satan's nature]:[notice the contrast] I am come that they might have life, and that they might have it more abundantly. (KJV)*

Look at the contrast; killing, stealing, destroying on one hand and abundant life on the other hand.

11) *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep.*

12) *But he that is a hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, seeth the wolf coming, and leaveth the sheep, and fleeth: and the wolf catcheth them, and scattereth the sheep. (KJV)*

We've seen that happen with our own eyes.

13) *The hireling fleeth, because he is a hireling, and careth not for the sheep. (KJV)*

Everything we have read to this point, tells us clearly that the Father cares for His sheep, His Son cares for His sheep. But Satan's mission is to kill, to steal, to destroy, the sheep of God Almighty. So, we have to ask ourselves in this first point, what is the solution to fear?

A key comes from noting what reassures the sheep and what quiets the sheep. The most reassuring presence for the sheep in a situation where they are not quiet, they won't settle down, is the presence of the shepherd out in the field with them. If the shepherd walks around them and is with them out in the field and talks to them, softly and quietly, the sheep will settle down. Herdsman often sing to the sheep at night to settle them and the same with cattle. My dad grew up on that ranch and herded cattle all his young life and those old cowboys, at night—whoever had the night watch—would sing to the cattle or whistle softly and the cattle would settle down. Sheep are the same thing. In fact, I've got a recording of old cowboy songs that were sung to settle sheep down and to settle cattle down. The songs were used for the purpose of settling the sheep because the herdsman was there, the shepherd was there in their presence.

So, the same applies to us. We are our Father's sheep so what quiets us and reassures us most when we are unsettled? Or when we are upset? Or when we are ill at ease? It's the presence of the Father and the presence of the Son. Our Shepherds are with us, near us and most of all, inside us. Go to John 14:23 just as a reminder. We'll read this one verse. Christ said this on the night He was betrayed. Christ was reassuring all of us down through the millennia.

**John 14:23** *Jesus answered and said unto him, If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we [both the Father and the Son] will come unto him, and make our abode with him. (KJV)*

Inside of us through repentance, baptism, laying on of hands. As with the sheep, the thing that would settle us most is being near the Father and His Son and that happens by them residing inside us. Notice Psalm 4:8; David says this very thing. He had a lot to be worried about and unsettled about, much of which he brought on himself, as we know. The fact is, he had a lot of opposition, but look at what he says because he is one of the sheep of his Father.

**Psalm 4:8** *I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: [Why?] for thou, LORD, only makest me dwell in safety. (KJV)*

Are we learning that today? We can't rely on the government for safety and peace, we can't rely on our city government, on the police, on the military, we can't rely on any of the world's creations for peace and safety. We are learning that; we are learning daily that the only way we can have a place of safety is through our Father and His Son, by our Father and His Son. We see that same concept in the New Testament in 2 Timothy 1:6. This is talking about the sheep being free from fear. Being able to rest quietly in a lush pasture of grass.

**2 Timothy 1:6** *Wherefore I put thee in remembrance that thou stir up the gift of God, which is in thee by the putting on of my hands. (KJV)*

Obviously referring to the Holy Spirit in Timothy.



*7) For God hath not given us the spirit of fear; but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)*

That sound mind, Philippians 2:5 says, is the mind of Jesus Christ. We are told here that when we feel fear, it doesn't come from the Father or Jesus Christ, it comes from the adversary or it comes from our human nature. Christ said in John 14 that the Spirit we have residing in us, is not a spirit of fear but is of power and love and a sound mind. It is a spirit of peace.

So, in ending this first point, we see that it is our individual responsibility to make our lives and frankly the life of the church itself, a place where there is no fear. Where peace is the rule and that occurs by not having Satan in our midst. Either individually or collectively, as a Church of God, not having Satan in our midst. It's only then that we can peacefully lie down as God's people in green pastures.

Let's go to the second point about sheep.

## **2. Like sheep, God's people cannot lie down in green pastures and be at peace if there is constant friction with others in the flock.**

We can't lie down—God's people can't lie down—in these green pastures and be at peace, if there is constant friction with others in the flock. If you know anything about chickens, you've heard the phrase or words, "pecking order". Chickens have pecking orders and the boss chicken doesn't get pecked, it does the pecking. Then that just goes down to the lowest member of the group of chickens. There is a "pecking order". But with sheep it's different. Sheep have a "butting order". What sheep will do is to stake out their territory—like an old ewe which wants to have some space—if somebody encroaches on their space, they will lower the head and butt a little bit or they will take their shoulder and push. They won't get into a bloody fight; they will just push or butt a little bit to move other sheep out of the way or stop others from coming into their territory.

When you look at the Church of God over the years, don't we do the same thing? I can remember going back years ago, hearing some woman saying "This is my kitchen." She was the kitchen boss. Or one of the deacons or want-to-be deacons, "This is my thermostat, don't you dare touch that." A little butting going on saying "This is my territory, don't encroach on my territory." In light of the Kingdom of God and in the light of what is at stake in our lives, isn't this attitude kind of ridiculous in the grand scheme of things. For people to start butting heads over thermostats, or who is in charge of cleaning out the bathroom or something like that? Isn't it a little ridiculous? Let's go back to Ezekiel 34; we were there earlier but part of Ezekiel 34 is famous about talking about the elders, the leaders and the shepherds. But it also talks about the sheep. We're going to look at that part that talks about the sheep. Begin in verse 15 out of the New King James. Jehovah is speaking a warning to the sheep—not the shepherds this time, but the sheep.

**Ezekiel 34:15** *I will feed My flock [that is Yehovah, His flock], and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord GOD. (NKJV)*

There is no question who is talking here.

*16) I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong [He’s talking about sheep], and feed them in judgment.” (NKJV)*

Now let’s go to verse 20.

*20) Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep. (NKJV)*

He says I’m going to judge between brethren and brethren.

*21) Because you [He’s talking about certain sheep] have pushed with side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad ... (NKJV)*

This is between sheep and sheep; butting, pushing, shoving.

*22) therefore, I will save My flock [the ones that look to the Father], and they shall no longer be a prey [for those who look to Satan or are provoked by Satan or influenced by Satan]; and I will judge between sheep and sheep. (NKJV)*

Between brethren and brethren. We might also say between sheep and goats to draw an analogy. We see that there are some sheep who push and shove and hurt other sheep. Yehovah says He is going to judge that. He’s going to judge how one sheep treats another sheep. How one of us treats another one of us. With that in mind let’s go to Isaiah 57:20, talking about those who look to the Father and will be at peace and those who do not. There will be no peace for them. This is out of the New Living Translation. Yehovah is speaking and notice what He says. This is an interesting translation.

**Isaiah 57:20** *But those who still reject me [Yehovah] are like the restless sea, which is never still but continually churns up mire and dirt. (NLT)*

Mire and dirt are not clear, you can’t see through them. Everything gets fuzzy and foggy and not clear.

*21) There is no peace for the wicked,” says my God. (NLT)*

No peace for the wicked; and who are the wicked? Those who reject God Almighty, Yehovah, the Father. There’s always going to be, within God’s church, those who

aggressively strive for power and authority. We've seen that among the brethren, the ministry; their goal, their purpose is power and authority. In doing so, we are told that they have no peace. The problem is, if there is somebody who is striving for power and authority, in other words "butting with the head, moving with the shoulder", trying to exert themselves, they can take away peace from all the rest of us. They can remove peace. That's why Yehovah says—we won't turn there; you know the scripture—

**Proverbs 22:10** "Cast out the scorner and contention will cease".

And reproach will cease when the scorner—the one who strives for power, the one who is looking to the self leaves—then peace breaks out among the sheep.

What is the solution to friction or aggression within the flock? The fact is, the less aggressive sheep are the more contented. Think about that. The ones who don't push and don't shove and don't strive are the most contented. The same is true for the brethren—for all of us. Look at Colossians 3:15. Peace takes work and it's something we have to strive for and something we have to work for. Paul is saying to us and to the church all these centuries later:

**Colossians 3:15** *And let the peace of God rule in your hearts, to the which [meaning peace] also ye are called in one body; and be ye thankful.* (KJV)

He says let peace rule; the Greek word for *rule* is Strong's #1018 and it means "to govern". What he's saying is *let peace govern your heart*. Let peace control and rule your heart so that we're not seeking division, we're not seeing controversy or upset between people, we are seeking peace—that is the goal. We are called in one body and we are called to peace. But peace takes work. We know this by heart, we've covered it in a recent sermon, we won't turn there but Matthew 5:9. What does it say?

*Blessed are the peacemakers for they are going to be called the children of God.*

Or we could easily say the sheep of God, the flock of God. *Blessed are the peacemakers.*

I can remember my dad often said, "we need to cut each other some slack". In his experience, cutting slack would be, if you were on a horse and you roped a cow, you pulled it tight and you made that cow do what you wanted. But cutting a slack is letting the horse walk toward the cow a little so the rope drops a bit and you're not jerking on the cow or pulling on the cow. Basically, what he was saying was we need to ease up on one another and not jerk that rope so tightly all the time. We in the church, sometimes don't cut each other too much slack do we? It's easy to be judgmental, it's easy to be condemning, as is the attitude in the past with all of us. It's the attitude too often in the church today. It's just the opposite of mercy, understanding, forgiveness; cutting our neighbor some slack.

It's very interesting that, if you have ever observed sheep, if there is butting and pushing among the sheep, when the shepherd walks up to the flock, the butting stops immediately, the pushing stops immediately because all of a sudden the shepherd is there and the sheep won't do that in the presence of the shepherd. That tells us something—Christ is truly in our lives and the Father is living inside us. Selfishness, aggression, competition, will cease, if the Father and Son reside in us. Closing out this second point, it's our responsibility to make the church a sanctuary of peace. Only then can we lie down peacefully in green pastures.

### **3. Like sheep, God's people can't lie down in green pastures and be at peace if we allow ourselves to be tormented by the adversary.**

In the summer time particularly, sheep can be tormented by flies and ticks. They really like to get in the ears of the sheep. You can imagine what it would be like to have a tick burrowing in your ear. They will stamp their feet, shake their heads, they will rush into the sagebrush to have the sagebrush scrub off these pests that bother them.

We have a pest, don't we? We could say the ultimate pest and that is Satan. What Satan does, is not just burrow into our flesh, he broadcasts into our minds. He broadcasts suspicion or false assumptions or doubts or fears or worries, in order to steal and kill and destroy. In that regard, Satan could be regarded as the ultimate pest; our ultimate pest. Notice Ephesians 2:2 where Paul is talking about a time before we were converted which is true for all of us.

**Ephesians 2:2** *Wherein in time past ye walked according to the course of this world [and we all have], according to the prince of the power of the air, [now he tells us what that is] the spirit that now worketh in the children of disobedience:* (KJV)

We see that in the world today, don't we? The spirit of disobedience, the spirit of Satan is everywhere—absolutely everywhere. As the prince of the power of the air, Satan broadcasts and provokes, if we allow it, the very children of God. It has happened in the past, it is happening right now, in the world and within the very church of God. This biting and devouring one another is indeed ongoing. It results in no peace, no rest for the sheep of the Father and of the Son.

So, what is the solution for us to rid ourselves of this ultimate pest; the evil one, our adversary. Our job is to put Satan out of our lives isn't it?. We won't turn there, you know it by heart, Matthew 6:13 out of the NIV.

**Matthew 6:13** *And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from the evil one.* (NIV)

That is something we should do every day. I have to admit there are days I forget to do that and shame on me because Satan doesn't take a day off. Satan doesn't say,

“He didn’t pray about that today so I’m going to leave him alone.”

It doesn’t work that way, as we know. We have to be praying every day for the Father to shield us from the evil one. What we have to do is actually behave the opposite way to how the adversary behaves. If we do a 180 from the record of Satan, we will be in the ballpark of what our Father and Jesus Christ want us to do. Look at Galatians 5:13; we have to act in an opposite manner to Satan the devil, the evil one, our adversary.

**Galatians 5:13** *For, brethren, ye have been called unto liberty; only use not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (KJV)*

Get the mind off the self and look out for your brothers and sisters.

*14) For all the law is fulfilled in one word, even in this; Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.*

*15) But if ye bite and devour one another, take heed that ye be not consumed one of another.*

*16) This I say then, [what is the anecdote of biting and devouring?] Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (KJV)*

Lusts of the flesh, provoked by Satan is one path, walking in the spirit of God Almighty and His Son is the other path and that is love for one another. It’s our responsibility to keep Satan from influencing us. Shame on us and shame on me because there have been times in my life when I allowed Satan to provoke me into doing things, saying things, thinking things, that were not right. I wish I hadn’t done it.

Let’s look at how our Shepherds—the Father and the Son—want us to treat one another. Let’s go to Isaiah 58:9, out of the NIV. Apply this to today and apply it to us as the sheep of God Almighty.

**Isaiah 58:9** *Then you will call, and the LORD will answer; you will cry for help, and he will say: Here am I. [notice the big word, “if”] If you do away with the yoke of oppression, with the pointing finger [that means accusing, berating others] and malicious talk,*

*10) and if you spend yourselves on behalf of the hungry and satisfy the needs of the oppressed, [if you do those two big “ifs”] then your light will rise in the darkness, and your night will become like the noonday.*

*11) The LORD will guide you always [if we meet those two “ifs”]; he will satisfy your needs in a sun-scorched land and will strengthen your frame. You will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail. (NIV)*

Another analogy of the land that we are so far removed from. This is how our Father and His Son want us to treat one another. With that in mind, go to 2 Corinthians 1:3. Paul is working with this very dysfunctional church where they allowed sin; he called them out, the man repented after being disfellowshipped for a period of time.

**2 Corinthians 1:3** *Blessed be God, even the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ [no question who is being referred to], the Father of mercies, and the God of all comfort; (KJV)*

Who is the God of all comfort? God Almighty, Yehovah, the Father of Jesus Christ. Who does what?

*4) Who comforteth us in all our tribulation, that we may be able [we have an obligation now if we are comforted] to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (KJV)*

God rescues us, comforts us, when we are upset and in trouble and we're being told that we have an obligation to do the same thing for our brothers and sisters, our fellow sheep if you will. Now let's go to 1 Thessalonians 5:14 to a way of policing ourselves as the sheep of God. Paul is saying:

**1 Thessalonians 5:14** *Now we exhort you, brethren, warn them that are unruly [the margin in the King James says "disorderly, create chaos, trouble and confusion"], comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all men. (KJV)*

Helping and serving one another and in that way the church becomes self-policing in that regard. Let's go to 1 Corinthians 12:26, the last scripture under this third point. Talking about not allowing the ultimate pest to torment us.

**1 Corinthians 12:26** *And whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it; (KJV)*

Those on the update—there are so many suffering—we need to suffer with them and pray about them and think about them and encourage them.

*26 continued) ... or one member be honored, all the members rejoice with it.  
27) Now ye are the body of Christ [the sheep of Christ and His Father], and members in particular. (KJV)*

It is our responsibility to make the church a place where God's sheep are nourished, where they are free from hurt, from torment, from abuse and they are free from the influence from the evil one. He is not present in the life of the church. Only then can we peacefully lie down in green pastures.

**4. Like sheep, God's people can only lie down in green pastures and be at peace if they are being properly fed and the sheep are using the food they have been given and not just let it lie.**

It surprised me when I did a little research and found that a young lamb, shortly after being born, if born into a pasture with lush green grass, they can gain 100 pounds in

100 days. Think about that—talk about growth and growing. If the right food is there and they are being properly fed, 100 pounds in 100 days. But on the other hand, they will become sickly and become weak if the field is barren and they are not being properly fed. In this analogy, the church is the field where God's sheep are fed. The field should provide the lush grass to feed the sheep. Let's go to John 21; this is an account of the third time Christ revealed Himself after His crucifixion, death and resurrection.

**John 21:14** *This is now the third time that Jesus shewed himself to his disciples, after that he was risen from the dead.*

15) *So, when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. (KJV)*

Another analogy between the shepherd and the sheep.

16) *He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep.*

17) *He saith unto him the third time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me?*

[Understandably, if we were on the receiving end of that we would be grieved, as we're told he was grieved] *Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time [we would be too; we would have a knot in our stomach], Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep. (KJV)*

It's obvious that the purpose of the church and the purpose of the ministry is to properly feed the sheep of God. To feed those that God has given—called into the church, into the body of Jesus Christ. Too often in the past, the church has gotten off on this project or that project and this mission or that mission and completely forgotten John 21 as a prime motivator of what the church and the ministry should be doing.

Now all of us have to take that food that is given to us, which is the truth of God in God's Word and use it in our daily lives. That's our responsibility—to take what we know to be true and put it into practice; nobody can do it for us, we have to do it ourselves.

Remember we're told not to be the hearers of the law but to be doers of the law—Romans 2:13. With that in mind let's go to Romans 13:10; looking at the state of the world today and also understanding that we are the sheep of the Chief Shepherd and the Good Shepherd, this scriptures applies today more so than ever.

**Romans 13:10** *Love worketh no ill to his neighbour: therefore, love is the fulfilling of the law. (KJV)*

Verse 11 and the rest I'll read out of the New Living Translation.

11) *This is all the more urgent, for you know how late it is; time is running out. (NLT)*

Paul is telling the church at Rome; he thought Christ would come soon, in his life at that point. He later understood that wasn't the case. If time was running out back then, what is it doing now?

*11 continued) ... Wake up, for our salvation is nearer now than when we first believed. (NLT)*

Many of us were called in the '60's, '70's and '80's and it's nearer now than when we were first called.

*12) The night [referring to the darkness of this world] is almost gone; the day of salvation will soon be here. So, remove your dark deeds like dirty clothes, and put on the shining armor of right living. (NLT)*

What an admonition for us today; live in light, not in darkness. Time is running out. It's closer than we think. Let's go to Ephesians 4:29; this is what we have to do on a daily basis—applying the Word of God in our personal lives. We can have all the knowledge in the world. We can know Hebrew and Greek. We can be technically correct on this point or that point, but if we don't apply the basics of what we know to be true in our lives—shame on us.

**Ephesians 4:29** *Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers.*

*30) And grieve [the Greek word means to distress] not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. (KJV)*

Now he gives specifics.

*31) Let all bitterness, and wrath ... (KJV)*

The Greek word for *wrath* means “anger boiling up”. If we look back in our lives, there are times when we've allowed anger to boil up and we have been in the presence of people who have let anger boil up in their lives.

*31 continued) ... and anger ... (KJV)*

This word *anger* in the Greek means as a “temperament”. Some people are just angry all the time—that's their temperament, their personality; we can't do that.

*31 continued) ... and clamor, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: (KJV)*

Malice is the motive behind all of that.



*32) And be ye kind one to another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. (KJV)*

Those are our marching orders; if we don't do that, nothing else matters. It's our responsibility to make the church of God a lush, peaceful field where our father's precepts and truth are taught and is applied in our daily lives. And is applied in the life of the church—not just talk about it, but do it. If we do that, then we can be at peace as a church and lie down in green pastures, when we meet together.

Let's conclude now. We've seen the following:

Like sheep, God's people can lie down in green pastures and be at peace if they are not afraid, having no fear.

Like sheep, God's people can lie down in green pastures and be at peace if there is no friction with others in the body.

Like sheep, God's people can lie down and be in green pastures and be at peace when we are not tormented by the adversary—by the ultimate pest.

Finally, like sheep, God's people can lie down in green pastures and be at peace if they are being properly fed and are using the food that has been given.

Remember John 10:11—final scripture—let's not forget this scripture. We read earlier, in the introduction that our Father is the Chief Shepherd.

**John 10:11** *I am the good shepherd: the good shepherd giveth his life for the sheep. (KJV)*

That is a fact and that is that something that has already been accomplished.

*14) I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine. (KJV)*

Now verse 16, which applies to us today.

*16) And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, and one shepherd. (KJV)*

This is the prime reason why the Pacific Church of God has the name that it does. It's one of the prime goals of the Pacific Church of God, to provide a peaceful environment for the Father's children, where we can all be fed and where we can all be at peace. So let's do our part to make the church a place where God's people can be at rest in green pastures of tender grass and live in peace.