

# Lie Down in Green Pastures

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About a hundred years ago my granddad, Cole Railston, was the foreman at one of the largest ranches in New Mexico. And it was in the Black Range in New Mexico, south of Magdalena and it was, even by today's standards, a very large range. It was seventy-five miles in one direction and thirty-five miles in another direction through the Black Range of New Mexico.

And after he retired as foreman of that ranch, he bought what he called his *small ranch* which was twenty-five sections. That means twenty-five square miles. To him that was small. That was west of Magdalena in the plains of St. Augustine.

And my brother and I when we were just grade-schoolers would go up to that ranch with my dad and visit. No running water, no electricity, so you'd sit around with the kerosene lamps and talk and that was the first time I'd ever smelled a cedar fire. Every time I smell a cedar fire now it brings back memories of those days. And he had an old crank-up *Victrola* and we'd play old cowboy songs on the *Victrola* and he would tell tales of the old west. But we would get out in the corral and dad would put me up on the horse and we'd go riding. Just a little squirt, but it was my first experience of being with the land and being with animals and being out on that ranch.

And then he died before I reached my teen years, but then as a teen we had a neighbor in El Paso who had a cattle ranch and a sheep ranch east of El Paso just north of Vanhorn, Texas about a hundred and twenty miles east. And for those of you who've ever been in West Texas, you know it's nothing but sage and jack rabbits and rattle snakes. And it takes a lot of land to put sheep and cattle on because it's not as fertile as the land we find here in the Northwest or in the Northeast or in the South.

And we would go out there in the spring for the round-up and occasionally in the summer to help on that ranch. And so they would get us up well before sunrise. We'd have breakfast and then we were in the saddle by the time the sun was up and we didn't get out of the saddle until about 1:30 or 2 p.m. for about an hour for lunch and then back in the saddle until sundown. And for young city kids, you were pretty sore after the first few hours of the first day in the saddle.

But I can remember Ol' Sparky the foreman, he would say, "There's a butte out there. See that one out there? It's about ten miles. I want you to ride straight to the base of that butte. Then made a U-turn and bring everything back this way." So we would herd sheep mainly at that time, and cattle too if we found them but bring them back to the central area where they would begin to round them up. And so this again was an experience with the land and with God's creation, with the creatures that He has made.

The fact is that it was a wonderful experience for us growing up, but the reality is also that most members of modern day society have never even had that limited experience. Most of them grow up in cities, think food comes from a grocery store somehow, and live their life in a big city. And they have never experienced the closeness to the land, the closeness to the sea or to the lake and the closeness to the animals that reside therein. They just have not had that experience.

But the Bible, we have to understand, was written in a time and by a people who were outdoors people. And they were in tune with creation because they were fishermen or they were farmers or they were herdsman and they did not, obviously, have the mechanized technological society that we have today. And so the reality is today, most of God's people are so removed from the water and the land and the sky that sometimes it's hard for God's people to relate some of the lessons in God's Word. Because these lessons were taught at a time when people were closer to the land and they knew exactly what Christ or the writers of the Old Testament or the apostles in the New Testament meant when they used analogies that related to the land, to being herdsman or fishermen.

Now Christ used such analogies in teaching us spiritual lessons. This is all by way of introduction. Let's go to John chapter 10. We'll come back here a little bit later, but we're going to read three verses. John chapter 10, we're going to read verse 11, 14 and 16. And Christ is telling us something that was very familiar to the people back then, but is not so familiar to us today. John 10 verse 11 Christ says:

**John 10:11.** I am the good shepherd: (KJV)

Now the people back then knew precisely what He was talking about, knew what precisely was involved in being shepherd. Today we do not.

He says:

**John 10:11b.** [and] the good shepherd [gives] his life for the sheep. (KJV)

Verse 14 He says it again:

**John 10:14.** I am the good shepherd, and know my *sheep*, and am known of mine. (KJV)

Verse 16:

**John 10:16.** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: (KJV)

Meaning that fold right then to His disciples and those that walked with Him, that was one fold, but there would come other folds down through the centuries. We're a fold today.

And He says:

**John 10:16.** And other sheep I have, which are not of this fold: them also [referring to us today] I must bring, and they shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. (KJV)

Now the people in Christ's day completely understood His references to being a shepherd. And, as we're going to find out, here in Psalm 100 and verse 3 about us being sheep. Psalm 100 and verse 3. David, obviously, was a shepherd. And I don't think it is any accident that the first true king, good king, of Israel God picked from being a shepherd and picked out of the field. Psalm 100 verse 3:

**Psalm 100:3.** Know [you] that the LORD he *is* God: *it is* he *that* [has] made us, and not we ourselves; (KJV)

But notice this last sentence:

**Psalm 100:3.** *we are* his people, and the sheep of his pasture. (KJV)

There are many such analogies in the Bible. Christ being the Good Shepherd and those whom God has called are likened unto His sheep. Now with all of this background in mind and understand we are not as close to the land being fishermen or herdsman or shepherds, we not as close to that as the people were at the time these words were written. So we need to stretch a little bit and to learn a little bit when we read these words. So with all of this in mind, let's go to Psalm 23—a very famous Psalm that David wrote. And we're going to read the first two verses focusing on verse 2. Psalm 23 verse 1, David says:

**Psalm 23:1.** The LORD *is* my shepherd; (KJV)

And when you look at the Hebrew, he is saying that in a way that gives the connotation that he is pleased and glad and thankful that God is his shepherd—Christ the God of the Old Testament is his shepherd—and not somebody else! He says: "The LORD *is* my shepherd" and he is very thankful for that.

**Psalm 23:1b.** I shall not want. (KJV)

Meaning LORD his shepherd is going to provide for his needs.

But notice verse 2!

**Psalm 23:2.** He [makes] me to lie down in green pastures: (KJV)

The Hebrew can mean "makes me to lie down in pastures of tender grass." And we've seen old dried out land with stubble. And then you've seen new spring grass as it just comes up and it is so soft and green and tender. That's what David is referring to: "This tender sweet grass I can lie down in a pasture of that."

Now we as God's people can just today, in our society, just read right over that without any understanding as to its full meaning.

Now if you want to read a good book that is descriptive of shepherds and sheep relative to Psalm 23, I would suggest you read the book [A Shepherd Looks at Psalm 23](#) by Phillip Keller. It's available, still in print. But he makes the following point in this book referencing verse 2:

It is almost impossible for sheep to lie down and to stay down until four requirements are met.

Unless these four requirements are met, they will not lie down quietly. They will not stay down. The four are as follows:

Number One: Because sheep are timid they cannot lie down until they're free from fear. If they sense that there's a predator at the edge of the field or hiding or stalking them, they will not lie down. They will be agitated. They will be up because they will be ready to run. That's point number one.

A second reason why sheep will not lie down in peace is because of their social nature. They will not lie down until they are free from friction with other sheep. If there is something going on between two sheep, they can't lie down and be at peace. They're agitated.

A third reason that sheep will not lie down and be at peace if they are tormented by flies or ticks or other pests. They can't be at peace because they're just being eaten up by all of these pests. So they will not lie down and be quiet if they are bothered by pests.

And the fourth and last reason is that sheep cannot lie down at peace if they're hungry. If they're bellies aren't full, they're going to be up foraging for food, trying to find food. And therefore, they cannot lie down and be at peace. They will if they have a full tummy just like we do. We want to lie down on a full belly and be at peace and kind of relax. Sheep are exactly the same way.

So sheep can be at peace only if these four conditions are met. So what we want to do in the sermon today is relate these four conditions, physical conditions, to the spiritual conditions in the Church today. And the title of the sermon, if you want to write it down, is *How Can We in the Church Today Lie Down in Green Pastures?* How can we be at peace and how can these four conditions be satisfied for us? Because we're going to find out that these four physical conditions apply to us spiritually today. So what we want to do is take a look at these four points, apply them to the Church today, and learn how we, as God's people, can lie down in green pastures and be at peace.

First Point—we're going to cover the four:

God's people cannot be at peace if they are afraid.

You know that. If you have fear, if you have a knot in your stomach, if you're in turmoil about something, you cannot rest and be at peace.

Now sheep will blindly bolt. And I found this out on our first round-up. Sheep will blindly bolt if they stumble across a jack rabbit. And if a jack rabbit jumps up in the air and takes off, it'll startle the sheep and they'll take off running.

And I can remember as a young kid trotting on the horse, rounding up the sheep, pushing him in a certain direction. And all of a sudden, the horse reared up on its hind legs. And I looked down and there was a skunk on its forelegs with its rear end up in the air and you knew what was going to happen! And I didn't wait because you know what's going to happen next. And so I heeled the horse, put my heels into him. They wouldn't let us wear spurs, of course. And we bolted off before the smell caught up with us, but the sheep were way ahead of us. I mean they were gone!

And so my point is that sheep will blindly bolt if they're startled by a predator or even something as small as a jack rabbit, much less a cougar or a wolf trying to divide and conquer the sheep. If one sheep starts running in fear, guess what happens? The entire flock can be stampeded, if they sense that another one's in fear and off they go.

Now relating to the Church today, what can cause us to be afraid? Who can cause us to be afraid? Let's go to 1 Peter 5 and verse 8, the very familiar Scripture where the apostle Peter is trying to teach us about Satan the devil. 1 Peter 5 and verse 8 we are told:

**1 Peter 5:8.** Be sober, be vigilant; [Why?] because your adversary [That means your enemy.] the devil, as a roaring lion [like a roaring lion], [walks] about, seeking whom he may devour [eat up]: (KJV)

Now if there is a lion at the edge of the field—or a wolf or a coyote in West Texas—the sheep cannot be at rest. They just can't. And Scripture tells us that Satan is like a lion and we are sheep. So we know that Satan is always there ready to attack and he is always broadcasting fear and anxiety into the minds of God's people. That happens. And sometimes it's happened to me. I know it's happened to many that I've counseled with. All of sudden people are fine and then within a few seconds this fear comes over them. They get a knot in their stomach. Their breathing goes up a little bit and it's just a feeling of apprehension or anxiety or fear. And it just comes over them at some point. And Satan, we know, is responsible for that. Because we have to understand Satan's mission, what Satan is trying to accomplish.

Christ told us that and He used the analogy of sheep. Let's go back to John chapter 10 now. We were there for three Scriptures earlier, but let's get the context. This is the Parable of the Sheepfold. It tells us a lot about Satan. It tells us a lot about His efforts to derail us and to cause us to be afraid. John 10 verse 1:

**John 10:1.** Truly, I say unto you, He that [enters] not by the door into the sheepfold, but [climbs] up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (KJV)

Previous sermons we've talked about this. The sheepfolds then were rectangular. Instead of barbed wire fences as we use today, they were made of stone. And they were made in such a way that animals would have a difficult time crawling in. Predators or sheep would have difficult time crawling out. And there was a gate at one end of this rectangle.

But He says:

**John 10:1b.** He that [enters] not by the door [or the gate] into the sheepfold, but [climbs] up some other way, the same is a thief and a robber. (KJV)

And we're going to see that His obvious reference is to Satan.

Verse 2:

**John 10:2.** But he that [enters] in by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. 3) To him the porter [or the gatekeeper] [opens]; and the sheep hear his voice: (KJV)

The sheep recognize the shepherd's voice because in those days they would sometimes have a common sheepfold where several herdsmen or shepherds would bring their sheep in and they would be intermingled. But then the shepherd would call for his sheep, whatever call he used. It could be words. It could be a whistle. It could be a shout of some kind. And the sheep—his sheep—would recognize the voice and then follow him out. The other sheep would just stay put.

**John 10:3.** To him the porter [opens]; and the sheep hear his voice: and he [calls] his own sheep by name, and [he leads] them out. (KJV)

Referring to Jesus Christ, obviously.

Verse 4:

**John 10:4.** And when he [puts] forth his own sheep, he [goes] before them, (KJV)

Meaning: he's out there leading them and protecting them and guiding them.

**John 10:4b.** and the sheep follow him: for they know his voice. (KJV)

They don't recognize another voice.

Verse 5:

**John 10:5.** And a stranger (KJV)

Someone that might want to harm them or hurt them

**John 10:5.** And a stranger will they not follow, but will flee from him: for they know not the voice of strangers. (KJV)

There's huge spiritual analogies to every sentence that Christ is saying here!

Verse 6:

**John 10:6.** This parable [spoke] Jesus unto them: but they [didn't understand] what things they were which he [spoke] unto them. (KJV)

They understood the relationship between shepherds and sheep and the sheepfold. But they didn't really understand what He was trying to get at.

Verse 7:

**John 10:7.** Then said Jesus unto them (KJV)

By way of explanation, He says:

**John 10:7b.** [Truly, Assuredly], I say unto you, I am the door of the sheep. 8) All that ever came before me are thieves and robbers: but the sheep did not hear them. 9) I am the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved, and shall go in and out, and find pasture. (KJV)

Tender green grass—find pasture. But notice verse 10:

**John 10:10.** [But] The thief (KJV)

He's referring to Satan here.

**John 10:10b.** [comes] not, but (KJV)

To do three things:

**John 10:10 continued:** to steal, (KJV)

Meaning: to take God's people away from the true Church.

**John 10:10 continued:** and to kill, (KJV)

Meaning: to physically kill them if he can.

**John 10:10 continued:** and to destroy: (KJV)

Meaning: to destroy God's spirit in them and the spirit in man forever.

Then He draws an analogy. This thief comes to steal and kill and to destroy, but He says:

**John 10:10 continued:** I am come that they might have life, (KJV)

Whereas the thief comes that they might have death—eternal death!

**John 10:10 continued:** I am come that they might have life, and they might have *it* more abundantly. (KJV)

A good life lying in green pastures of tender grass!

Verse 11:

**John 10:11.** I am the good shepherd: (KJV)

We read that earlier.

**John 10:11b.** the good shepherd [gives] his life for the sheep. 12) But he that is an hireling, and not the shepherd, whose own the sheep are not, (KJV)

He doesn't own them. He says:

**John 10:12b.** [sees] the wolf coming, and [he leaves] the sheep, and [he flees]: and the wolf [catches] them, and [scatters] the sheep. (KJV)

Referring obviously to Satan in this analogy.

**John 10:13.** The hireling [flees], because he is an hireling, and [cares] not for the sheep. (KJV)

So we see here that as long as the sheep are afraid they cannot lie down in green pastures. But if they are free from fear, they can.

Now let's understand—bringing this analogy toward God's people—who are the sheep? Who does he steal or kill or try to destroy? Let's go again to a very familiar Scripture, Revelation 12 and verse 10, breaking into the context of Satan being cast down. Sometimes I think—I've had several people comment—and sometimes if I get in a darkened mood I think the same thing that Satan's been cast down because of all the trials and turmoils God's people have, but when you look at it with a steady mind, it hasn't happened yet. But sometimes it's easy to feel that way. Revelation 12 and verse 10:

**Revelation 12:10.** And I heard a loud voice saying in heaven, Now is come salvation, and strength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ: for the accuser of our brethren is cast down, which accused them before our God day and night. (KJV)

So this tells us before Satan was cast down, he was at God's throne accusing His people day and night, just like he did with Job. But he accuses us by name to God trying to discredit us in front of God Almighty. And so let's understand where accusations are, where constant accusations are Satan is also there



because that is one of his methods of operation—continued accusations. We have to understand when that occurs, Satan's in that mix somewhere.

But our job, as God's people, is to put Satan out of our lives, to put Satan out of the sheepfold, to put Satan out of the Church. Notice Matthew 6 and verse 13, I'll just read it out of the NIV. You know it. It's the model prayer, the outline of a prayer. But in Matthew 6:13 we are told:

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

And we're to pray that every day! And shame on us if we don't because Satan is our accuser. He is our enemy. He wants to kill and steal and destroy. And so we need to pray everyday that we are delivered from this evil one because he has power we do not have. And the only way that we could be delivered is to be filled with God's spirit. Therefore, we have to do our part. And our part is praying for God's spirit to overpower the ability of Satan.

What quiets and assures the sheep and reassures them most of all is the presence of the shepherd out in the field with them. If the shepherd is out there walking amongst the sheep or walking as they huddle in for the night and rest and if he's walking around the outside of the congregation of the sheep and they know that, then they are at peace.

Herdsmen would often sing or whistle to the sheep just as cowboys did the same for the cattle. And especially if the wind was blowing with cattle, that would disturb them. And several of the old cowhands would sing the old songs. They would just ride on their horse very slowly around the herd and they would start singing or they would start whistling. And the sheep or the cattle would begin to relax. Then they would lie down and they would be at peace. I've got a recording of those old cowboy songs that they used to sing. It brings back fond memories, but they would do that to let them know that the shepherd or the cowboys in the case of cattle were there and were protecting them and watching over them. And then the sheep would rest and be at peace.

As with the sheep, what quiets and reassures us, as God's sheep, is the presence of Christ—the presence of Christ in us, the presence of Christ within the body of Christ. Notice what David said in Psalm 4 and verse 8. David understood this quite well, being a shepherd. And he understood that the Good Shepherd would give him peace if he was close to the Good Shepherd. Psalm 4 verse 8, he says:

**Psalm 4:8.** I will both lay me down in peace, and sleep: (KJV)

He says, "I can lie down and I can go to sleep." Why is that? How is that made possible? The last part of the verse:

**Psalm 4:8b.** for [you], LORD, only [make] me dwell in safety. (KJV)

He knew God and Christ were the only ones that would help him be at peace even during troubled times—and David had many of those. Let's understand that he relied on the presence of God and Jesus Christ to give him peace and to allow him as a sheep to lie down in tender fields of grass.

Now let's look at this in the New Testament in 2 Timothy 1 and verse 7 because Paul is telling this young minister—and my guess is this young minister had his own fears, his own doubts. He was a young man. He was trying to shepherd or pastor people old enough to be his grandparents and there were challenges in that. He probably made some mistakes in his early ministry. And Paul is consoling him and he says in 2 Timothy 1 verse 7:

**2 Timothy 1:7.** For God [has] not given us the spirit of fear; (KJV)

No He hasn't. And if we have a spirit of fear, it does not come from God and Jesus Christ. It comes from somewhere else.

He says:

**2 Timothy 1:7b.** but [God has given us a spirit] of power [That comes through God's spirit.], and of love, and of a sound mind. (KJV)

Now we know that sound mind, we read in Philippians 2 and verse 5—we won't turn there—is the mind of Jesus Christ. "Let this mind be in you," which is the mind of Christ. That is the sound mind.

So concluding this First Point:

It is our responsibility to make our lives and the lives of our Church, God's Church, a place where Satan is not present and where we are with Christ continually.

Christ is in amongst the sheep. Christ is giving us peace and freedom from fear if we're close to Christ and we allow Christ to come into the Church. Shame on us if we're not close to Christ or we allow the Adversary to come into the Church! But we will be at peace as long as the Shepherd is amongst us. And we will be able to lie and rest in peace in green pastures.

Now to the Second Point, the second reason sheep can't lie down in peace is—we understand that if there's friction between the sheep, they can't lie down in peace. So the Second Point is:

God's people can't be at peace if there's constant friction among others in the flock, if there's constant turmoil and upset and personal issues between people.

Now we talk about the *pecking order* with chickens. The Roecks' have chickens. They fully understand that. With sheep it's a *butting order*. Sheep don't peck but they butt. And an old ewe can stake out her territory. Somebody comes and she

doesn't like that, she'll come up and start butting and shoving and pushing—make sure that they know who's boss.

Now we have a *butting order* in the Church—have had it in years past. We've had the *butting order* that says "This is my kitchen and I'm running this kitchen. Stay out of here!" We've had that. We've seen that. "This is my thermostat and you'd better not touch it! And I'll butt you out of the way if you attempt to touch it!" Or we've had, "These are my people. Don't mess with my people!" rather than saying, "These are God's people. And so there's a *butting order* there and we've all seen that in the Church.

Let's go to Ezekiel chapter 34. We read Ezekiel 34 knowing it's a condemnation of ministers who don't do their job properly, but if you read Ezekiel 34, you also know that it talks about relationships between the Brethren—in other words, the relationship between the sheep of the flock not just between the shepherd and the sheep. And let's learn some lessons from Ezekiel 34 because we know it's a prophecy for today. I'm going to read this out of the New King James. We're going to read verses 15 and 16 and then 20 through 22. Verse 15 of Ezekiel 34:

**Ezekiel 34:15.** "I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down," says the Lord GOD. (NKJ)

Being the Good Shepherd. "I will be among them. I will protect them. They can lie down in peace."

Verse 16:

**Ezekiel 34:16.** "I will seek what was lost [those that were driven away] and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken [the wounded] and strengthen what was sick; (NKJ)

He's going to do that and only He can do that ultimately.

**Ezekiel 34:16b.** but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment." (NKJ)

Now He's talking about sheep that are fat and strong—the ones that can butt a little harder, the ones that can shove with more force.

Verse 20:

**Ezekiel 34:20.** 'Therefore thus says the Lord GOD to them: "Behold, I Myself will judge between the fat and the lean sheep. (NKJ)

He's saying, "I'm going to judge between Brethren and Brethren." Some of the Brethren are fat in this analogy; some are lean. "And I'm going to judge between the Brethren."

Verse 21:

**Ezekiel 34:21.** "Because you have pushed with side and shoulder, (NKJ)

This *butting order* that sheep have.

**Ezekiel 34:21b.** ["You've] pushed with the side and shoulder, butted all the weak ones with your horns, and scattered them abroad, (NKJ)

This tells us that some Brethren have been anything but loving toward other Brethren and pushed and shoved them out of the Church, or out of an individual congregation, because they were staking out their territory and "You'd better not mess with my territory. So I'm just going to make sure. I'm going to run you off, or I'm going to make sure life is so difficult that you'll leave." This has happened.

Verse 22:

**Ezekiel 34:22.** "Therefore I will save My flock, (NKJ)

They're Christ's flock—there not a man's flock! They're Christ's flock!

**Ezekiel 34:22b.** I will save My flock, and they shall no longer be a prey; (NKJ)

And notice, He says it again:

**Ezekiel 34:22 continued.** and I will judge between sheep and sheep. (NKJ)

Between brother and sister and brother and sister!

So He is saying, "Boy, you cause friction, you start butting and trying to exalt the self or lord it over other people, you're going to be judged. I'm going to take care of you," Christ said.

Let's go to Isaiah 57 and see that those who do the butting have a problem. Isaiah 57 and we'll read verses 20 and 21. There are some who just can't exist without butting and shoving and creating problems. Isaiah 57 verse 20:

**Isaiah 57:20.** But the wicked *are* like the troubled sea, when it cannot rest, (KJV)

Remember we're talking about lying down in green pastures and being at peace.

He said they're:

**Isaiah 57:20b.** like [a] troubled sea, when it cannot rest, whose waters cast up mire and dirt. (KJV)

And those of us in the Pacific Northwest, I think most of us and most of you that will watch this or hear this have been to an ocean at some point. It took, being in West Texas, it took many years for me to get to an ocean, but if you've walked a

beach after a storm, you see all kind of muck and mire and seaweed and logs and stuff just washed up in a jumble and in a turmoil. Mire and dirt are cast up.

Verse 21:

**Isaiah 57:21.** *There is no peace, [says] my God, to the wicked. (KJV)*

They're like a troubled sea and there's garbage that follows them wherever they go. There are always those—have been in the Church, will be in the Church—who aggressively strive for power and authority. They butt and they push and they shove because they want power and authority.

And in doing so, as we just read in Isaiah 57, they have no peace because they're aggressively shoving and pushing, but the important thing is they take peace away from others. The ones that are being shoved don't have peace because they're constantly being butted and pushed and abused in that sense.

This is why God tells us that sometimes a shepherd has to discipline a sheep. And there are those—Ol' Sparky the foreman said, "The ones that cause the trouble, they're the first ones to be eaten." They'll kill them and carve them up and then the flock will be at peace. Well, God says the same thing in Proverbs 22 and verse 10 because God wants us to be at peace and sometimes people just can't do that. They just won't heed. They won't listen. They won't heed the admonitions and they have to be dealt with. Proverbs 22 verse 10 that's where we read:

**Proverbs 22:10.** *Cast out the scorner, and contention shall go out; [and], strife and reproach shall cease. (KJV)*

And if the scorner, the one that's doing the butting and kicking and shoving, is cast out, then all of a sudden the flock's at peace. Everybody just relaxes. The other sheep breathe a sigh of relief. They can lie down in peace because this one, who was causing all the trouble, is now gone.

I've seen that in the Church. We had a situation in the old Yakima Church that family moved in and we had been at peace before. And then all of a sudden every week there was a new issue. There was new problem. There was somebody that was upset. And then after a couple of years, this family moved away. And the flock all of a sudden just miraculously was back at peace because the scorner, in this case, left!

One thing I noticed in the limited time of herding sheep is that the less aggressive sheep are generally the most contented. The ones that don't do the butting and shoving are just happy sheep. The ones that do the butting and shoving are never happy!

The same is true with the Brethren. The ones that are continually fighting, continually have an issue, continually have a problem, they don't have any peace. And, as I said, the problem is they take peace from the others. Let's look at Colossians 3 and verse 15: This is why we're told that we have to do our part

in making sure we don't cause issues by butting and shoving as the sheep of God. Colossians 3 and verse 15, Paul is telling the Church in Colosse, and by extension us today, he says:

**Colossians 3:15.** And let the peace of God (KJV)

Do what?

**Colossians 3:15b.** rule in your hearts, (KJV)

Now the word *rule* is Strong's 1018. It means to govern. So he's saying, "Let the peace of God *govern* your heart, *govern* everything you do. *Govern* your words, *govern* your actions, *govern* your conduct.

**Colossians 3:15b.** Let the peace of God [govern] in your hearts, to the which also [you] are called in one body; and be [you] thankful. (KJV)

We are called to peace! And shame on us if we take actions, we say words that result in upset and turmoil! I'm not talking about not preaching the truth, but I'm just talking about our interpersonal relationships one with another as God's sheep.

Notice 1 Corinthians 7 and verse 15. We're breaking into a context where Paul is discussing the issue in a marriage where one is called and baptized and converted and the other mate is not. One has God's holy spirit and other is not. We're breaking into that context. 1 Corinthians 7 verse 15, he says:

**1 Corinthians 7:15.** But if the unbelieving (KJV)

The one who has not been called in the marriage, if they depart, if they choose not to dwell with the converted mate:

**1 Corinthians 7:15b.** let him depart [let him go ahead and leave]. A brother or a sister is not under bondage in *such* cases: (KJV)

You don't have to stay in that marriage! Notice the reason is that:

**1 Corinthians 7:15 continued.** God [has] called us to peace. (KJV)

He's saying, "If you're in a marriage where there is no peace, because God's spirit doesn't reside in the other individual, you don't have to stay there because God has called us to peace."

Now the implication for the body of Christ is that God has called all of us to peace. We are a family. And we should be at peace with one another. And that's why he said, "If somebody's causing turmoil and butting and shoving, just let him depart. Let him leave."

Peace, however, takes work! Sometimes we think, erroneously, that I can just relax and peace will come. No. Peace takes work amongst all of us. We won't

turn there, but you know the very familiar Scripture in Matthew 5 and verse 9, the very start of the Sermon on the Mount where Christ said: "Blessed *are* the peace," what? The peacemakers! You have to make peace! It just doesn't happen by osmosis. You have to go out and make peace. He said: "Blessed *are* the peacemakers: [because they're going to] be called the children of God," or the sheep of God. You have to go out and make peace!

My dad often said, especially when referring to ranch hands working together, he said, "You got to cut your partner some slack every once in a while. Maybe they're not feeling good that day. Maybe they're having a bad day. So you cut him some slack. You don't keep the line tight on him and harp and complain. Just give him some slack. Just give him some space." And we have to do that every once in a while.

It is also interesting that you find one sheep butting another sheep. When the shepherd walks up, guess what happens? The sheep that's doing the butting all of a sudden stops because the shepherd is right there. That stops. And the spiritual implication for that is if Christ is in our life, we're not going to be butting either.

And sometimes people get into an argument and you wake up in the middle of a dustup and you realize, "I'm not behaving like a Christian right now. So I better watch my words and watch my emotions and watch my attitude." And you just all of a sudden turn it around. And so if the Shepherd is in our lives, then we won't be butting and shoving other people.

So let's understand that it is our responsibility to make our life and the life of the Church and to make the Church a sanctuary of peace. Only then can we lie down in green pastures. That's the second reason when there's trouble between the sheep.

The Third Reason is:

God's people can't be at peace when they are tormented by those influenced by the Adversary because the Adversary is the ultimate pest, the ultimate attacker!

He is a pest. He's always there nibbling, whispering in our ears, agitating us, shoving us, pushing us spiritually, mentally, emotionally.

And in the summer particularly, sheep can be tormented to absolute distraction by flies and ticks. They get in their nose. They get in their ears. And I've seen sheep in West Texas, they will run into sagebrush. Just run right into the middle of a giant hunk of sagebrush and they're scratching and moving and trying to relieve themselves from these pests and ticks. They'll even draw blood on their own hide trying to get rid of these pests and these ticks. They will stamp their feet. They will shake their heads. And, as I said, they'll do anything. They'll scrub on a post or a tree or whatever just to get some relief from the pests.

Now Satan has broadcast into the people of the Church for decades. Mr. Armstrong understood that because he grew up in a time before there was radio.

And Dorothy and I talked to her mom who died not long ago at age a hundred and one. And we were asking her one day, "What was it like when you heard your first radio broadcast?" A neighbor down the street got a radio and the whole neighborhood came into the living room and this box was plugged into the wall. They looked all around it. And all of a sudden there was this guy talking and he was in New York! And his voice was coming out of this box! She said, "It was like a miracle." It's just a miracle to hear a voice three thousand miles away come out of a box in your living room. If you've never heard that before, you can imagine how astounding that would be.

So Mr. Armstrong understood that Satan broadcasts in a similar way. He's doing it spiritually, of course. But you can wave your hands around the box and you can't see anything. You can't hear anything. You can't feel anything. Well, Satan is the same way. He broadcasts into our minds spiritually, wrong thoughts, wrong attitudes, wrong emotions. And he is in that sense the ultimate pest.

Let's go to Galatians 5 and we're going to read verses 13 through 16. Satan broadcasts into our mind suspicions, false assumptions, wrong emotions, wrong thoughts, wrong attitudes. Galatians 5 verse 13, he is telling the Church in Galatia:

**Galatians 5:13.** For, brethren, [you] have been called unto liberty; (KJV)

Meaning you're free from Satan. You're free from the pulls of the flesh. You're free from death.

**Galatians 5:13b.** only *use* not liberty for an occasion to the flesh, but by love serve one another. (KJV)

Look out for one another. Not butt each other and shove each other, but to look out for one another.

Verse 14:

**Galatians 5:14.** For all the law is fulfilled in one word, *even in this*; [that you shall] love [your] neighbour as [yourself]. (KJV)

That is the fulfillment of the Law.

But notice verse 15!

**Galatians 5:15.** But (KJV)

And this is what he's getting to.

**Galatians 5:15b.** if [you] bite and devour one another, (KJV)



Just like a tick just gorges itself on the blood of its host, or mosquitoes or flies just bite and bite and bite! If you take that analogy between the sheep and the pests and apply it to between brother and sister and to between brother and brother in the Church, he says:

**Galatians 5:15b.** if [you] bite and devour one another, take heed that [you] be not consumed one of another. (KJV)

You'll eat each other alive! And I've seen that in the Church. God's people almost literally eat each other alive because of suspicion, false assumptions, slander, and all of that.

Verse 16:

**Galatians 5:16.** *This* I say then, (KJV)

Because I don't want you to bite and devour each other!

**Galatians 5:16b.** Walk in the Spirit, and ye shall not fulfil the lust of the flesh. (KJV)

And we have to make sure that in God's Church we are not a pest. We're not doing the biting and devouring. But this has happened and frankly is happening in the Church today where people bite and devour one another. There is no peace or rest when this biting and devouring is allowed to continue. It's like a cancer. It'll just go on and on and on and eat the person who has the cancer, just eat him alive.

Look at Romans 16 and we'll read verses 17 and 18. It cannot be allowed to continue! And we know Satan is the ultimate pest and behind it all. Romans 16 verse 17, Paul is saying to the people and he's beseeching us today, he says:

**Romans 16:17.** Now I beseech you, brethren, mark them (KJV)

Now I want to make a couple of points here. He says, "I beseech you, brethren." He's not talking to the ministry. He's talking to the Brethren! He says, "I beseech you brethren, mark them." Now the word *mark* means to just take note of. It's not like you put a stamp on somebody's forehead. He says, "Just take note of the fact of":

**Romans 16:17b.** [those who] cause divisions and offences contrary to the doctrine which [you] have learned; (KJV)

And one of the doctrines is: We should like down in peace. So if you find somebody who is not doing that and is stirring up trouble, he says:

**Romans 16:17 continued.** [take note of that fact] and avoid them. (KJV)

Now we know in Matthew 5 and Matthew 18 we're to go to our brother or sister. But after repeated admonitions if they don't and they're just going to be the pest that just causes biting and devouring among God's people, what you have to do ultimately after you give them a chance and you go back to them and back to them, but if they do not see and do not repent and they're causing the flock to divide and devour one another, you just avoid them.

Notice verse 18:

**Romans 16:18.** For they that are such serve not our Lord Jesus Christ, (KJV)

Who do they serve?

**Romans 16:18b.** [they serve] their own belly [selfishness, personal gain]; and by good words and fair speeches deceive the hearts of the simple. (KJV)

In other words, they're not there to show love to their brother and sister—which is the fulfilling of the Law—they're there for their own agenda. They're there to advance their own state or their condition.

Now let's look at how Christ our Shepherd wants us to treat one another. Instead of being a pest, He wants it to be just the opposite.

Let's go to Isaiah 58 and we're going to read verses 9 through 11.

Again an analogy back to the farm, talking about a yoke. And if you've ever seen giant oxen yoked together, particularly back in Christ's day or the Old Testament days, it was made of wood and it was not a light piece of wood. It was a big thick heavy piece of wood. It had to be heavy and strong to hold those oxen together.

Verse 9 of Isaiah 58:

**Isaiah 58:9.** Then [you shall] call, and the LORD shall answer; [you shall] cry, and he shall say, Here I *am*. (KJV)

He says, "I will be there. I will hear you":

**Isaiah 58:9b.** If [you] take away from the [middle] of [you] the yoke, (KJV)

This heavy thing that just burdens you down! Well, what is the yoke? Well, He goes on to say:

**Isaiah 58:9 continued.** the putting forth of the finger, (KJV)

That's an analogy for an accusation. "You did this," or "They're doing that," or "They're saying this."

**Isaiah 58:9 continued.** the [pointing] of the finger, [or the] speaking [of] vanity; (KJV)

That means pride. Somebody always bragging about themselves, letting people know what they did or what they accomplished, or "Look at me"! He says, "That's the yoke and you've got to take it away.

Verse 10:

**Isaiah 58:10.** And *if* [you] draw out [your] soul to the hungry, (KJV)

Now He's saying, "I want you to change from this yoke of accusations and pride." He says, "If you draw out your life to the hungry, you focus on the hungry:

**Isaiah 58:10b.** and satisfy the afflicted; then [your] light [shall] rise [from] obscurity, and [your] darkness *be* as the noonday: (KJV)

Verse 11:

**Isaiah 58:11.** And the LORD shall guide [you] continually, (KJV)

If you get your mind off yourself and off your own agenda!

**Isaiah 58:11b.** and [shall] satisfy [your life] in drought, (KJV)

He will provide.

**Isaiah 58:11 continued:** and make fat [your] bones: (KJV)

Even if there's famine!

**Isaiah 58:11 continued.** and [you shall] be like a watered garden, (KJV)

Again an analogy to the land.

**Isaiah 58:11 continued.** like a spring of water, whose waters fail not. (KJV)

And I'll tell you in West Texas there's nothing so joyful among all of this arid land as to see a spring coming up through some rocks. And the sheep or the cattle will almost stampede to get there! And He says, "You will be like that spring of water," drawing an analogy to what the land is like that we're so distant from today.

Going on another Scripture about how Christ our Shepherd wants us to treat one another. Look at 2 Corinthians 1 and verse 4. What we're being told here is that when we're in trouble, when we have a trial, guess what? God comforts us. Christ comforts us through His spirit, but He does it not just to comfort us but He wants us to take action as a result of that. 2 Corinthians 1 verse 4:

**2 Corinthians 1:4.** Who [comforts] us in all our tribulation, (KJV)

Why? What's one of the reasons? Not only to comfort us, but that we can do some things.

**2 Corinthians 1:4b.** that we may be able to comfort them which are in any trouble, by the comfort wherewith we ourselves are comforted of God. (KJV)

God comforts us. He gives us peace. He allows us to lie down in green pastures. And then when we see our fellow sheep in trouble or agitated or upset or in fear, we go to them and comfort them with the same spirit that we were comforted with when we had a trial. That is how God wants us to treat one another. So the flock then can lie down in peace and not be butting and shoving one another.

Look at 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 14. This is a two-fold Scripture. It talks about what to do with those who butt and kick and shove, and then how we overcome that. 1 Thessalonians 5 and verse 14, Paul is saying:

**1 Thessalonians 5:14.** Now we exhort you, brethren, (KJV)

He's not exhorting the ministry. He's exhorting the brethren!

**1 Thessalonians 5:14b.** warn them that are unruly, (KJV)

The margin says *disorderly*. So if somebody is causing friction, if somebody is butting and shoving, if somebody is creating division and dissention, it is up to the Brethren to go to them and say, "Look! I love you. I care about you, but you're creating a problem! The flock isn't at peace because you did this and this and this. Can we talk about it? Let's see if we can work this out. What's going on?" The Church then, as I've said before, becomes self-policing. And that's our responsibility as individuals. Not just the ministry's responsibility.

Then he goes on to say, he says. "Warn those that create disorder and confusion and upset." But he says, "On the contrary and in addition to that," he says:

**1 Thessalonians 5:14 continued.** comfort the feebleminded, support the weak, be patient toward all *men* [or women]. (KJV)

The word *men* is in italics. "Be patient toward all. "Comfort those," he says.

When it says *feebleminded*, that doesn't mean somebody who's stupid or below average in intelligence. The word *feeble* means weak. In other words, they're easily influenced. Or maybe they don't know all the circumstances or they're brand new in the Church. And so therefore, they're easily led or guided astray.

And he says, "So you go comfort those and put your arm around them and console them and help them. Support those that are weak and be patient toward everybody."

And I have learned that over the years that patience is very, very important! Some people, somebody causes a problem and they want you to pull the trigger and kick them out of the Church. Well, God's been patient with me. God is patient with each one of you. And God is so patient and so kind and so gentle maybe we ought to be that way with each other and give people plenty of opportunity to come to themselves and to change and to grow.

Let's look at 1 Corinthians chapter 12 and we're going to read verses 26 and 27. Again we're talking about how Christ our Shepherd wants us to treat one another rather than butting and shoving and being pests. 1 Corinthians 12 and verse 26, he says:

**1 Corinthians 12:26.** And [when] one member suffers, all the members suffer with it; (KJV)

When Joe DeSalvo is suffering, we should ache and grieve for he and his wife. When any of us suffer or are in pain, we should feel that.

It goes on to say—Paul says:

**1 Corinthians 12:26b.** [when] one member be honoured, (KJV)

We shouldn't feel jealous. We shouldn't feel envious wishing it was us. No, he says:

**1 Corinthians 12:26 continued.** all the members [should] rejoice with [that honor]. 27) Now [you] are the body of Christ, and members in particular. (KJV)

So it's our responsibility to make the Church a place where God's people are nourished, are free from pests, free from hurt, free from torment, and free from abuse. And as we've seen these Scriptures, it's up to each brother and sister to make that happen. Not only in our lives that we don't become pests ourselves, but if somebody else is a pest, we go to them and we try to get them to see the error of their ways.

So we're concluding now the Third Point that:

God's people, God's sheep cannot lie down in green pastures if they're just tormented by pests.

The Fourth and Last Point:

God's people cannot be at peace if they are not being properly fed or if they do not use the food they have been given.

God's people cannot be at peace if they're not being properly fed or if they don't use the food that they have been given!

With lush green pastures—the proper environment—a young lamb can gain a hundred pounds in a hundred days from birth! That sounds like me if I stop exercising! Because I guarantee you, I'd gain five pounds a week—seven pounds a week if I didn't exercise! But a young lamb, this tiny little lamb coming just fresh born a hundred days later can be a hundred pounds, if it is being nourished and fed properly. On the other hand, if that little lamb is not being fed properly, it will be weak. It will be sickly. It will be stunted if their field is barren.

And so there are some huge spiritual analogies in that. The Church is the field where the sheep are fed. Let's go to John chapter 21. The Church is the field where the sheep are fed and the shepherds are supposed to do the feeding. John 21, this is the third time that Jesus Christ has appeared to the apostles after He was crucified. We're reading this account, John 21 verse 14.

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

Verse 15:

**John 21:15.** So when they had dined, Jesus [said] to Simon Peter, Simon, *son* of Jonas, [Do you love] me more than these [your brothers and sisters]? He saith unto him, [Yes], Lord; [you know] that I love [you]. [And] He [said] unto him, Feed my lambs. (KJV)

Now the lambs are the babies. They're the new ones. They're the weak ones. They're the small ones. They're the ones most vulnerable. It doesn't necessarily in the spiritual sense doesn't refer to age or how long you've been in the Church, but those are most vulnerable.

Verse 16:

**John 21:16.** He [said] to him again the second time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, [Do you love] me? [And] He [said] unto him, [Yes], Lord; [you know] I love thee. (KJV)

Peter's now beginning to get uncomfortable.

**John 21:16b.** [And] He [said] unto him, Feed my sheep. (KJV)

The adults, the more mature! So He's telling Peter, "You treat everybody alike. God is no respecter of persons. You don't blow away the weak or the young or the inexperienced or the ones that maybe are not up to your level of knowledge." I've seen that happen too often where the young ones, maybe the ones that don't know as much, they're blown off because "I'm up here and you're down here. And when you can come to my level, then I'll treat you as an equal. Otherwise don't bother me." I've seen that happen.

But He says, "Feed My sheep."

Verse 17:

**John 21:17.** He [said] unto him the third time, Simon, *son* of Jonas, [Do you love] me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, [Do you love] me? And he said unto him, Lord, [you know] all things; [you know my heart, you know what's inside me and you know] that I love [you]. (KJV)

And Christ just said it one more time!

**John 21:17b.** Feed my sheep. (KJV)

So, this is obviously a reference to the ministry that our job is to feed the sheep. But it's also a job of all of us together. We need to feed each other. We need to look after each other. We need to take care of each other. If somebody's starving, we go to their aid—physically or spiritually! We go to their aid.

I heard it once said that "The responsibility of the Church is not to take care of the physical needs of the Brethren." I don't see that! Look at Matthew 25—the sheep from the goats! "You visited Me. You clothed Me. You fed Me." That's part of the responsibility. Not just spiritually, but also physically! Obviously, spiritually is the most important, but you do both.

All of us must put that food to use in our lives. The spiritual food is the Truth of God, the Word of God. We must put it to use.

Not just study it for academic reasons or intellectual reasons just to say we know something or we go out and impress other people by our knowledge of the Bible or our knowledge of Greek and Hebrew. That means nothing, as we're told in 1 Corinthians 13, if we don't have love. That knowledge is absolutely meaningless.

And so we, all of us, must put that food to use in our daily lives. Romans 2 and verse 13 let's go there. Sometimes we forget these basic Scriptures.

The Protestants tell us "Once saved, always saved. Once you give your heart to the Lord, then you can do anything you want and God will wink or look the other direction or somehow it just doesn't count. You're not held accountable because you've given your heart to the Lord." That is not true!

Romans 2 and verse 13:

**Romans 2:13.** (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, (KJV)

The word *just* means to be in a right standing with God.

**Romans 2:13.** (For not the hearers of the law *are* just before God, but the doers of the law shall be justified. (KJV)

It is not enough to study the Bible and just know it academically. We have to put it into practice in our life every day, every minute of every day!

Look at chapter 13 and verse 10. Romans 13 and verse 10—talking about the food that we get, but also in the greater context of the sheep getting along with one another. Romans 13 and verse 10, it says:

**Romans 13:10.** Love [works] no ill to his neighbour: (KJV)

Now, that's not just talking about people in the Church, but to your next-door neighbor or the person at the cash register in the supermarket. We don't want to bite and devour them just because we're in a bad mood that day.

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

And let's understand that God's people cannot be at peace if we don't apply the Word—the food—that we're given through God's Word.

A final Scripture under the Fourth Point here is Ephesians 4 and let's look at verses 29 through 32. Again, this is a Scripture that shows us how not to do it, and then again in the same set of Scriptures how we should do it, how we should apply and use the food that God has given us. Ephesians 4 verse 29:

**Ephesians 4:29.** Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, (KJV)

*Corrupt* means polluted. And I think most of us, hopefully all of us, know that sometimes I'll catch myself in mid-sentence and I'm thinking, "I shouldn't be saying this," or "I shouldn't even be thinking this."

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

It should be positive and uplifting, sheep to sheep.

Verse 30:

**Ephesians 4:30.** And grieve not (KJV)

Now the word *grieve* means to put in distress, to upset.

**Ephesians 4:30.** And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby [you] are sealed unto the day of redemption. (KJV)

As long as we have God's spirit and use God's spirit, in that sense we're sealed. We're one of Christ's, one of God's. We're part of the body of Christ.

Verse 31, but in order to make sure that we have the spirit of God, verse 31 says:

**Ephesians 4:31.** Let all bitterness, and wrath, (KJV)



Now the word *wrath* in the Greek *means anger boiling up*. And we've all been there. We have had, we have felt. Sometimes you can feel it start in the pit of your stomach and that anger comes all the way up. Sometimes our face gets red, our hands start trembling, and then, the words come blasting out! And we're told we shouldn't be doing that!

**Ephesians 4:31.** Let all bitterness, and [anger boiling up], and anger, (KJV)

And *anger*, that Greek word, means anger as part of your temperament. It means somebody with a short fuse. My dad had a short fuse. And that's one thing I've had to overcome is a short fuse. So don't let anger as part of your character, your temperament, don't let that come up boiling.

**Ephesians 4:31b.** and [he said also] clamour, and evil speaking, (KJV)

You know the pests biting and devouring each other.

**Ephesians 4:31 continued.** [he says] be put away from you, with all malice: (KJV)

The word *malice* means you have an agenda to destroy somebody or to hurt somebody or put somebody down. So he says, "Put away all of that—bitterness and wrath and anger and clamor! And watch your attitude and your motives in doing so."

Verse 32, contrary he says:

**Ephesians 4:32.** be [you] kind one to another, (KJV)

How can you be kind if you're butting your fellow sheep?

**Ephesians 4:32b.** [be] tenderhearted, [be] forgiving one another, (KJV)

Somebody has a bad day and says something they shouldn't have said, then cut him some slack. Be forgiving.

**Ephesians 4:32 continued.** even as God for Christ's sake [has] forgiven you. (KJV)

I want God to forgive me. So I'd better be eager and willing and ready to forgive anybody that says anything about me or attacks you. You've got to be willing and ready to do that.

It's our responsibility to make the Church a peaceful field where God's Truth is taught and where God's Truth is applied in our daily lives in our interaction between one another. Only then can we live peacefully and lie down in green pastures.

Now let's wrap it up and summarize. We have seen the following:

Like sheep, God's people can't lie at peace if they are afraid.  
And like sheep, God's people can't be at peace if there is friction amongst the sheep.  
And also like sheep, God's people can't be at peace if there are pests that are just biting and devouring one another within the flock.  
And also like sheep, God's people can't lie at peace if their stomach is empty, if they're not being fed properly. and if they're not using the food to do God's will.

Now let's go back to John 10. And remember John 10? That's where we started early on—The Parable of the Sheepfold. Now hopefully with this understanding, we can now go back to John 10 and hopefully, it has a bigger meaning to each one of us. And we, being so far removed from the land and from shepherding and from sheep and from shepherds, maybe when we read these, we can have a deeper understanding of what Christ is trying to get across. John 10 verse 11, He says:

**John 10:11.** I am the good shepherd: (KJV)

He's not an evil shepherd. He's not kicking us, abusing us, but He is a very good shepherd that takes care of us and feeds us and heals us when we're wounded and comforts us when we're afraid.

**John 10:11b.** the good shepherd [gives] his life for the sheep. (KJV)

And He has already done that for us. And He has also told us in other places that "If I give My life for the sheep, so should you. You should be ready to be a living sacrifice."

Verse 14, He says again:

**John 10:14.** I am the good shepherd, [He says, I] know *my sheep*, and am known of mine. (KJV)

That means we had better heed the Shepherd's voice because you remember at the door of the sheepfold, the Shepherd says, "Come out," and the sheep hear His voice and they come out. Now at some point, the Shepherd's going to say, "Come out because I want to take you away from this world." We better be so in tune with Christ that we hear His voice; we recognize His voice when He calls! He says, "I know *my sheep*, and am known of mine.

Verse 16:

**John 10:16.** And other sheep I have, (KJV)

Referring to us today and down through the past centuries since these words were spoken.

**John 10:16b.** which are not of this fold: (KJV)

Referring to the fold in existence right then when He spoke those words.

He says:

**John 10:16 continued.** them also I must bring, (KJV)

And He's brought each one of us. He has brought each and every one of us!

Notice what He says:

**John 10:16 continued.** they [referring to us today] shall hear my voice; and there shall be one fold, (KJV)

Not corporations, not barriers between God's people. But there's only one fold. That's the Church of God comprised and composed of all those who have God's holy spirit. God doesn't look down from heaven and say, "Oh, well I can't talk to these people because they're of this corporation." Can you imagine how ridiculous that is? God's flock are people with His holy spirit. Now God doesn't pay any attention—I don't think—to corporations.

But He says:

**John 10:16 continued:** there shall be one fold, *and* one shepherd. (KJV)

The true Shepherd is Jesus Christ. Not a man! I'm just a little tiny assistant, assistant, assistant shepherd. The true Shepherd, the Good Shepherd is Jesus Christ. And don't let anybody tell you otherwise. The true Shepherd, the Good Shepherd owns the sheep. Not a man!

So let's learn these lessons from understanding a little bit more about sheep and shepherding. And let's all make sure that God's Church is a place where God's people can lie down in green pastures of tender grass. It is our responsibility as individuals to make it so.