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BIBLE ADVENTURES SCRIPT:

A1997 ~ The Parable of the Shepherd.

Welcome to Bible Adventures. Help for today. Hope for tomorrow. Jesus is Lord of all.

A pastor had a serious back problem. As a result, he had to lie on a hard floor for weeks to rest it. This floor rest frustrated and humiliated him. He couldn't do anything but lie there and pray. But he didn't realise this at first. He went through two weeks of boredom before he asked his wife for the church directory so he could pray for the members of the congregation.

Even though his motive for prayer didn't start out pure, the pastor prayed every day for every person listed in the book. Those few hours each day became a sweet time for him. Towards the end of his time of rest, he told the Lord how good these prayer sessions were and it was a pity he wouldn't be able to continue them as soon as he started back to work.

The Lord brought to his mind that the pastor would have the same 24 hours each day when strong again, the same as when he was weak. The only difference was that when the pastor was strong in health, he thought he was the one in charge. But when he was weak, he knew that he wasn't.

Prayer is an admission of weakness and the single, most important expression of true dependence on God. In today's Bible Adventure, we consider the dependence of sheep on a shepherd for finding food, water and protection from wild animals and robbers, care for injuries and being found after straying from the flock.

DRAMA - [The Bible In Living Sound](#).

Sheep have been kept in Israel as domesticated animals throughout the centuries. A ‘keeper of the sheep’ was the first profession named in the Bible. The shepherd often controlled a herd that had some goats as well because goats and sheep graze happily together.

All the sheep were shorn yearly for their wool and the female sheep milked daily. Since sheep were considered to be clean animals by Jewish law, mutton was an everyday meat. Keeping the animals as pets was a luxury the Israelites couldn’t afford. A good shepherd cared deeply for his sheep. By Jesus’ time in Israel, shepherds were generally considered to be less than trustworthy people.

In the Old Testament, God is called a shepherd to the people of Israel a number of times. In Psalm 77, as an example, God acted a shepherd to the Children of Israel by leading them out from Egypt. When doing so, God took good care of all the people’s needs. In Psalm 95, it says: “He is our God; we are the people he cares for, the flock for which he provides.” In Psalm 23, it says: “The Lord is my shepherd; I have everything I need.”

The Lord Jesus came to earth and fulfilled Old Testament prophecies about being a shepherd taking care of His people. In Isaiah, Chapter 40, it had predicted: “The Sovereign Lord is coming to rule with power, bringing with him the people he has rescued. He will take care of his flock like a shepherd; he will gather the lambs together and carry them in his arms; he will gently lead their mothers.”

In the New Testament Scriptures, Jesus is called the ‘good shepherd’, the ‘great shepherd’, the ‘chief shepherd’ and the ‘Shepherd and overseer’. He knows his sheep and has compassion on them. He searches for any that are lost. He died for His sheep. It is said in Matthew, Chapter 25: “When the Son of Man [that’s Jesus] comes as King and all the angels with him, he will sit on his royal throne, and the people of all the nations will be gathered before him. Then he will divide them into two groups, just as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats.”

This passage from Matthew points out to people when on Judgement Day, if we refused to help anyone in need while on earth, we actually refused to help the Lord Jesus Himself.

Today’s Bible Adventure comes from John, Chapter 10. When Jesus had finished talking about spiritual blindness with the Pharisees, He spoke to them about the role of a shepherd in taking care of his flock.

The Lord Jesus started with a distinction between good shepherds and thieves and robbers. In the Old Testament, the Jewish leaders were supposed to be watchmen and shepherds of Israel. Many of them had failed in their duty of doing so because they had lacked the understanding that as God’s representatives, they should have lead the people correctly to follow God’s ways. As a result, these appointed leaders became thieves and robbers, teaching the people that they didn’t need to enter God’s fold (or sheep pen) by the true gate of God, but rather, by ways that seemed right to them. Jesus, however, said that a true shepherd would always lead the people in the true ways of God.

Christ, known as the true shepherd, calls His sheep and they recognise Him. Even the voice of a false shepherd will send the flock of sheep running in an opposite direction. The life of

the Lord Jesus was watched carefully by many people besides the religious leaders of His day. People everywhere saw that Jesus lived a full life, even though He didn't possess many of the things that people thought were necessary for living. There was also certainty and authority in what Jesus said and knew about life, because He spoke the truth.

Most of all, the people saw that Jesus cared for everyone. His interest in people wasn't just a general one, but a willingness to help all with their specific needs.

In Luke, Chapter 15, there's a parable concerning lost sheep. The parable showed it was the Shepherd who found His sheep, not the sheep that found the Shepherd. Sheep by nature are easily lost, weak and helpless. They neither know their way back to the Shepherd nor have the strength to find Him. It is the Jesus the Shepherd who carries the sheep back home. He not only knows the way home, but to any lost sheep, He Himself is the Way back to God. There's no other person that we, like lost sheep, can put our hope in. This parable presents a picture of ourselves needing God's mercy and help. If God doesn't look for us and find us, we have no chance of ever finding our way back to Him and His everlasting home.

Unless we confront those who have taken a wrong turn in life, they may never regain their orientation, and some may not even know they are lost.

God appointed Jesus to be our chief shepherd. In turn, Jesus appoints under-shepherds or pastors and others to be teachers to take care of His sheep on earth. In the Greek language, the word 'pastor' actually means 'shepherd'. After His resurrection from the dead, Jesus spoke with Peter about Peter's denials of Him when Jesus had been arrested. Three times He had asked Peter to feed His sheep.

In the Bible book of 1 Peter, the Apostle Peter taught that church leaders must serve God and His flock; not because they have to but rather, out of love. They must exercise their leadership not for financial gain or honour, but for serving the sheep. A good leader tends to lead mainly by example. If the pastor is a good one, God's sheep will be eager to follow God's ways. The leader must not lead by force or threats. He must not use his authority to push others down, but rather, he must make himself the servant of others. Jesus was clear: if church leaders serve God well by how they serve His sheep, such people will receive a never-fading crown of glory as a reward in heaven.

However, the Lord Jesus also warned that many false prophets, false teachers and false witnesses would come into the church and deceive many people. In 2 Peter, Chapter 2, the Apostle Peter said: "False prophets appeared in the past among the people, and in the same way false teachers will appear among you. They will bring in destructive untrue doctrines and will deny the Master who redeemed them, and so they will bring upon themselves sudden destruction. Even so, many will follow their immoral ways; and because of what they do, others will speak evil of the Way of truth."

In 1 John, Chapter 4, the Apostle John wrote: "My dear friends, do not believe all who claim to have the Spirit; but test them to find out if the spirit they have comes from God. For many false prophets have gone out everywhere. This is how you will be able to know whether it is God's Spirit: anyone who acknowledges that Jesus Christ came as a human being has the Spirit who comes from God. But anyone who denies this about Jesus does not have the Spirit from God."

These passages make it quite clear that every believer in Christ has a duty to test the doctrines of their church leaders. Otherwise, we might be lead astray and deceived. In

Revelation, Chapter 3, the message to the church of Laodicea is that we must examine ourselves to see what our true condition is before Jesus. The condition of the Laodicean church was desperate yet they weren't even aware of it. The Lord Jesus said that they were poor, blind and naked and that they should buy heavenly currency refined by the fire of suffering from Him.

The first fire is one of sacrifice, which is a willingness to suffer and die to one's self and the world. This can produce a great struggle for many Christians, but in persevering to surrender all to God in faith, such belief results in a complete transformation of the Christian's sense of values. When such happens, things that used to matter a great deal no longer matter at all. It is as though we are to buy special eye ointment from the Lord Jesus Christ. In using it by reading the Scriptures, we can see clearly the condition of our heart. If we have no care of compassion for a world that is lost and no concern for others in need, we need to get back to the Cross and confess our preoccupation with caring for our own needs. The gratitude of the Cross brings the praises of God back to our lips, and gives us a spirit of hope that we can trust God fully to take care of our needs without worrying or self-ambition.

The Lord Jesus also said to buy from Him white garments. This doesn't mean salvation but rather, character. In Revelation, Chapter 19, it says: "Let us rejoice and be glad; let us praise his greatness! For the time has come for the wedding of the Lamb, and his bride has prepared herself for it. She has been given clean shining linen to wear." This linen means the good deeds of God's people. Do we lack character and keep secret sins hidden deep within us? We must love the Saviour more than we love keeping our hidden sins.

The chief shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, said in Revelation, Chapter 3, Verse 19: "I rebuke and punish all whom I love. Be in earnest, then and turn from your sins."

The drama is from The Bible In Living Sound.

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