

BEING SHEPHERDS IN THIS AGE

"Be shepherds of God's flock that is under your care, watching over them—not because you must, but because you are willing, as God wants you to be; not pursuing dishonest gain, but eager to serve"

(1 Peter 5:2, NIV)

In the period leading up to the independence of the Indonesian people before August 17, 1945, we remember the services of the heroes who fought with full dedication. They voluntarily in accordance with the goals of the nation and state want to advance together in order to realize independence. Finally, on August 17, 1945 the independence of the Indonesian nation could be proclaimed by Soekarno and Hatta. And on August 17, 2022, the Indonesian people will commemorate the 77th anniversary of their independence. If we reflect back on the journey of the Indonesian nation during these 77 years, then we should be grateful to God who has bestowed this great independence on the Indonesian nation even though the challenges and struggles of the Indonesian people were also great. So it is in church life. Although God's people and His church have also faced various challenges and struggles both internally and externally throughout history, but because of God's faithful love, His church is still growing since 2000 years ago until now. It can happen because of God's grace and because of the obedience of Christ's disciples to His Great Commission throughout the centuries of church history to this day. The commandment given by the Lord Jesus to His disciples before He ascended to heaven in Matthew 28:19-20 is still continuing from generation to generation. And besides the task of discipleship, God's church also has the task of shepherding. In the letter 1 Peter 5:2 the apostle Peter shared what God had commanded him, namely to feed God's sheep, namely Christ's disciples (see also John 21:15-19). The Apostle Peter and his companions were asked to feed God's sheep voluntarily according to God's will and not because they wanted to seek profit, but with self-dedication. Just like what the heroes of the struggle for independence have done who are willing to go forward with full dedication, so that they can bring us into the independence of the nation. The coming of the Lord Jesus as king or the second coming of the Lord Jesus is drawing near. In this time leading up to His second coming, we should be grateful that we can become Christ's disciples today who are willing to be planted and shepherded according to God's will. In these last days there are many false shepherds and false sheep who are no longer living according to God's will, but they are only looking for profit for the sake of popularity, for money or for other reasons. There are sheep who have lost their vision of discipleship and shepherding, so these people have lost their way. We are grateful that in these end times there are still God's sheep or Christ's disciples who are still faithful to be planted in His church and also want to be sanctified in the truth of His Word (John 17:17). When Jesus lived as the Son of Man, some of Jesus' disciples did not believe His Word and they turned away and no longer followed Jesus (John 6:66). If we as God's disciples who have been freed from sin by the power of Christ's blood, we want to keep working on the salvation that God has given us earnestly (Philippians 2:12-18) and want to pay attention to the fulfillment of His Word in the days leading up to His coming. second, then we will definitely be stronger and fruitful. In the days leading up to the second coming of the Lord Jesus, let us also be stronger and fruitful in the task of discipleship and shepherding according to His will. The life of the early church became an example for the church in all ages (Read Acts 2:41-47). Let us also be more led and filled with the Holy Spirit in waiting for the rapture of His church. Amen!

By Pastor Silwanus Obadja