

Becoming a disciple of Christ, who is willing to be lead

"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 August 2023, we are still focusing on how we can build our identity as true disciples of Christ, namely through discipleship and shepherding according to God's will. In last month's devotional we have reflected on how we can become mature disciples of Christ, that is, how to become disciples of Christ who dare to die in preparing the way for God. One more important thing in our calling as disciples of Christ in these last days is how we can become disciples of Christ who are willing to be shepherded. From the shepherd's point of view, 1 Peter 5:2 says that shepherds of God's flock may not shepherd by force, but voluntarily according to God's will and also not because they want to seek profit, but with self-devotion. And this must be held for the benefit and maintenance of every church of God that is entrusted with shepherding God's sheep. However, at the end of this era there is a lot of shepherding as described in the book of Ezekiel (Ezekiel 34:1-31), that many shepherds do not feed God's sheep but feed themselves, so that the weak sheep are not strengthened, the sick are not treated, the wounds are not bandaged, those who have strayed are not brought home, those who are lost are not searched for, but instead trampled on with violence and cruelty, meaning that many shepherds who feed God's flock are not like what was written in 1 Peter 5:2 earlier. Because of this many of God's sheep are scattered.

In these last days there are still many of Christ's sheep who are not ready and unwilling to be shepherded, so they are not spared from the danger of drought and spiritual destruction.

Without a willing heart it is difficult for believers to be able to grow to become His living and effective witness in a world full of challenges and shackles of sin. The spiritual dynamics of a believer cannot be separated from the spiritual freedom he experiences. The real freedom that comes through Christ (Galatians 5:1), is first and foremost liberation from the punishment and slavery of sin and all the powers of the devil. This liberation (spiritual freedom) occurs because they are ready to be discipled and are also willing to be shepherded as God wills.

Talking about freedom, basically there are two kinds of freedom, namely political freedom and real freedom (freedom from sin). Political freedom is freedom that is only temporary and unsecured, while true freedom is eternal and guaranteed freedom that results from biblical discipleship and shepherding. For example, on August 17, 2023, our nation Indonesia by His grace will commemorate its 78th year of independence. Even though the Indonesian nation has been declared as an independent country since 1945, this does not guarantee that the entire Indonesian nation is truly independent internally from various shackles of national problems. The problems of poverty, drugs, corruption, disputes and acts of violence which often lead to issues of SARA (Ethnicity, Religion, Race & Inter-Group) are clear evidence that shows that not all Indonesians have real independence. True freedom can only occur when a person is willing to be discipled and shepherded according to God's plan and will. Therefore, let every disciple of Christ be mature and willing to be shepherded according to God's leading. Jesus bless you! Amen!

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