

GROWING STEADFAST IN DISCIPLESHIP & SHEPHERDING

“having been deeply rooted [in Him] and now being continually built up in Him and [becoming increasingly more] established [a]in your faith, just as you were taught, and overflowing in it with gratitude.” (Colossians 2:7 AMP)

Over the past month, we have reflected deeply on how to become successful disciples of Christ who are willing to carry out the task of discipleship (Matthew 28:19-20). The key to successful discipleship is living with an ever-growing faith—a faith that comes from hearing the word of Christ (Romans 10:17). Discipleship means helping others become disciples of the Lord Jesus. Shepherding, on the other hand, entails caring for, nurturing, protecting, and feeding God’s sheep (John 21:15-17). Both tasks require steadfastness, as they are processes that unfold over a long period of time.

Growing steadfast in the work of discipleship and shepherding means, first, that we must possess a firm foundation. We need to remember the words of 1 Peter 5:2-4: “Shepherd 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; not lording it over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock. And when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that will never fade away.” The key is recognizing that the sheep belong to God, not to man. The shepherds chosen by the Lord to tend His sheep serve under the authority of the Chief Shepherd—the Lord Jesus Himself. Having grasped a firm foundation, the second point is that God’s sheep require solid spiritual nourishment—food that strengthens faith; they must live by the Word rather than by seeking human approval (Acts 20:28: “Keep watch over yourselves and all the flock of which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers. Be shepherds of the church of God, which he bought with his own blood”). These sheep must be shepherded, and shepherds cannot give what they do not possess. Therefore, those called to shepherd God’s sheep must maintain a personal relationship with the Great Shepherd by keeping quiet times with His Word and in prayer. A hungry shepherd cannot feed God’s sheep. These shepherds must also possess the right motives—acting not to be seen by others, nor for material gain, nor out of a fear of emptiness, but out of a genuine love for the Lord (John 21:17). Thirdly, a good shepherd needs to possess a steadfast attitude, just like the Lord Jesus, the Good Shepherd (John 10:11, 27-28). There are four characteristics of steadfastness found in the Lord Jesus as the Good Shepherd: 1) He knows (not merely memorizing names, but understanding His sheep’s struggles; they are not shepherded en masse); 2) He seeks (willing to leave the ninety-nine to find the one that is lost—Luke 15:4); 3) He protects (bold enough to confront sin with love—Galatians 6:1; not allowing the sheep to be devoured by the wolves of false teaching—Acts 20:29); 4) He sets an example (1 Peter 5:3; disciples learn most quickly from the lives of their shepherds, not from sermons).

Let us remain steadfast in discipleship and shepherding during these difficult times in the last days. Lord Jesus bless us all. Happy commemoration of Indonesian independence, Amen!

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