

THE SHEPHERD'S HEART- PART 2

--1st THESSALONIANS 3:1-13--

INTRODUCTION:

In this chapter Paul models for us the shepherd's heart for the flock that God has given into his care. Paul's example of the model shepherd gives us seven features of a shepherd's heart for his flock. Last week we looked at the first four of those features. First, we saw the shepherd's love for his flock, then the shepherd's sacrifice for his flock, third, the shepherd's lovingkindness for his flock and finally, the shepherd's watchfulness over his flock.

This morning we will look at the last three features of the shepherd's heart and then Paul ends the chapter by praying for the Thessalonian believers and it is a model prayer for the shepherd.

- I. THE SHEPHERD'S JOY OVER HIS FLOCK (1st Thess. 3:6-8)
 - a. In verse six Paul fast-forwards to the time when Timothy returned from Thessalonica with a _____ for him.
 - b. Timothy brought back a four-part report on the status of the Thessalonians' spiritual _____ - _____. (Matt. 13:3-23)
 - c. Timothy's report moved Paul from anxious concern to _____ even in the midst of all his distress and affliction.

- II. THE SHEPHERD'S THANKFULNESS FOR HIS FLOCK (1st Thessalonians 3:9)
 - a. The sixth feature of a shepherd's heart for his flock is his _____ to God.
 - b. Paul found no _____ to express the overwhelming thankfulness to God in return for all the joy Timothy's report had brought to him.

- III. THE SHEPHERD PRAYS FOR HIS FLOCK (1st Thess. 3:10)
 - a. The seventh feature of a shepherd's heart for his flock is that he _____ for them.
 - b. Paul writes that his praying was _____ and fervent.

- IV. A MODEL PRAYER FOR A SHEPHERD (1st Thess. 3:11-13)
 - a. Paul, from the very beginning of this book, was in the spirit of _____ for the Thessalonians.
 - b. Paul begins by addressing _____ by name and not just his God, but he addresses Him as the God of the Thessalonians as well.
 - c. By addressing God as our Father Paul was highlighting the personal _____ that exists between God and His children.
 - d. It is interesting that Paul used the word " _____ " in the opening of his prayer.
 - e. As Paul moves into the body of his prayer, we discover the _____ of his prayer.
 - f. Paul's primary motive in praying for the Thessalonian believers was that their faith would _____. (3:10)
 - g. The second virtue that Paul wanted to see in the lives of the Thessalonians was an increasing and abounding _____.
 - h. Paul's final request for the Thessalonian believers was that they would look to the future, look to the time of their glorification, which should produce in them a purifying _____. (Romans 5:1-2; 1 John 3:2)
 - i. Paul wanted them to have _____ hearts so as to desire the coming of the Lord Jesus. (1 John 3:2-3)

CONCLUSION:

We have looked at the seven features of a shepherd's heart for his people. Paul was our example and if he is the ideal human model of one with a shepherd's heart, it is only because he carefully patterned his ministry as a shepherd after that of the Great Shepherd, the Lord Jesus Christ, who perfectly modeled the shepherd's heart during His earthly ministry. He was the ultimate example of love for His sheep, sacrificing His very life for them. He showed lovingkindness to His people, He was watchful over His sheep. He rejoices over His church, He is thankful for His disciples, and He intercedes for His beloved children. The Good Shepherd of the sheep has the shepherd's heart that is the divine standard for all shepherds today.

Paul prayed three things for the church in Thessalonica, that they would have complete faith, that they would be increasing and

abounding in love, and that they would have purifying hope for their future glorification at the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ. This prayer is a model of how shepherds and spiritual leaders ought to pray for their people. These last few messages have been directed at me as your shepherd, I have set before you the standard to which you should hold me. I have learned how I might better pray for you as I bring you before the throne of grace.