

PROFILE OF A SHEPHERD-COUNSELOR

Lessons Learned from the Good Shepherd

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I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep.... I am the good shepherd; I know my sheep and my sheep know me.

—JOHN 10:11,14

Knowing Christ and caring for others have been inextricably woven together for me ever since I can remember. I came to Christ at the age of eleven through the teaching of my parents. It was not long afterward that I began to truly see the needs of others.

CALLED TO CARE

My father was a U.S. Air Force colonel. As I was growing up, I did not need a degree in psychology to see that most of my friends' mothers were alcoholics. They liked to come to my house after school because my mother was sober—and kind. I told my friends about Jesus and, at the age of twelve, began teaching a small group of girls from Scripture. I remember going home with one of those girls one day on the way to my house. We found her mother still in bed in a filthy nightgown. She was drunk and hanging tightly onto a bottle of something. It gave me a glimpse into the pain and horror of my friend's life, and I wanted to help.

Little did I know where the eyes to see people's hurts and the heartfelt desire to help them would take me, or how like God it is to use the broken lives I saw to bear fruit in the lives of others. Many years have passed since I was twelve, and I

still have eyes that see and a heartfelt desire to help. Those two traits, plus a few degrees and some training, have given me access to many people whose lives are not unlike those of my young friends and their parents. I have witnessed a great deal of pain and horror, and, I believe, I have been called by God to tend those whose lives have been so marked.

I have nurtured women who, as little girls, were repeatedly raped by a man called Daddy. I have come alongside men who, as little boys, were repeatedly molested by a woman called Mommy. I have sat with women whose shattered, black-and-blue faces testified to a twisted form of husbanding yet who were confused as to who was responsible. I have sat with parents who had tended dying children and who desperately needed tending themselves. I have walked with those whose lives were slowly being destroyed by cancer or other diseases. Missionaries who had been raped and robbed or kidnapped and tortured have come for help and healing. Pastors, weary and broken by divisive and persecuting churches, have needed pastoring themselves.

And there has been another kind of tending, one that I never anticipated when I first began counseling others. I tend not only the women whose faces are black and blue, but also those who batter them. I care for missionaries who leave the United States to proclaim the gospel, but who have to come home because they molested those they went to help. I walk with pastors who were called to shepherd, but who ended up feeding on their sheep. I care for those whose marriages are ravaged because they cannot get their faces out of pornography. And so I find myself tending those who are damaged by others as well as those who do the damaging. Sometimes, of course, these people are one and the same.

All of us who help others are shepherds. We shepherd in various arenas. Many of us do so as pastors and therapists; some as teachers, managers, writers, and parents. I did not think of myself as a shepherd so many years ago. Now, however, I realize that this is what I am. Also, having seen the damage done by some unfit shepherds, I have realized that competent Christian counseling—shepherding—is a serious and awesome task.

UNFIT SHEPHERDS

It is far too easy to be an unfit shepherd.

One of the things I do during the course of a week is supervise several other therapists. I hear myself again and again trying to impress upon them the significance they have in the lives of their clients and the power they have to help or to harm them. Whenever you as a therapist enter the broken life of another person,

you become extremely important. Many people's lives are so destroyed and barren that you are the only significant relationship they have, and so they live from one session to the next. They count the days until their next appointment with you. As you know, some people cannot even make it a week between appointments, so they call or page or write letters or request more frequent sessions.

People come wanting wisdom about their marriages or their parenting. They come confused and in need of truth. They come in bondage to sin and needing freedom. They come unable to discern right from wrong. To walk into a broken life, a life with needs of this magnitude, obviously gives the shepherd significant influence. And such potential for help also means great potential for harm.

Being an unfit shepherd begins when you abuse the power you have in the lives you've been called to care for, using that power for your own benefit instead of for the good of the client or parishioner. We find this negative model in Ezekiel 34, where the shepherds of Israel are described as feeding on their flocks. Those commissioned by God to care for his people instead used his people for their own benefit. They drank the milk of the sheep, wore their wool, and ate their flesh. In other words, they took whatever the sheep had to offer and used it for themselves.

In counseling, the most obvious example of such abuse of power is the use of a client for the therapist's own sexual gratification. Unfortunately, it is also the most common example—and the most damaging to clients. I refer not only to suicide committed by 1% of sexually abused clients, but also to the inflamed trauma, mistrust of others, destroyed marriages, and shattered lives experienced by nearly every client who has been sexually victimized by self-serving shepherds.

We can abuse our position in more subtle ways as well. For instance, it is easy to feed off others emotionally in order to help ourselves feel loved, important, or wise. We may ask questions in order to titillate our curiosity or to hear information about a third party. Anytime we orchestrate a session so as to feed some appetite or need in ourselves, we behave as unfit shepherds.

Another common abuse of power is encouraging clients to look only to us for help and healing. Certainly, the weak need our strength, the foolish need our wisdom, the despairing need our hope, the blind need our sight, and the doubters need our faith. These are good and right things to give. However, such work can also be seductive to the caregiver, for we may begin to think that we alone are able to give such things adequately. Somehow the healthy nurturing that comes from other people—such as the client's spouse, circle of friends, or church community—begins to pale in comparison to our caregiving, and we wrongly help our clients buy into the lie that we alone are what they need. There is a fine line between believing we are important to others and believing we are necessary to

them. When we begin to think and teach—even by implication—that we are necessary, we take the place of the One we have been called to honor and follow.

We are never to steal the hearts of others for ourselves. Rather, as Christian counselors, we are commanded to hand our charges over to God. Our clients come to us hungry for love, truth, hope, and faith. We cannot ultimately fulfill such needs. But we can, by our lives, give them tastes of the One who is using us to draw them to himself. We are servants of the Good Shepherd. We are unfit servants if we become so inflated with our own importance that we fail to utilize the gifting of the body of Christ or fail to point our clients away from us and ultimately to the satisfaction that resides in the Good Shepherd.

Perhaps overarching all abuses, we are unfit shepherds at any point that we misrepresent the Good Shepherd. If our compassion leads us to condone sin, if our abhorrence of evil leads to harshness, if we demand justice without mercy, if our appearance of obedience cloaks hidden disobedience—we are unfit. If we abandon or fail to seek after those who have wandered away, if we rule by power rather than by love, if we leave our clients vulnerable to attack because we fail to speak truth to them—we are unfit.

In John 10, Jesus speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd, contrasting himself with those perfect examples of unfit shepherding, the Pharisees. His clear message to those unfit shepherds was "Woe..." a word used primarily as an expression of grief. Anytime you and I hurt, damage, or mislead one of the least of God's sheep, we bring great grief to the heart of our Lord.

THE FIT SHEPHERD

If it is true that those who seek us out are broken, needy, and vulnerable, and if it is true that you and I are called by God to shepherd such people, then we must learn how to shepherd fitly. Furthermore, if it is true that such a task is so serious and awesome because of its potential impact for good or evil in the lives of others, and if it is also true that shepherding selfishly and unfitly grieves the God who has called us, then we had better learn to counsel according to the Master's own heart.

Oswald Chambers wasn't inaccurate when he wrote, "The sheep are many, and the shepherds few, for the fatigue is staggering, the heights are giddy, and the sights are awful" (p. 52). Some job description—but how true it is! Given the challenge, what does it mean to be a fit shepherd? I believe the answer to that question takes us on a journey into the fellowship of Christ's sufferings—and to the Cross.

It is no coincidence that the birth of the Good Shepherd was announced to shepherds. These men were rejected, and they led isolated lives outside the camp.

Unable to observe the ritual washings, they were considered unclean. So, on the outskirts of Bethlehem, they tended flocks of sheep that were set aside for temple sacrifices. These shepherds so identified with their sheep that they entered their lives and took on their filth. They smelled like their sheep. They lived outside the camp with their sheep. They were set apart because they had stepped in the muck and mire of those they tended.

All the aspects of Jesus' good shepherding, and ours as well, are foreshadowed in this scene. Here we see the thread of sacrifice: The shepherds sacrificed in order to tend the sheep, and the sheep were intended for sacrifice. We also see the threads of tending, protecting, and being ever-watchful day and night, for that is what shepherds do. But we have another, unusual thread: the glory of God manifested in the heavens, brought down into the muck and mire.

Thirty years later the Son of God entered the scene again as John the Baptist announced, "Behold! The Lamb of God who takes away the sin of the world!" (John 1:29, NKJV). Our threads are all here. *Behold the Lamb*—the sacrifice, the unblemished One. He takes away the sin of the world. He stepped into the muck and mire of this world and was made so unclean by it that he had to go outside the camp to die.

If you and I are to learn from the Good Shepherd, we must begin here. We must first behold the Lamb. We need to seek him, to search him out. When John called his followers to behold the Lamb, he also called them to repentance. To truly behold the glory of God in the flesh is to see our own lives more clearly. So, before we can serve our clients, we must be fully aware of the fact that we are sheep ourselves, in need of the sacrificial Lamb of God and his death for our sins.

We dare not move into shepherding others if we fail to deal with our own lives. If we do not learn to behold the Lamb and repent of our sin, we will catch the soul diseases of those with whom we work. If we do not behold and repent, we will feed on the flock we have been called to feed. If we do not behold and repent, we will confuse ourselves with the Lamb and lead others to follow us rather than him. If we do not behold and repent, we will misrepresent the Good Shepherd, and others will believe lies about him, thinking we are representing him accurately.

You and I are fit to tend sheep only to the degree to which we ourselves have learned to follow the Good Shepherd. If Jesus tended us by first becoming a lamb, who are we to do otherwise? All good shepherds are, first and foremost, lambs. The shepherd who is not first a lamb will be arrogant and proud and will damage those he or she has been called to tend.

So we begin by beholding the Lamb of God, asking him to search us out and repenting of anything in our lives that displeases him. As a result, we are empowered to bring his life and influence into every relationship. If we fail to begin here,

then we, like the Pharisees, may have the appearance of obedience, but in actuality we will be unfit shepherds in feeding the flock of God.

We must also begin in the same way that the announcement to the shepherds and from John the Baptist began: *Behold the Lamb!* The Lamb of God, the supreme sacrifice, is the world's only hope. Yet we tend to proclaim, "Behold a new theory!" "Behold these new methods!" "Behold our training and credentials!" "Behold this new opportunity!" "Behold our human skills!" Such things may be good and helpful, but they do not bring life. Any time we forget to declare *Behold the Lamb of God*, we lift up that which cannot bring life and healing to those we serve. Any shepherd who subordinates the life, death, and resurrection of the Good Shepherd to his or her own credentials, tools, or skills will fail.

LESSONS LEARNED FROM THE GOOD SHEPHERD

Over the years I have had the privilege of learning many lessons from our Good Shepherd, and as we conclude volume one of *Competent Christian Counseling*, I would like to share some of these lessons with you. These are not the lessons from graduate school or internship, though certainly the knowledge and training of those years are essential to our calling. Instead, the lessons of the Good Shepherd can actually infuse our knowledge, training, and experience with the life of Christ for the good of our clients and to the glory of God.

HUMILITY

The first lesson I want to share is underscored in Philippians 2:5-8: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus: who, being in very nature God, did not consider equality with God something to be grasped, but made himself nothing, taking the very nature of a servant. . . . He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!"

The Lamb of God identified with and served those who were cursed. I suspect that you are like me in that you prefer to be with attractive, like-minded people, those with whom you have a natural affinity. When you are in a group you want to be aligned with those who are clean, bright, healthy, and relationally adept. Jesus, on the other hand, identified with those whose personalities or abnormalities isolated them from others. He identified with the demon-possessed, the blind, the diseased, and even the dead. It is not our nature to do this. We see the afflicted and back away. We are repulsed by crime and disease and social ineptness. We have an aversion to the tormented, the odd, or the unacceptable.

I remember many years ago when I first began to see those who had been

chronically sexually abused as children. I have never been abused. I enjoy what I now know is the phenomenal privilege of having a mind completely free of any memories of any kind of abuse. I never have to worry that such memories might float to the surface or be triggered by certain circumstances, for they simply do not exist. But one of the women I saw in the early years of my counseling work had been repeatedly and sadistically abused by many others. As I began to ease myself down into those memories, I found myself experiencing nightmares and crying in my sleep. I did not like the nightmares and clearly remember wrestling with whether I could go forward in my counseling work: *I don't have memories like this. Why would I want this in my head? I don't want to picture these things. I don't want them disturbing my sleep. I don't have to do this.*

Only the reminder of the Good Shepherd's humble sacrifice could help me resolve that dilemma: "Your attitude should be the same as that of Christ Jesus." A while ago another client asked me an astute question: "After all these years, does your head ever get mixed up about where your memories stop and others' memories begin?" Well, after twenty-five years in the counseling profession the answer is yes, sometimes my head gets mixed up. Sometimes I think or feel things that arise from my identification with survivors rather than from my own life experience.

It is only through the power of the Holy Spirit that you and I can humble ourselves and identify with those whose nature or experience is contrary to our own. And it is only the Holy Spirit who saves us from being overwhelmed by the secondary or vicarious trauma that has become a significant issue for many therapists. But if we are to follow the example of the Good Shepherd, we must indeed humble ourselves and wade into the muck and mire of our clients' lives in order to help and nurture them, for that is the kind of shepherding Jesus did. He so identified with the objects of his redemptive work that he became the Lamb and bore the punishment for our sin.

CHOOSING LESSER THINGS

The second powerful lesson I have learned is similar to that of humility. It has to do with choosing lesser things.

The Good Shepherd emptied himself of those things that elevated him. He demanded no recognition. He did not complain that Nazareth was too limited a sphere for his great gifts. He did not seek to dominate those under him. When the disciples started to squabble over who would be greatest in God's kingdom, Jesus got down on his hands and knees and washed their dirty feet.

Unfortunately, in recent decades, the Christian community has been infiltrated with the beliefs that bigger is better, that more means more important, and

that status, money, and power are worthy of worship. Now I am not foolish enough to say that bigger is always worse or that more is always bad or that status, money, and power are inherently evil. But what I do believe with all my heart is that such things are of this earth and are transient, not worthy of our devotion.

I remember an inner struggle I experienced during the years when my two sons were quite small. Our sons were born shortly after I finished my doctorate and got my license. I had been in private practice for a short while, and it was clear that the practice was about to take off. However, I distinctly sensed God directing me to devote myself to mothering my young children. (I realize that he does not lead every young mother to do this.) I loved my work, so setting it aside to be a mom was not an easy thing to do. Also, if God had gifted me for counseling work, why would he ask me to lay down that which he had given? Nevertheless I obeyed. I kept the practice open to a minimal degree and sent most of my referrals elsewhere while I played with LEGOs and Matchbox cars.

During those precious years I learned something of what it means to set aside a good thing—something rightfully mine—for the sake of others. God had indeed called me to do some exceptional things, but he had also called me to be exceptional in the ordinary—to be holy in small places, loving with little people, unrecognized, and unappreciated.

It is a lesson I have had to learn again and again, and not just with little people but also with slow, mean, difficult, and resistant people. To follow the Good Shepherd, we must learn that greatness resides not in what we have or what we do. Rather, greatness is the freedom to set aside what we have and what we do in order to love the sheep God has entrusted to us.

RESTRAINT

Restraint is a voluntary limitation of oneself for the benefit of someone else.

The grocery store where I usually shop has a policy of hiring several employees who are intellectually limited. One particular man has been there about ten years; his job is to help people put their groceries in their cars. He is hard of hearing and lacks social skills. The first time I had him put my groceries in my car, he was slow and he threw the bags (eggs and all) into the trunk in disarray. I decided that from then on I would load the groceries myself.

On future shopping trips this man would offer help, and I would politely say, "No, thank you." One day after I declined his help, he asked, "Are you sure, ma'am?" There was almost a pleading tone to his voice, and I realized that he was being rejected by one customer after another. I felt the tug of God's Spirit. I was, of course, in a hurry. It was raining—hard. But the tug came again, so I said yes.

I stood in the rain, carefully made a couple of suggestions, and together we put my bags in the car.

When we finished, the man asked, "Did I do a good job?"

"Yes, you did a good job," I assured him.

He seemed relieved. "Lots of ladies get mad at me because I don't do so good."

I drove home weeping, asking God to teach me what that lesson was about. This man suffers. He suffers in ways I have never experienced. He is treated with anger, disregard, annoyance, and frustration. God called me that day to restrain myself—to restrain my quickness, my skill, my independence, my powers—in order to bestow dignity, value, and esteem on one who was suffering. As I pulled into my garage, I sensed God saying to me, *Is that not a picture of my incarnation? Is that not a tiny taste of what I did for you?* God of the universe, a baby. Infinite wisdom, a little boy. Creator of the worlds, a carpenter. Master of the seas, in a boat. Eternal life, dead and buried. And I didn't want to restrain myself for a retarded man!

Jesus, the Good Shepherd, says to us, "Why do you call me, 'Lord, Lord,' and do not do what I say?" (Luke 6:46). I say that I love Christ, that I am a Christian psychologist—but then I am impatient or intolerant or frustrated with a darkened, confused, or frightened person. I will not be able to wait for a trauma survivor to articulate the unspeakable unless I learn the lesson of restraint. I will be intolerant of the repeated failings of an addict unless I learn the lesson of restraint. I will throw in the towel with an Axis II personality disorder unless I learn the lesson of restraint. I will refuse to walk through the valley of the shadow of death with someone who is terminally ill unless I have learned the lesson of restraint.

The work of shepherding requires that we limit our words, because people who suffer cannot absorb a barrage of words or understand the language of high intellect. We will have to restrain the number of our syllables, the loudness of our voices, the suddenness of our movements, and the intensity of our emotions if we are to provide a safe place for the scared, the suffering, the traumatized, the silenced. Restraint allows us to connect with others, to be a blessing, and to be blessed ourselves. It also means willingly stepping down into the muck and mire of tragedy and suffering so that we may extend help and hope.

Often, when we are faced with the need to restrain some aspect of ourselves or to alter our agenda, we say, "That's just not me." I am not sure where we get the idea that we should do only that which comes naturally or easily. I have a quick mind and a quick mouth. I have a high energy level. They make jokes in the office about my going through the halls on Rollerblades. But my Shepherd is teaching me that I cannot shepherd his suffering sheep simply by doing what

comes naturally. That which is immeasurable came to us in a very tiny package. If we would follow him, we too must learn the lesson of restraint in order to bring light and life to his sheep.

LOVING SERVICE

Another key lesson the Shepherd has taught me is that of service. Certainly the things we are trained to do are avenues of service: We counsel, we teach, we supervise, we write, we consult, we pastor. However, I believe that the service to which the Good Shepherd calls us goes far deeper than the skills we have been trained to utilize.

In Matthew 25 Jesus speaks of returning in all his glory and separating the people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. When he speaks to the sheep, he describes why he recognizes them as belonging to him: "For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in, I needed clothes and you clothed me, I was sick and you looked after me, I was in prison and you came to visit me" (verses 35-36). Jesus is talking about acts of merciful service to particular kinds of people. I fear we often read such passages and either romanticize them or fail to really consider what our Shepherd is saying to us. Think about it with me.

What is it like to serve someone who is really hungry and thirsty? I do not mean someone who has skipped lunch. I mean someone who is starving. Hungry, thirsty people are in great need. They may be demanding. They do not care about you. They do not think clearly. They want only to have their needs met. They are desperate, clamoring, grabbing.

What is it like to serve strangers? They may make no sense to you. Their ways are foreign. They seem odd. You do not know why they do what they do. You cannot serve strangers effectively until you take the time to understand them. If you do not, it is only too easy to serve them in a manner that is frightening, inappropriate, or offensive to them.

What is it like to serve naked people? Naked people want to hide from you. They feel exposed. They do not want to be seen. To not humiliate them requires great tact and care. They do not want you close. They want you to go away. Their ambivalence is overwhelming. But you cannot cover their nakedness unless you move in close.

What is it like to serve sick people? Sick people focus on their pain. It is all they can think about, and their interest in you extends only to what you can do to help them feel better. Sick people live in small worlds. Sick people talk about what

hurts. Sick people are needy and often messy. Sick people require constant care and oversight.

What is it like to serve prisoners? You cannot serve prisoners unless you go to prison. You must enter a place of locked doors and little light. You must enter a place of restricted movement. You must enter a place where you are watched and where trust is rare.

Clearly, Jesus' redemptive work demanded identification at the deepest level with the most shocking varieties of human suffering. After going through this list, Jesus makes the amazing statement that his sheep are those who do all these things for *him*: "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me" (verse 40). You see, the lesson I have learned about service is not that I am simply called to serve people, but rather that in serving those who suffer, I am in some mysterious way directly serving the One I follow.

At the close of each year, I try to invest some time before God asking him to show me a Scripture to truly learn to live out in the coming year. One year I was led to Colossians 1:24: "Now I rejoice in what was suffered for you, and I fill up in my flesh what is still lacking in regard to Christ's afflictions, for the sake of his body, which is the church." I believe this verse means we are called to be sensitive to the presence of the sufferings of Christ in all sufferers. Every time I encounter grief, I am encountering a grief *he* bore. Every time I encounter the sufferings of a stranger or a prisoner, I am encountering burdens *he* endured. The lesson of service means this: You and I live in solemn trust to the afflicted to mediate to them all that is to be obtained through the life and death of Christ. In so doing we serve the Lord Christ.

LEADERSHIP

When Jesus speaks of himself as the Good Shepherd, he says he "calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. . . . He goes on ahead of them, and his sheep follow him because they know his voice" (John 10:3-4). In order to be a fit shepherd, I must willingly go where I would take the sheep I tend.

One of my clients shared with me that a psychology professor had told her class that, if they ever decided to go into therapy, they should be very careful whom they chose as mentors. The reason? If they spent any significant amount of time in therapy, the professor explained, they would leave looking to some degree like their therapists. As the shepherd goes, so the sheep go. Only those who are faithful disciples of Jesus will be fit shepherds for the sheep.

Remember, the Good Shepherd himself became a lamb. To lead effectively we must perpetually "behold the Lamb" in our own lives. Take time to consider these questions:

- Do I really think I can lead someone out of a life of deceit if I live with ongoing, hidden sin in my own life?
- Do I really think I can lead someone away from bitterness and revenge toward his or her spouse if I harbor such feelings in my own heart?
- Do I really think I can lead someone out of captivity to an addiction if I continue to be live enslaved to something in my own life?
- Do I really think I can lead someone with grace and love when I do not deal graciously and lovingly with the people in my world?

Recently, I was working with a woman who had made the commitment to learn how to love what we might call a difficult man. Her husband is fearful, selfish, and controlling. The promise of reward in this marriage is not at all great, but the wife has chosen to learn to love rather than leave. One day while we were talking about what that love might look like, she stopped me in my tracks with a question: "I just want to know one thing before we go on: Do you work to love your husband like this?"

It was a heart-searching question, one I knew was not just from her but also from God. My husband is an easy man to love; the rewards in our nearly three decades of marriage have been great. My circumstances were a piece of cake next to hers. But the challenge still stands: If I am going to teach this woman to be Christlike, to love her husband as Christ loves us, then I must be the kind of shepherd who goes before her sheep. I need to love my husband in the same way that I am calling her to learn to love her husband.

The lesson of leadership is that shepherding is not about imparting knowledge or information. Rather, shepherding is about going before someone in order to impart life. And isn't that exactly what the Good Shepherd has done for us? There is absolutely nothing Jesus asks of us that he himself has not exemplified. He who calls us to truth is Truth. He who calls us to love one another loved us unto death. He who calls us to carry the burdens of others was broken by our burdens. He who calls us to enter the muck and mire of others' lives endured our filth. He who calls us to weep with those who weep, wept over us. The Good Shepherd goes before. Those who would lead sheep are called to go before the sheep. That is true leadership.

AS THE MASTER GOES, SO GOES THE SERVANT

I have heard that a shepherd uses his pet lambs to gather lost sheep. These lambs are so fond of being near the shepherd that, when he calls out to them, they instantly follow him, bringing the lost sheep with them. Likewise, our Shepherd asks us to be so attached to him that, no matter where he places us, others will be

induced to follow him because we have gone before them and have followed him ourselves. As we draw nearer to our Shepherd, we bring those lost sheep with us.

The redemptive work of Christ demanded that he identify at the deepest level with all the most shocking varieties of human suffering. As the Master was, so must his servants be. He who dealt with the enemy's occupation of the human heart has called us to do the same. As we follow him, we will learn lessons similar to those I have mentioned—and many more. Each of those lessons calls us to behold the Lamb and repent. As we are taught the lesson of restraint, we see the Lamb who is God in the flesh. As we are taught the lesson of humility, we see Eternal Glory setting aside rank and honor. As we are taught the lesson of service, we see the Sovereign Over All washing feet and touching the untouchable. As we are taught the lesson of leadership, we see Jesus going before, being and doing what he calls us to be and do.

To follow the Lamb is to enter into the fellowship of his sufferings. It means that, like him, we will get down in the filth of life in this world. The more we are willing to follow him into the dual mysteries of iniquity and suffering, the more of his beauty we will see. The threads of sacrifice that we discovered at the entrance of God into time will lead us directly to the throne of God where we will see his glory, not just in the heavens or in the flesh this time, but in its fullness.

Revelation 5:2-14 tells us that we will hear a mighty angel proclaiming in a loud voice, "Who is worthy to break the seals and open the scroll?" And the answer will be, "See, the Lion.... He is able." Then we will see a Lamb, looking as if it had been slain, standing in the center of the throne. And we will hear the voices of many angels, numbering ten thousand times ten thousand. They will encircle the throne and sing: "Worthy is the Lamb, who was slain, to receive power and wealth and wisdom and strength and honor and glory and praise!" Then you and I who have followed this Lamb will join with them, singing: "To him who sits on the throne and to the Lamb be praise and honor and glory and power, for ever and ever!"

Amen.

NOTES

CHAPTER 5

1. A great resource to begin in is Richard Foster's *Renovare* materials, especially *Devotional Classics* (by Foster and Smith, published by HarperSanFrancisco, 1993). Other classic works are as follows:
 - Tertullian (b. 160), *Regula Fidei* (Rule of Faith)
 - John Chrysostom (b. 345), "Dead to Sin" (a sermon)
 - Benedict of Nursia (b. 480), *The Rule*
 - John Climacus (b. 579), *The Ladder of Paradise*
 - Bernard of Clairvaux (b. 1090), *On the Love of God*
 - Francis of Assisi (b. 1182), *The Little Flowers*
 - Dante Alighieri (b. 1265), *The Divine Comedy*
 - Geoffrey Chaucer (b. 1343), *The Canterbury Tales*
 - Julian of Norwich (b. 1343), *Revelations of Divine Love*
 - Catherine of Siena (b. 1347), *The Dialogue*
 - Thomas à Kempis (b. 1380), *The Imitation of Christ*
 - Catherine of Genoa (b. 1447), *Life and Teachings*
 - Ignatius of Loyola (b. 1491), *The Spiritual Exercises of St. Ignatius*
 - John Calvin (b. 1509), *Golden Booklet of the True Christian Life*
 - Teresa of Avila (b. 1515), *The Interior Castle*
 - John of the Cross (b. 1542), *The Dark Night of the Soul*
 - Francis de Sales (b. 1567), *Introduction to the Devout Life*
 - George Herbert (b. 1593), *The Temple*
 - John Milton (b. 1608), *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*
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 - Jeremy Taylor (b. 1613), *The Rule and Exercise of Holy Living*
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 - George Fox (b. 1624), *The Letters of George Fox*
 - John Bunyan (b. 1628), *Grace Abounding to the Chief of Sinners*
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