



## World Christian Fellowship

[www.wcflondon.com](http://www.wcflondon.com)  
[wcflondon@gmail.com](mailto:wcflondon@gmail.com)

### **Pastors lead by feeding the flock.**

**John 21:15–19**, *So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.”*

*He said to him, “Feed My lambs.” <sup>16</sup>He said to him again a second time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” He said to Him, “Yes, Lord; You know that I love You.” He said to him, “Tend My sheep.”*

<sup>17</sup>*He said to him the third time, “Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me?” Peter was grieved because He said to him the third time, “Do you love Me?” And he said to Him, “Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You.” Jesus said to him, “Feed My sheep. <sup>18</sup>Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.” <sup>19</sup>This He spoke, signifying by what death he would*

*glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."*

The central work of the pastor is leading by feeding.

Jesus is raised from the dead.

This is His third appearance.

It's by the Sea of Galilee.

He has just performed a miracle by telling them to drop their nets on the other side of the boat, and they gather 153 big fish into a net. They recognize it's Jesus.

Peter dives in and they drag the net to the shore. They have breakfast with Jesus, and then come these questions.

**John 21:15**, *So when they had eaten breakfast, Jesus said to Simon Peter, "Simon, son of Jonah, do you love Me more than these?" He said to Him, "Yes, Lord; You know that I love You." He said to him, "Feed My lambs."*

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*grieved because He said to him the third time, "Do you love Me?" And he said to Him, "Lord, You know all things; You know that I love You." Jesus said to him, "Feed My sheep.*

Few weeks earlier there was an exchange between Peter and Jesus.

**John 13:36–38**, *Simon Peter said to Him, "Lord, where are You going?" Jesus answered him, "Where I am going you cannot follow Me now, but you shall follow Me afterward." <sup>37</sup>Peter said to Him, "Lord, why can I not follow You now? I will lay down my life for Your sake." <sup>38</sup>Jesus answered him, "Will you lay down your life for My sake? Most assuredly, I say to you, the rooster shall not crow till you have denied Me three times.*

Jesus knew four things Peter did not know.

Peter is going to deny three times tonight.

Peter does not love Jesus the way he should.

Peter cannot, therefore, follow Jesus now.

Peter will follow Jesus afterward.

The sovereignty of Jesus.

Jesus is saying, "I know your coming down. I know your coming up. Nothing surprises me. I have got this under control here.

- Your sin is certain,
- Your forgiveness,

- Your redemption,
- You serving Me,
- You following Me, and
- Your rock-like role are certain!

An amazing statement.

Luke put it when he recorded it.

**Luke 22:31–32,**

So, Jesus prayed for Peter. He knew the answer. Peter’s faith and love and courage failed, but not utterly. He wasn’t Judas.

Jesus was saying to Peter, “You will follow me after. Yes, you will. When you have turned, strengthen your brothers. The reason you’re going to have the strength to strengthen your brothers and do the work I call you to do is that you are going to love me then.”

The Words of Eternal Life

So, here we are beside the sea.

Three questions corresponding to three denials.

Peter had said, “I deny you. I deny you. I deny you,” and then, “I love you. I love you. I love you.”

Jesus responds three times,

“Feed my lambs. Shepherd my sheep. Feed my sheep.”

In John 14, he said three statements about love and obedience.

**John 14:15**, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

**John 14:21**, *He who has My commandments and keeps them, it is he who loves Me. And he who loves Me will be loved by My Father, and I will love him and manifest Myself to him.”*

**John 14:23**, *Jesus answered and said to him, “If anyone loves Me, he will keep My word; and My Father will love him, and We will come to him and make Our home with him.*

Again, now Jesus applies that to Peter right here in this situation and his shepherding obedience.

He says, “Feed them. Feed them.” That call to feed the sheep interprets the shepherding. He says feed, shepherd, and feed.

**So, what does he mean by shepherd the people?**

He means feed them.

**What should he feed them with?**

I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall not hunger.

**John 6:35**, *And Jesus said to them, “I am the bread of life. He who comes to Me shall never hunger, and he who believes in Me shall never thirst.*

**John 6:51**, *I am the living bread which came down from heaven. If anyone eats of this bread, he will live forever; and the bread that I shall give is My flesh, which I shall give for the life of the world."*

**John 6:54**, *Whoever eats My flesh and drinks My blood has eternal life, and I will raise him up at the last day.*

Now, that last statement was so bizarre, commending cannibalism, that the people just left. They thought, "He is crazy!"

**John 6:66**, *From that time many of His disciples went back and walked with Him no more.*

**John 6:63**, *It is the Spirit who gives life; the flesh profits nothing. The words that I speak to you are spirit, and they are life.*

He is saying, "It's the words. Don't leave me. I don't mean cannibalism. It's the words. If you want to have the life that I give, feed on my words. My words are spirit and life."

So, when we come to John 21 and we hear him say, "Feed my sheep," we understand he means, "Feed them with my word. I am the life-giving nutrition that they will receive through the fullness of you feeding them with my word."

## My Sheep Hear My Voice

### **What happens when you feed sheep well with the words of Jesus?**

**John 10:3–5**, *To him the doorkeeper opens, and the sheep hear his voice; and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. <sup>4</sup>And when he brings out his own sheep, he goes before them; and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. <sup>5</sup>Yet they will by no means follow a stranger, but will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers.”*

**John 10:16**, *And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

Faithful shepherds are so relentless in feeding with the word of Christ!

True sheep hear, they taste the food of the word, and they follow that shepherd.

Pastors this is the only kind of following you want.

You don't want non-sheep following you.

The central work of a pastor is to lead by feeding, where does it come from?

Where does a pastor get that capacity?

How does he do it?

Where does it lead him?

## **1. Where does it come from?**

It comes from loving Jesus.

Jesus says,

**Do you love me?**

Feed my sheep.

**Do you love me?**

Shepherd my sheep.

**Do you love me?**

Feed my sheep.

It is very clear and unmistakable.

You don't need any high-level education to see that. Love for Jesus overflows in feeding the flock with the words of Jesus. That's what lovers of Jesus do. They feed people with the words of Jesus.

Don't jump to the conclusion that loving Jesus means obeying Jesus. It doesn't mean obeying Jesus. It is the cause of obeying Jesus.

**John 14:15**, *“If you love Me, keep My commandments.*

I have had so many people argue that loving Jesus is obedience. It's not!

It results in obedience.

They are not the same thing.

Loving Jesus means receiving the bread, drinking of the living water, and saying, “That’s really good. I am satisfied with that bread and that water. I am in love with that bread and that water.” That is love to Jesus.

**Matthew 10:37**, *He who loves father or mother more than Me is not worthy of Me. And he who loves son or daughter more than Me is not worthy of Me.*

When Jesus asks, “Peter, do you love Me? Do you love Me?”

Jesus means,

Peter, do you value Me as all-satisfying bread?

Do you value Me as all-satisfying living water?

Am I your soul’s treasure?

That is what loving Jesus is.

So, the first and greatest battle in the ministry is to love Jesus.

It is a battle to love Jesus more than,  
Money,  
Fame,  
Success in the ministry,  
Family, and  
Life.

The steadfast love of the Lord is better than life.

**Psalm 63:3**, *Because Your lovingkindness is better than life, My lips shall praise You.*

Give yourself to the greatest task every day. Feed on Jesus to your soul's satisfaction. That's where leading by feeding comes from for all of us.

Every one of you leads in some capacity.

You lead a family.

You lead a small group.

You lead a friend to Christ.

Everybody is a leader at some level, and therefore this message is for every believer.

## **2. How do you do it?**

I am not thinking mainly of preaching here, though its implications for preaching are massive.

Leading by feeding happens, or not, everywhere you open your mouth and everywhere you put your fingers on a keyboard with an email or a blog or a tweet. The point is feeding.

Am I feeding?

Am I leading by feeding?

Leaders may be called upon to counsel people in an amazing array of issues. It is beyond your imagination right now how bizarre and complicated they are going to be.

Pastors are going to be called to stand beside some dying saints with their family all around you, expecting you to speak words of inestimable preciousness.

Pastors are going to speak at weddings, banquets, conferences, school chapels, small groups, staff meetings, family devotions, and gospel encounters on the street.

Pastors are going to write books, blogs, tweets, Facebook, and Instagram posts, and who knows what other technologies that may develop in the next 100 years.

Every time you open your mouth, you will lead somebody somewhere. Every time you write something or say something, you will feed and lead, or not.

Some shepherds try to get a following.

They try to grow a church.

They try to lead a movement by being trendy in the way they dress, clever in the way they talk, culturally cool in their references to the latest movie, sharp in their organizational skills, stirring with their emotional stories, relationally manipulative with flattery, impressive with rationality, overwhelming with the force of their personality, and shrewd in their branding.

When those methods of leading succeed, and they do, the church grows and the followers increase, but not with the sheep.

**John 10:27**, *My sheep hear My voice, and I know them, and they follow Me.*

The sheep are hungry.

They are scattered.

**John 10:16**, *And other sheep I have which are not of this fold; them also I must bring, and they will hear My voice; and there will be one flock and one shepherd.*

They are everywhere.

You cannot see them.

They are dead in sin right now.

They don't look like followers of Jesus yet. But in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the voice of Jesus, they awaken.

Shrewd leadership, in order to grow churches other ways than the feeding with the word, succeed to our own destruction.

Be saturated with the word of Christ that every time you open your mouth in a small group, staff meeting, counselling session, or a sermon, God's people feel fed.

**Colossians 3:16-17**, *Let the word of Christ dwell in you richly in all wisdom, teaching and admonishing one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord. <sup>17</sup>And whatever you do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God the Father through Him.*

Church leadership is not by politics.

Do not use to lead with political manoeuvring.

Do not try to lead by threats.

Do not try to lead by self-pity.

Do not try to curry favour by taking people out to lunch or creating factions.

Personally, I always give the answer by quoting a bible verse, never give my opinion unless they ask for it.

If you bring Bible verses to bear with true, contextually accurate interpretation relating to the issues at hand, you lead sheep and elders.

The man who knows his Bible best applies it best, winsomely, and humbly. It doesn't matter what rank he holds. It doesn't matter what office he holds. Eyes turn.

When you set your heart to lead God's people into faith, hope, love, righteousness, justice, mercy, missions, courage, strength, and Christ-exalting joy.

You don't want any other following.

Let the voice of Jesus be heard in every meeting, every devotion, every chapel, every conference, every sermon, and every conversation.

### **Holy Spirit empowers.**

The pastor/ teachers of the Word must depend on the Holy Spirit in his daily life.

The pastors' dependence on the Holy Spirit occurs when he is aware of what the Holy Spirit has done in his life and then when he is eager to obey the commandments of the Word of God in regard to the Holy Spirit.

When a person places his or her faith in Jesus as Saviour and Lord, the Holy Spirit brings to pass several dynamics to the life of the believer.

#### **a) Indwelling of the Holy Spirit.**

The Holy Spirit indwells the believer at the moment of conversion.

**Romans 8:9**, *But you are not in the flesh but in the Spirit, if indeed the Spirit of God dwells in you. Now if anyone does not have the Spirit of Christ, he is not His.*

The Holy Spirit does not come in and then move out when a believer sins like a person who checks in and out at the hotel. The Holy Spirit comes into the believer's life and finds a permanent residence there.

When the preacher is aware that God in His grace saved him, he should be eternally grateful for the work of the Spirit in his life.

#### **b) Sealed by the Holy Spirit.**

When a person comes to faith in Jesus Christ, the Holy Spirit seals the believer.

**Ephesians 1:13**, *In Him you also trusted, after you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation; in whom also, having believed, you were sealed with the Holy Spirit of promise,*

The sealing refers to an official mark of identification placed on a letter, contract, or other document. That document was officially under the authority of the person whose insignia was on the seal.

When one becomes a believer in Jesus Christ, he or she is placed under the authority of Jesus Christ.

When the preacher is aware that he has been sealed by the Holy Spirit, he should rejoice that he no longer is under the authority of Satan but under the authority of Christ!

### **c) Anointed by the Spirit.**

The Holy Spirit baptizes the believer at the moment of conversion.

**1 Corinthians 12: 13**, *For by one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—whether Jews or Greeks, whether slaves or free—and have all been made to drink into one Spirit.*

Many sincere Christians seek the baptism of the Holy Spirit. However, nowhere in Scripture are we commanded to seek it. The baptism of the Holy Spirit takes place in one's life when the person gives his or her life to Jesus Christ.

I believe that one does not receive the Holy Spirit in parts but in His entirety at the moment of conversion. When the proclaimer of God's Word is aware that he has been baptized by the Holy Spirit, it should motivate him to seek even greater intimacy with God through the Holy Spirit.

#### **d) Holy Spirit empowers with gifts.**

The Holy Spirit provides discernment to the person in relation to his call to preach. God calls individuals to the ministry of proclamation.

Jeremiah 1:4-5, *then the word of the Lord came to me, saying:*  
<sup>5</sup>*“Before I formed you in the womb I knew you; Before you were born I sanctified you; I ordained you a prophet to the nations.”*

When a man receives the call from God to ministry, the Holy Spirit provides discernment to the nature and the purpose of the call. **Acts 9: 6-17.**

The Holy Spirit gives spiritual gifts to individuals when they trust Jesus as Saviour and Lord (**Romans 12: 3-8; 1 Corinthians 12: 8-11, 27-31; Ephesians 4: 11-12; 1 Peter 4: 10-11**).

The Holy Spirit has called the pastors to the ministry, must discerns what his spiritual gifts may be—whether they are knowledge, wisdom, preaching, teaching, or encouragement, among others.

### **3. Where does that lead?**

Where does leading by feeding lead?

**John 21:18–19**, *Most assuredly, I say to you, when you were younger, you girded yourself and walked where you wished; but when you are old, you will stretch out your hands, and another will gird you and carry you where you do not wish.*<sup>19</sup> *This He spoke, signifying by what death he would glorify God. And when He had spoken this, He said to him, "Follow Me."*

Remember that just weeks before this Peter had said, “Lord, why cannot I follow you now? I will lay down my life for you”

**John 13:17**, *If you know these things, blessed are you if you do them.*

Jesus replied, “You are not going to follow me now. You are not ready. You don’t love me as you ought. You don’t have the courage to do what you say you are going to do. But you will follow me afterward.”

But now Jesus is saying to him, “You are ready, Peter. You are going to follow Me all the way down. You are going to be crucified. That’s why I am testing you.”

With that, every romantic notion of leadership evaporates.

Maybe you thought it was going to be cool — a big following, a big church, and lots of great music. It meant crucifixion for Peter.

So, I don’t know whether the Lord will call you or me to martyrdom. In a sense, that particular detail is not the main point.

John 21:19 points to the main point. Jesus said this to show by what kind of death Peter would glorify God.

Living and dying to the glory of God, that is the point.

If we feed on Christ daily and find our deepest joy in Him.  
What comes from that overflow in feeding others, God will be glorified, whether we live or whether we die.

There is no better way than leading by feeding.  
There's no better way to get ready to live fruitfully and to get ready to die than to lead by feeding.