

# Lambs, Sheep, Shepherds, and Getting it Together

(Elders Conference—2019)

Roy Assanti

What I do is manage the CBCG in Australia. They have been looking for an elder over there for a while now. I sure could use the help of someone. Not that I'm overly burdened, I just, I like a buddy to be with me.

In managing the office, we are converted; we have God's Spirit inside of us. Somehow, you know, he's got a handle this: one thinks one way or another things another way. and you sort of got to be the in between to bring everyone together. We can't judge. But we try to bring people together and provide an accord and understanding between them.

It's not everyone, but we've had a few in the past. They're all wonderful. Aussies are wonderful, they're lovely. But we're different. What I want to talk about today, I thought about it, and I have titled this *Lambs, Sheep, Shepherds, and Getting it Together*.

We've all been lambs; we've all been at the start when we were called. What was it like? Should we forget? Yes, I always say Psa. 78. Israel went wrong because they forgot. They forgot all about it. They forgot their start. They forgot how God worked with them and brought them out of bondage. *We were all in bondage!* But we should never forget how God worked with each of us individually.

It was October 1973, the Yom Kippur War was on the way. What was in there was the U.S. and Russia was in there, and you didn't know whether it was going to escalate. In the Church they was saying 'we're in the gun lap.' It was getting close. It was that atmosphere of peril. I had a lot of urgency. It was October 6<sup>th</sup> to the 26<sup>th</sup> the Yom Kippur War was. In those days if I prayed for 10 minutes I felt like Moses, Whoa! what do I do?

In time, with all of us, there is a problem of what I will term as *spiritual inertia* that we have to get past. I'm going to read it. One of them is a *tendency to do nothing, or to remain unchanged, sticking points!* Another one in physics, it is the property of better by matter continues its existing state of rest, or uniform motion in a straight line, *unless the state is changed by an external force.* We can apply that spiritually. We have sticking points, but we've got to keep moving to grow.

I remember when I spoke to an elder, I remember the first elder I spoke to, and not long after he was gone! I thought, *how can you be gone?* What's the big idea, this is not supposed to happen; it's urgent. And every time I saw an elder and I

spoke to a minister of the Church, I seemed to get a shot in the arm. I seemed to be encouraged and inspired by it. That's the way it is with sheep.

The Apostle Paul put it this way; 2-Corinthians 2:14: "But thanks *be* to God, Who always leads us triumphant in Christ, and manifests **the fragrance** of His knowledge through us in every place."

I guess that's what I sensed every time I spoke to an elder. We spoke and I was talking about where we're going, the direction, and I sense this 'fragrance' an internal fragrances, internal joy and internal strength that comes from God's Spirit. It seems to rub off on you. That's what I felt, sensed and experienced back then.

Verse 15: "For we are Christ's **sweet perfume...**" Here he goes again; it's a kind of a metaphor for God's Spirit, the presence of God's Spirit. By some, as I term it, it's a period of *spiritual osmosis*; we sense it. And we do sense when we're in that company of someone who brings that 'fragrance' of God.

Verse 15: "For we are Christ's sweet perfume to God among those who are being saved and among those who are perishing...there's another perception] ... to those *who are perishing, we are a stench of death unto death...*" (vs 15-16).

Sometimes you speak to someone who just doesn't get it and get off the subject. They don't want to hear! It's like that hard ground, that hardened path (Matt. 13). It just doesn't penetrate!

What is it that penetrates with us? We need to go back and think about when we received and hold on to that. Because it penetrated in the mind and the heart within us. We need to hang on to that.

Verse 17: "For we are not like the many, who for *their own* profit are corrupting the Word of God..."

It's been my experience with the elders in the Christian Biblical Church of God, that they are not in it for profit. They're working hard and sacrificing, working a job and putting their heart and prayers into the messages, especially as we've been talking about in the **Go To Meeting**. Go To Meeting is called *video conferencing*. But we've noticed that this motivation is inspiration, *inertia busting messages* that tend to move us, encourage us and inspire us. We speak with sincerity as from God, before God, and in Christ.

We all have our hassles, and we all have our difficulties. But as I can observe, personally, we all are dedicated when it comes to giving, speaking, shepherding. We give it our all! There's not one exception!

Paul had to make a judgment, and the judgment was to empower this congregation because of the problems that we're having. Paul sought to empower them and go ahead, be encouraged, solve the problems.

2-Corinthians 2:10: "But to whom you forgive anything, I also *forgive*; and if I also have forgiven anything, to whomever I have forgiven *it*, for your sakes *I forgave it in the person of Christ.*"

Elders need to make judgments. You need to assess certain situations and with God's inspiration and strength, we need to try and find a solution. Just a few general examples that I have come across, like I've come across one situation where someone says, 'Something's wrong; I don't feel close to God anymore. But if everything is right; it shouldn't be like this.'

Knowing the situation, we went through: Look, this has happened, that's happened, and that's happened. Now you are released from that problem. So could it be now that the spiritual message to you from God is, 'Okay, pressure's off? Will you still seek Me, you still gotta look for Me.' So, the solution that I gave you, it's not in your head, it just comes to you.' This is what you've got to say to help, to assist to break that inertia. Standing still is concern.

So, now that the pressure is off, 'You need to get on your knees, you need to pray, you need to exert strength and force.' Normally, I have a long conversation. I say probably an hour or so, but that one was a short one. He wanted to get off the phone. 'I wonder why you wanted to get off the phone.' I thought he's going go straight to his knees, seek and move, break the inertia. That's what we need. *When we have the sticking points, we need to move forward!*

Another generalized situation was at a standstill, what's going on. He had a trial, a health trial of a loved one. Again, there the situation was to point out into a space: 'Where are you?' Inertia set in, it wasn't moving, but there was a sickness of a loved one. I said, 'Well, there it is. That's there to move you. It's an indicator that you have to keep moving.' And again, got the picture.

That's the job. I suppose that's one of the things that elders need to be aware of, to be aware of the state of their flocks. To know! I think somehow

God gives it to us. To just say that this is what you've got to do. Why? What is this about?

Verse 11: So that we... [sometimes we mix words, we together, the brethren—the sheep and the shepherd-- that's what it means] ... may not be outwitted by Satan..."—it's a team effort!

"...for we are not ignorant of his schemes" (v 11). *So, that's the scheme of the adversary to make you stop!*

You cannot stop, you've got to keep moving regardless of where you are, what stage you're at. Sometimes things hold us back, but we need to look forward

Philippians 3:13: "Brethren, I do not count myself as having attained; but *this one thing I do*—forgetting the things that are behind, and reaching forth to the things that are ahead."

To those that we might call sheep, who have understanding and have the maturity, they also can stop the past problems. I lament these other situations that come up, but what is the instruction?

Verse 14: "I press toward *the* goal for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus. So then, let as many as *be* perfect be of this mind. And if *in* anything you are otherwise minded, God will reveal even this to you. Nevertheless, *in regard* to that which we have attained, let us walk by the same rule, let us be of the same mind. Brethren, be imitators together of me.." (vs 14-17).

The shepherd's need to provide leadership, direction. When I find inertia, you got to keep moving.

"...and bear in mind those who walk in this way, as you have us *for an example*" (v 17).

This is the problem we all have: I raised the point of not being outwitted by Satan. This is what we face, all of us. We can't be ignorant. You can't see spiritual things. But you know, in John 3, it's kind of like the wind that blows, you don't know where it comes from, *spirit*. We're talking about that's God's Spirit, that spirit. The adversary is a spirit. You can't see where the wind comes; you can see where it goes. But you see feel the effect as it moves you. Which way are you being moved?

Ephesians 2:2: "In which you walked in times past..."

The pressure is to bring us back to where we were. We have to hold our ground. We have to move forward as George S. Patton said when he went to Europe, 'Men, I don't want to hear anyone say we're holding our ground. We ain't holding nothing, we're moving forward.' That is the mandate for us.

“...according to the course of this world, according to the prince of the power of the air, the spirit...” (v 2).

You can't see it, it's like the wind, but you can sure feel your emotions, your feelings, that intensity to bring you back to another way of thinking that you know isn't right. You have to move away forward, not stand still. The answer is *we're moving forward!*

“...that is now working within the children of disobedience” (v 2).

Hebrews 10:39—this is a danger to keep in mind: “**But we are not of those who draw back unto destruction...**”

Can't go back. There's no turning back. *After we're baptized, we have God's Spirit we only move forward!* And whatever there is whatever force, whatever motive that would have a stop and regress, you can't have it.

“...rather, we are of faith unto the saving of the soul” (v 39). *So the message is:*

- we gotta fight inertia
- we got to keep moving
- we got to be encouraged
- we got to be motivated
- we don't stand still
- we don't move back

Here's a mandate for all and especially elders:

Luke 17:1: “Then He said to the disciples, ‘It is impossible that no offenses will come...’ *That's the age-old story!*

How did the angelic rebellion start? God's angels, righteous angels, rebelled. How did it start?

“...but woe to the one by whom they come!” (v 1)—*the offenses!*

You're feeling cheated? Who's this guy? You know, Who is God? I should be #3.

Was that the message that Satan broadcasted to the angels? That feeling of being cheated, not fair, not right.

Verse 2: “It is better... [the one by whom offenses come] ...for him that a millstone be put around his neck... [pretty serious stuff] ...and he be cast into the sea, than that he should cause one of these little ones to offend.”

Luke 10 is an example of a problem of one of these humps in the process of living Godly and an example of how offenses come about and what they look like. Let's see how Christ handled it.

Luke 10:38: “Now, it came to pass as they were going that He came into a certain village; and a certain woman named Martha received Him into her house.” Obviously, there were people there as the context will show that Christ was teaching.

Verse 39: “And she had a sister called Mary, who sat down at Jesus' feet and was listening to His message. But Martha was distracted...” (vs 39-40).

She's sitting there with her eyes open, and looking, and the sister thinks she's lazy. ‘I'm working like crazy.’ She probably gave some of these looks. It must have built up. Don't situations like that come up with all of us when something builds up, we don't communicate. We don't say anything. We have a missing of minds. And we get an attitude. She had an attitude. What happened?

Verse 40: “But Martha was distracted because of much serving; and she came to Jesus and said...” This is a public rebuke; ‘tell her to get up, I'm pushed like crazy and can't do all this by myself.

It's interesting to see how Christ handled it. “...she came to Jesus and said, ‘Lord, is it of no concern to You...’” (v 40). ‘*Look at what's happening, are You blind?*’ I mean, she's rebuking Christ!

“...‘Lord, is it of no concern to You that my sister has left me to serve alone?...’” (v 40). *Tell her so she'll help me!*

What would you do in a situation like that? You extrapolate it, put it into different circumstances and situations. How did Christ handle it? Did He say, ‘Pipe down and keep going?’ *No! A warmth and a love exuded here.* Listen to this:

Verse 41: Then Jesus answered and said to her, ‘Martha, Martha... [Who knows how He said it] ...you are full of care and troubled about many things.’”

I understand! That's what's necessary to show an understanding of where they are. I understand where you are. I can see it. I know it. But look at look at what's happening. She's not gawking with our eyes wanting to get out of work. She's found something. She has found a treasure, a hidden treasure that she's gonna have to pay to buy. She has found a pearl of great price that she knows, she recognizes, she desires.

Verse 42: “‘But there is one need above all else; and Mary has chosen the good part, which shall not be taken from her.’” *What a way to put it!* She's got it!

Luke 17:3: “Watch yourselves...” **Warning!**  
What does that mean?

- deal with it
- don't ignore it
- don't sweep it under the carpet
- pay attention, there's a lesson here

“...and if your brother commits a sin against you, rebuke him; and if he repents, forgive him” (v 3)—*that's the instruction!*

Verse 4: “And if he sins against you seven times in a day, and seven times in a day returns to you, saying, ‘I repent,’...” ‘Sorry, I didn't mean it.’ *Wait a minute, you said that before!*

But what's the instruction? *It's tough it's seven times!* ‘I'll repent, forgive me,’ “...you shall forgive him.” (v 3).

Verse 5: “Then the apostles said to the Lord, ‘Increase our faith.’” *Whoa! That's a hard one!* How do you do that in a day seven times. He kicks you up the pants, and you're sorry. Seven times! It's hard!

I'll make a point here. There's two things to that. It's really hard to forgive someone. It's hard! Sometimes. I've experienced it. It's hard! But I've got to do it. I don't want to, I don't have a choice. I've got to do it. That's what I'm instructed, very simple.

The other side of it is, it's not easy to receive the forgiveness. Not easy! You want to just want to justify it a little bit more. So very simple. Forgive, except it! Seven times in a day!

Matthew 18:1—this points us to the attitude: “At that time the disciples came to Jesus, saying, ‘Who then is *the* greatest in the Kingdom of Heaven?’ And after calling a **little** child to *Him*, Jesus set him in their midst” (vs 1-2).

In other words, gather around men, fellows, guys, and the child was in the middle, have a look. Is that pointing to her character, that God Himself has retained, that simplicity! Think about it. God is eternal, from forever, to forever. And suddenly, He makes temporary, and the temporary is just a little bit, but it also has to grow from a speck to birth, to childhood; He's pointing to childhood. Remember that! So, as opposed to from ever to forever, God thought about temporary in simplicity.

Now, I have played this in the Go To Meeting. I have got my little granddaughter here. She's three years old, singing a little song, it's only 10 seconds. I'll play it for you because sometimes listening, we understand what's going on. Doesn't that say volumes of the simplicity of the innocence of a little child! *That is what we are to retain!* We're to grow, but we have to retain that element in

our character. And you know, that is a part of God's very character. So we go on, we mature that we have to still be as a child. As we grow, we have to be simple.

John 13:35: “By this shall everyone know... [here's another commandment] ... that you are My disciples—**if**... [conditional] ...you love one another.”

What do you mean about love? What's the description of love? Here's another description that might fit in a little bit.

Proverbs 17:9: “He who covers a transgression seeks love... [‘Forgive me.’ Both a very difficult to do.] ...but he who repeats a matter alienates friends.”

I didn't ask Fred's permission if I could read this in another translation, but I will. I'll ask forgiveness after. [Fred says, ‘That's a \$500 fine!'] Well, this one suits me because it has the exact wording; Proverbs 17:9: “But he repeats a matter alienates a friend.”

Luke 17:7—Christ is telling you and me what is like: “But which of you... [Is it easy? It's not! It's tough!] having a servant plowing or shepherding... [acting as a shepherd] ...will immediately say *to him* when he comes in from the field, ‘Come and sit down *and eat*?’”

You're coming in from the field, you're hot, you're tired, you're dirty, you're sweating; you've finished the day of physical work. You want a break! What happens?

Verse 8: “Rather, will he not say to him, ‘Prepare what I may eat, and gird yourself, *and* serve me while I eat and drink; and afterwards you may eat and drink?’” *Then afterwards, you may eat and drink!*

You're tired? You've had it? No, you're not finished. You gotta go over and above. It's not easy. That's the point. And we need to mind that there's one time when God willing, for each and every one of us, that Christ will do that for us that He will gird Himself and serve us. He's not asking you or me to do something that He wouldn't do.

Verse 9: “Is he thankful to that servant because he did the things that were commanded him? I think not. Likewise you also, when you have done all *the* things that are commanded you...” (vs 9-10).

You've worked, you've come in, you've served. When you've done it all, say, “...**We are unprofitable servants, because we have done that which we were obligated to do**” (v 10).

I guess what I'm saying, what I'm looking at as I choose these Scriptures, and I examine myself first. it's not an easy task. It's not an easy task to do, to do certain things. But we're not called to do easy stuff.

Luke 13:23: "And one said to Him, 'Lord, *are* those who are being saved few?'...."

What Christ does, He brings into focus, and He brings you and me into the picture. He makes it personal.

"...Then He said to them, 'Strive with *your* whole being... [it's not a walk in the park, it's hard] ... to enter in through the narrow gate..." (vs 23-24).

It's not a big and wide, it's only just a narrow passage. It's hard! It's tough!

"...for many, I say to you, will seek to enter in, but shall not be able" (v 24). **Warning!**

Anybody watch Lost in Space. When I hear that? I hear that robot saying, 'Warning! Warning! There's an alien.'

Philippians 2:5: "Let this mind be in you, which *was* also in Christ Jesus."

Romans 13:14: "But *let us* put on... [our walk, our journey, because our nature will not cut it. We have to put it on] ... the Lord Jesus Christ, and not make any allowance for the flesh... [because the flesh is always there. Remember, Satan wants to pull us back to where we were] ...to fulfill its lusts."

That applies across the board, we all know our weak points. What is it? vanity? violence? what is it? hatred? What is it? **Drawn back!** It's like that chink in the armor. We've got to strengthen those things.

Eph. 4:22 is putting the same thing another way. As it says 'line upon line, here little, there a little,' we put it all together.

Ephesians 4:22: "That concerning your former conduct, you put off the old man... [this is going to always happen until you close your eyes and get put off the old man] ...which is corrupt according to deceitful lusts; and that you be renewed in the spirit of your mind; and that you put on the new man... [Christ, being Christ's life] ...which according to God is created in righteousness and Holiness of the Truth" (vs 22-24).

Well, I'm going to conclude with just a few Psalms. We need to look forward and have hope. Because if we don't have hope, we'll slip back. So that's one of the things **that propels us forward, keep the future in mind, the direction!**

Bear in mind Proverbs 29:18: "Where *there*

*is* no vision, the people perish; but happy is he who keeps the Law."

Happy today, tomorrow, and right to the end! If you think about it, like in Matt. 25, the virgins that did not have the oil had to go and earn it. How is it earned"

- day-by-day
- week-by-week
- month-by-month
- year-by-year

*continual!*

At the last, at the end, you realize this urgency, there is real motivation. But it says it's going to be too late. Now, we have to do the hard stuff, not what pulls us back. What propels us for that future.

Psalms 15:1 "LORD, who shall dwell in Your tabernacle?...". This is the state that we want to be in, that we move towards *day-by-day, week-by-week, month-by-month, year-by-year!*

"...Who shall dwell upon Your Holy hill? He who walks uprightly, and works righteousness, and speaks the Truth in his heart" (vs 1-2). *Follow the instructions that I give you* is the lesson that Christ gives us there.

Verse 3: "He does not slander with his tongue...."

I frustrate myself Why do I say that? Why did I do that? And we have to pull ourselves back continually. **Keep walking; keep moving and moving forward!**

"...nor does evil to his neighbor, nor takes up a reproach against his neighbor; in whose eyes a vile person is despised, but he honors those who fear the LORD..." (vs 3-4).

If there's someone else that has God's Spirit inside of them, do I honor this person? How can I honor?

I've had a unique experience preparing a sermon, I have to have it in heart and mind. Otherwise, it just reading words. I can't just read words, can't do it. If I have to go and make peace with someone I've got to do it or I can't speak; I'll be false. Even if it is to repent before God. I'm sorry, the first opportunity. I'll do it! I'll do it! Then He opens it up, opens His Word.

"...he who swears to his own hurt and does not change it" (v 4).

I can say a lot more, but I won't. 'I accept your apology. I accept. I don't judge you but I'll accept it seven times in a day.

Remember these things are *the aroma of life* that doesn't end. God's Spirit is like *an aroma, like a sweet savor!*

Psalm 133:1: "Behold, how good... [this is what it's like] ... and how pleasant... [to embrace] ... it is for brethren to dwell together in unity! It is like the precious ointment upon the head that ran down upon the beard, Aaron's beard, that went down to the hem of his garments; like the dew of Hermon that descended upon the mountains of Zion, for there the LORD commanded the blessing, **even life forevermore**" (vs 1-3).

*That's the sweet smell of God's Spirit!*  
That's from the Chief Shepherd to all of us. *To the lambs, the young ones, the sheep and to the shepherd's!*

Scriptural References:

- 1) 2 Corinthians 2:14-17, 10-11
- 2) Philippians 3:13-17
- 3) Ephesians 2:2
- 4) Hebrews 10:39
- 5) Luke 17:1-2
- 6) Luke 10:38-42
- 7) Luke 17:3-5
- 8) Matthew 18:1-2
- 9) John 13:35
- 10) Proverbs 17:9
- 11) Luke 17:7-10
- 12) Luke 13:23-24
- 13) Philippians 2:5
- 14) Romans 13:14
- 15) Ephesians 4:22-24
- 16) Proverbs 29:18
- 17) Psalm 15:1-4
- 18) Psalm 133:1-3

Scriptures referenced, not quoted:

- Psalm 78
- Matthew 13
- John 3
- Matthew 25

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