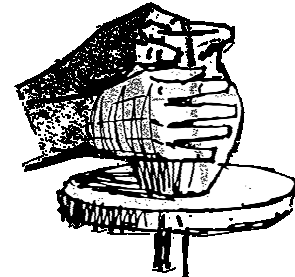


His Workmanship: Westside

*"For we are His workmanship, created in Christ
Jesus for good works."*

—Ephesians 2:10



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Isaiah 64:8

They Really Do Smell Like Sheep, part 2, from sermons by Jeff Strite and Jason Jones

[The Westside church may appoint new elders soon, and the church is praying about God's plans for church leaders.]

Shepherd-elders have real relationships with their flock. By the frequent touching (guiding the sheep, applying salve, cleaning off parasites) and their close contact and time with the sheep, the shepherds smell like sheep (they also remain the sheep of the Great Shepherd). Shepherds are mentors who have walked the trail ahead of us for a long time, and thus they point us in the right direction. We are attracted to good mentors by the way they live their lives. Their lives provide a positive message which shows us the way of Christ. When we are tempted to quit, they give us courage to go on because they have kept on and endured.

Shepherds are also equippers, Eph 4:11-16; 2 Tim 3:16-17. They prepare people for service by teaching opportunities—one on one, side by side, in the pulpit, in classes, working together, laughing together—Just as Jesus prepared His disciples. They help Christians discover their God-given gifts. They guide us to areas of service that match our gifts and passions, and they provide us with the tools and skills that we need to carry out our ministry effectively. Shepherds do their best work through relationships. An elder is to be

known by the credibility of his walk with God, the genuineness of his service, and the authenticity of his relationship with the sheep. Elders cannot help but to smell like sheep. Paul gave a wonderful job description of leadership in Acts 20:25-31 with four charges to pastors. The first charge, as we saw last week, is to **A. Proclaim the Whole Counsel of God**, 26-27. A shepherd's task is to point to Christ in every lesson, to feed the church solid spiritual food that produces discernment, conviction, consistency, power, and effective sharing of the greatness of the saving work of Christ. The second charge is to **B. Watch Closely over Lives**, 28. They are the older ones who lead by experience—not merely wise life experience, but also spiritual experience, cf. 1 Tim 3:6. Spiritual watchfulness has three directions—upward to God, inward to the heart's spiritual condition, and outward to environment. They watch for God as David did, Ps 130:6. They look with patient, loving attention for fresh revelations of the character of God, of new and clear openings of His Word and will. They also keep a devoted, intelligent watch for applications of scripture in the affairs of men. Holy watchfulness toward God will find Him where foolish indifference sees only blank space. They also watch over

themselves—self-examination is at the foundation of their watchfulness. A watchful elder will keep guard over his own inner spirit. He will notice the trend of his thoughts, the choice of his will and his words, and the causes/results of his actions. He strictly follows the admonition: "Keep your heart with all diligence; for out of it are the issues of life," Pr 4:23. His holy vigilance also guards the environment of the church. He is on the lookout for the approaches of Satan in multiplied forms and stays alert for seizing golden opportunities to do good. He keeps watch out of love. The condition for watchfulness is great quietness of spirit. Flurry, agitation of spirit, terrified alarm, gloomy, despondent foreboding, or fatigued legalism that drags itself in the service of God—all make a soul unfit for watchfulness.

1. Quietness Of Spirit. God's watchers in the darkness of this age need stillness of spirit, or they will fail to see the things they are appointed to observe. Many Christians are so filled with bustle noise-hurry-excitement-fret-criticism-scheming-talkativeness that they cannot detect the gentle voice of God—nor can they know what is going on in their own hearts.

2. Christ's Appearing. Watchfulness is the elder's attitude for meeting Jesus

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Smell Like Sheep, from p. 1 when He comes. His watchful spirit fills its vessel with oil, trims its lamp, and remains ready for the long-expected hour when the cry will ring, "Behold the Bridegroom comes; go out to meet Him!" Mt 25:6.

C. Shepherd as Spirit-appointed overseers, 28. The work is appointed by the Holy Spirit: "the Spirit Himself placed" these men to watch. The early church saw themselves as affirming the Spirit's choices for leadership—leaders were not merely the choice of the people. The Holy Spirit chose them to shepherd, to feed, to pastor. He gives them decision-making responsibility, cf. Ax 15: 6, 22; 16:4. The Greek verb *poimaino* primarily means to feed and lead a flock of sheep, to tend as a shepherd, but also has the connotation of *governing, supervising, guarding, or ruling*. Paul said to feed the flock as overseers, bishops, or *episcopos*, "epi—over, above, on behalf of, have charge of; and *scopos*—to watch, keep on goal or mark," Phil 1:1; 1 Tim 3:2; Tit 1:7. This described the work of superintendents who were given charge over something to see that things were done right and well, 1 Pet 5:2-3, 1 Tim 5:17, Heb 13:17, Tit 2:15; 1 Thes 5:12; Hebrew *nachah*, to lead, guide, bring into, govern, Ps 78:14, 53, 72; Job 31:18; Ps 23:3; 27:11; 31:3; 43:3; 61:2; 67:4; 73:24; 107:30.

John MacArthur observed that "sheep are the most helpless, defenseless, straying, and dirty of animals. They require constant oversight, leading, rescue, and cleaning or they will die. Being a shepherd was good training for leading people." Sheep do not know where to go. "Sheep require more attention than any other livestock. They just can't take care of themselves. Unless their shepherd makes them move on, sheep will actually ruin a pasture, eating every blade of grass, until finally a fertile pasture is nothing but barren soil. Sheep are near-sighted and very stubborn, but easily frightened. An entire flock can be stampeded by a jack rabbit. They have little means of defense. They're timid, feeble creatures. Their only recourse is to run if no shepherd is there to protect them. They have no homing instincts. A dog, horse, cat, or bird can find its way home, but when

a sheep gets lost, it's a goner unless someone rescues it. So the over-riding principle of Ps 23 is that sheep can't make it without a shepherd," Charles Jefferson.

Pastor-elders are commanded to lead the flock. The flock is never commanded to lead the shepherd, just as children are never commanded to lead the parents. The shepherd never asks the sheep to see where they want to go. Pastors are set in charge over the church to oversee that everything happens according to the Owner's plans.

But many flocks do not want leaders to lead—they want hirelings who do what they're told, have board meetings, and occasionally fill the pulpit. When they don't, they fire them and find another who they think will do what they want. God gives pastors the commission to lead the church and commands the church to follow. "Never confuse the will of the majority with the will of God," Phillip Keller. The church is commanded to submit, Heb 13:17; 1 Pet 5:5. If the pastors decide that the church should meet at certain times, or study certain Bible books, or reach out to the community in a certain way, the church is to follow. However, God holds the pastors accountable for their decisions, and the congregation does, too. Shepherds must remember that their authority is given to them by God and is valid so long as they are acting on His behalf. It is not sheep's job to keep the shepherd in line—it is the Owner's, the Chief Shepherd's. The plurality of elders should be sufficient to keep crazy shepherds in line. But the entire church, each person, will be held accountable by the Owner for what happens at Westside, cf. 1 Tim 5:19.

D. Defend against coming attacks, 29-31. Finally, Paul commanded the elders to be alert and watch in order to defend the flock. Savage wolves would come into the flock; men would rise up from among the elders or among the church and seek to lead people astray. They would twist or pervert truth so as to rip disciples apart from the flock. This had already happened in Galatia and Corinth, and later Paul's prophetic

voice rang true in Ephesus, when Diotrephes attempted to split apart the church there under the Apostle John's watchful eye. So the elders were to protect the flock from coming attacks. Elders must protect the flock in three areas: false doctrine and worldviews, bitter infighting, and straying sheep.

1. False teaching. Pastors protect the flock. They are to be the most alert to things that are unbiblical, destructive, harmful, or hindering to the work of the church. They are continually to warn the flock of dangerous, poisonous weeds of false ideologies and idols. Therefore the pastor-elders should lead in evaluating material, books, songs, teaching, and theories. They should be the constant source of help for discernment in life. The pastors should lead the defense against cultural worldviews that stand in opposition to Biblical truth.

"But there were also false prophets among the people, even as there will be false teachers among you, who will secretly bring in destructive heresies, even denying the Lord who bought them, and bring on themselves swift destruction," 2 Pet 2:1.

Our enemy isn't so easy to spot. When we think of our enemy, some tend to picture a red suit, a tail, and a pitchfork. But Paul tells us that false teachers will deceive us, "transforming themselves into apostles of Christ. And no wonder! For Satan himself transforms himself into an angel of light," 2 Cor 11:13-14. Our enemies look righteous. They look religious. In other words, we will not always know evil by how it looks. False teachers don't always show up with snake oil and a handlebar mustache. Jesus said, "Beware of false prophets, who come to you in sheep's clothing, but inwardly they are ravenous wolves," Mt 7:15. They look like the flock. They have wool just like the other sheep. That's because they often are us, "part of the family." They could be elders, Bible teachers, preachers. They could be me—or you. And that's scary. Often wolves may not even realize they're wolves. They're so convinced that they are right that nothing else matters. So we might actually end up being wolves
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God makes my heart clean in 2015 "Create in me a clean heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me." —Ps 51:10

Smell Like Sheep, *from p. 2*

without realizing it. Savage wolves feel and think they are in the right. They are willing to destroy anything in their way to get their way. So if wolves can arise from among our number, and if those wolves could end up being us, how do we recognize when we're no longer sheep but wolves?

Wolves "*distort the truth*," 30. Truth is often one of the first victims of wolves. Sometimes that distortion is the form of false doctrine. For example, a man taught in his Wednesday night Bible study that Jesus was not the Son of God. Some of the men were appalled and approached the elders, who knew about the class. Why hadn't they dealt with the matter? Because the teacher threatened (if he couldn't teach what he wanted) to leave and take many others with him. Fear. The men convinced the elders of their responsibility to "*convict the gainsayer*," Tit 1:9, and they agreed this teacher needed to be confronted. When they approached him, he made good on his threat—he left and took one other family with him.

Sometimes the distortion of truth has to do with doctrine, but too often that distortion comes in the form of character assassination. For example, a small group wanted to rid a church of the preacher. So what did they do? They began to spread rumors in the community that the man was immoral. But they failed, because he had protected his reputation, and everyone knew these rumors were lies. When the elders investigated the rumors, they found them to be merely gossip and

Discipleship Here At Home

slander. Wolves seek to have their own way and play fast and loose with the truth. 2. *Bitter infighting.* Wolves seek power and influence. Paul said that these wolves "*distort the truth in order to draw away disciples after themselves*," 30. Wolves want the church run their way. The rest of the church should be their disciples, and if not, they are either fools or heretics. One phrase these wolves often use is "*...my church*." They think it belongs to them and should be run their way. But whose is it? Paul said, "*Feed the church of God, which He purchased with His own blood*," v. 28. This church was bought with the precious blood of Jesus. That's why shepherding is so vital! Wolves don't think that. If they can't get their own way, they forget whose church it is. They do not love it as their own, or as their own life, cf. Eph 5:25-30.

Wolves don't care whom they hurt. Paul said, "*savage wolves will come in among you, not sparing the flock*," v. 29. They're vicious, and they cause mortal harm. Wolves "*tear/ devour the prey, shed blood, destroy people, and get dishonest gain*," Ezek 22:27. They "*leave not a bone until morning*," Zeph 3:3. Jesus said, "*the wolf attacks the flock and scatters it*," Jn 10:12. They send out nasty e-mails. They try to peel off Christians to follow them as their disciples. They'll find ways to attack the character of the elders, preacher, or anyone else who opposes them. Why? Because the flock isn't as important to the wolves as control. Getting their own way is what's important to them. They don't care what is destroyed as long as they accomplish their objective of being in control. Their lust for control is insatiable—they are "*ravenous*." They'll tell you they love Jesus, but they don't. They love themselves. They don't love Jesus,
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- * **Building workday this Saturday, 10/24, 8:30 am to noon. See Jonathan for task list.**
- * **Need communion preparers for Nov. and Dec.**
- * **Return elder appointment forms this week to Larry or DeWayne.**
- * **Third quarter financial report posted online.**

PRAY FOR healing, protection, help

- **Melanie Baughn's** mother, **Barbara**—ill; Melanie has joined her mother and father in OK
- **Sandra Perry**—diabetes complications; on oxygen; port for dialysis inserted recently
- **Tracy Corray**—broken bone in foot; boot
- **Judy Sartin**—hairline fracture in left foot; ortho shoe
- **Judy Strand**—preparing for liver transplant; also broken arm, post-surgery pain
- **Sheryle McNeill**—pinched nerve
- **Ernesto Gonzalez's** father **Fidencio**—stage IV lymphoma, has started chemo
- **Linda Szymanski's** mother, age 88—fall, broke ankle, rehab post surgery
- **Letha Fink's** brother **Kenneth Morrison** of GA—liver disease, diagnosed with neuro-muscular disease
- **Kaylee Chavez**—age 10, cancer; has rallied well; treatments at St. Jude's in Memphis through Nov
- **Bill Dennis**—home recovery following rehab
- **Larry Campbell's** FL partner **Terry Hargadine's** wife **Michelle**—cancerous lymph nodes removed, latest scan shows improvement; picc line inserted for chemo
- **Kayla Knighten, Christine Adams's** daughter, needs our prayers; **Judy Strand** requests prayer for her son **Joe**; pray **Ed's** son **Rodney Schulz** and **Sheryle's** daughter **Tiffany** receive the gospel; pray **Jeff** and **Pat's** son **Mike** and grandson **Drew** return to God.
- **Sandra Perry's** daughter **Naomi** was recently in a car accident; granddaughter **Katie Redden** has a broken arm; son-in-law **Donald Redden** is on dialysis; his mother suffered cuts in collision.
- **Sylvia Chapman, Brett's** grandmother—third stage pancreatic cancer; **Brett's** grandmother **Sue**, and Aunt **Bonnie Doss**—cancer returned
- **Brittany Tope's** mother—breast cancer, improving; grandmother—on dialysis

CHRONIC CONDITIONS

- Christian Harrod; Addison Tope; Pat Wilkes; Ann Cox; Logan Corray; Rocco Jr.**—asthma
 - Orchid Cox**—chronic blood clot condition
 - Autumn Hadders**—epilepsy; celiac disease
 - Kirk Johnson**—MS
 - Menards**—**Lloyd** diabetes, Alzheimers; VA help; **Virginia** blindness from macular degeneration
 - Cheryl Reames**—fibromyalgia; diverticulitis
 - Judy Sartin**—rotator cuff injury; spinal stenosis
 - Judy and Mike Strand**—hepatitis trtment
 - Lynda Szymanski**—COPD, lung weakness
- Directory Updates** Please welcome **Scott** and **Amanda McClelland**, who have joined themselves with the disciples here (Ax 9:26): 3404 Wabash St, Denver 80238
Scott's cell: 720-254-9664
Amanda's cell: 512-423-9654
 scotty_mec@yahoo.com
Bill and **Ann Cox** have also joined Westside 18877 E. Linvale Pl, Aurora 80013
 303-766-4081 birthdays: **Bill** 8/18 **Ann** 12/26

They Smell Like Sheep, from p. 3

because they don't care for His bride. In order to get their way, they'll drag the bride of Christ through the streets and shred her wedding gown, tearing at it and tromping it down into the mud—because they think they're right—and that's all that matters.

Elders should help settle internal disputes so that they do not hinder the work of the church; and they should guide the discipline process (although it is the church as a whole that carries out the final steps). Church discipline, after all, is about "regaining the brother," Mt 18:15. If elders do not defend against these things, they create a spiritual greenhouse for Satan's minions to sow seeds of disunity and strife. God will hold them accountable for lack of action as much as for action. Satan knows that if we are fighting among ourselves, or mad at each other or at the way things are going, then we are bound to become distracted and thus pose no danger to the kingdom of darkness. Shepherds are alert to spiritual attacks—so they can deal with problems before they become major issues. They can put a stop to gossip first time they hear it, set people right before sin becomes entrenched, stop grumbling and complaining, help keep the sheep focused on kingdom priorities.

3. *Straying sheep.* Greed, idle talk, "profane babblings," false knowledge, "striving about words," idolatry, pride, falsehood, lust, foolishness—and mere failure to listen, or listening to the wrong thing—all cause sheep to stray, cf. 1 Tim 1:6-7; 6:10, 20-21; 2 Tim 2:14-19; Ps 119:21, 110, 118; Ezek 44:10; Pr 7:25; 19:27; Hos 4:12; Mic 3:5. Jesus is the Owner of the sheep—He bought them with His blood, and His sheep hear His voice, Jn 10. Sometimes God allows His sheep to stray: "You have severely broken us in the place of jackals, and covered us with the shadow of death," Ps 44:19. He may do this for discipline or to test us, but He always calls us to return, even if our hearts have become hard. "O LORD, why have You made us stray from Your ways, and hardened our heart from Your fear? Return for Your servants' sake the tribes of Your inheritance," Is 63:17; 11. Isaiah saw the addictive power of sin and the stubbornness of rebellion. He proclaimed God's Word to the people and watched them turn away in contempt, Is 5:19; 30:9-14. He realized that God's power and watchful care through His shepherds would turn His people, Is 40:11. Without watchful shepherds and the enabling grace of God, sheep will stray from God's way and our hearts will harden in our sin. Our hearts may become so hard that we deceive ourselves and others, cf. Ps 119:113. The pastor-elders should search for and pray for straying sheep (as well as take appropriate action to protect the flock from other harmful sheep). The shepherds help straying sheep come to themselves, cf. Lk 15:17. As straying people come to their senses, they must confess their failure to desire the ways of God and to walk in Him. "You rebuke the proud—the cursed, who stray from Your commandments," Ps 119:21. Sheep are oblivious, uncaring, and weak—unless shepherds lead us to connect with the passion and power of God, there is no hope for us. Elders intercede, passionately entering into the needs of the flock and storming the gates of heaven until the straying sheep are turned back to God, Jas 5:19-20; Mt 18:20; Lk 15:1-7. Shepherds treat straying sheep gently, but firmly, speaking the truth, Eph 4:15, encouraging their return, and trusting God to restore them. Jesus said, "I send you out as sheep in the midst of wolves. Therefore be wise as serpents and harmless as doves," Mt 10:16 (Lk 10:3).



meets at
13789 W. 8th Avenue
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720-295-4530

Pastors

Larry Campbell (303) 246-8810
DeWayne Howell (303) 973-7283

Preacher

Jim Reingrover (303) 973-5102

info@thechurchingolden.com

<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Westside-Church-of-Christ/276475819148309>

Assembly Schedule

Sunday

Bible classes	9:00 am
Morning assembly	10:00 am
Afternoon assembly	1:30 pm

Wednesday

Bible classes	7:30 pm
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Sunday morning

- **adult Bible class**, A Life-Changing Encounter with Christ from "The Gospel According to John," Kenny Boyd

- **sermon**, "Truths Easily Forgotten," Jim Reingrover

Sunday afternoon

- **Answering Questions**, Larry Campbell

Feeding on His Word Reading

Everyone is invited to an open Bible reading of 2 Samuel this afternoon, 10/18, 4 pm, at Sarah McMurray's house, supper after the reading. See **Joel Walker** for schedule.