

The Shepherd's Heart

Biblical

As the shepherd of His people, Jesus is able to fulfil His role, because of the perfection of His heart. In this article, we turn our attention to the biblical nature of the shepherd's heart.

Biblical Heart

We shall be examining many facets of Jesus' heart, but a good place to start is to see that it is biblical. Charles Spurgeon, once said of John Bunyan, "Why this man is a living bible. Prick him anywhere - his blood is Bibline, the very essence of the Bible flows from him." Consistently through his greatest work, "The Pilgrim's Progress," John Bunyan alludes to Scripture and quotes Scripture. This sublime work literally oozes the Bible. Now if this could be said of a mere servant of Christ, how much more can it be said of His master, the Shepherd. We can argue clearly that the biblical heart of the shepherd, pumps Scripture around His veins, so that His entire being and life is soaked in the Scriptures and fulfils the Scriptures. Where do we see this?

Jesus' heart is to fulfil the Bible

This was impressed upon us recently as we drew our series on, "making the most of sermon" to a close. We were challenged in the final two messages to ensure that we practice what we preach. This is exactly what Jesus did. He fulfilled Scripture, and indeed what He preached.

Jesus taught that the Scriptures speak of Him. We find this after His resurrection, as He seeks to encourage two despondent disciples on the road to Emmaus. Luke records this encounter in Luke 24v27, "*And beginning at Moses and all the prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.*" Jesus, read and understood that the Bible spoke of Him. Sadly, His opponents didn't see this, and in John 5v39, He had to disclose to them the error of their ways, "*You search the Scriptures, for in them you think you have eternal life; and these are they which testify of me.*" This is something Jesus, knew and stood firm on.

Furthermore, He also ensured that He lived out the Scriptures in His life. It wasn't just something passive that Jesus knew. It was also something active. A sport's commentator may speak of a runner being a champion in the making. However, if they just sit on their laurels, believing it is so, but don't put any effort in, the words of the commentator will not be fulfilled. However, if they hear the words, and then seek to live them out, they are more likely to be that champion. Jesus not only sees the truth, but fulfils it actively. In His biblically soaked, and

profound sermon on the mount, Jesus said, *“Do not think that I came to destroy the Law or the Prophets. I did not come to destroy but to fulfil.”* (Matthew 5v17). Jesus came to DO all that the Scripture said. As the Messiah, it was His heart and life, to fulfil the Father’s word in detail. From His inmost being, He gave Himself to accomplish what the scriptures laid down. Thus, he could say, in the words of Psalm 40 quoted in Hebrews 10v7, *“Behold I have come – in the volume of the book it is written of Me – to do your will, O God.”* Can there be a more amazing demonstration of this fact than to view Him praying prostrate in the Garden of Gethsemane three times, *“Not my will, but yours be done”*? (Luke 22v42). This was in the very heart of Jesus. He must do the Father’s will. This was His heart’s priority. This is the heart of our shepherd.

The shepherd fulfils His role

What does this mean for us as the sheep under the care of a biblically hearted shepherd?

Firstly, it means that He has, does and will live out Psalm 23, which describes His role as a shepherd. All the aspects of the shepherd’s work that were mentioned in the introduction, Jesus will ensure that they are all fulfilled. Not one will be left out. We may have a list of “To do’s” at the beginning of any week. How many times are there some matters left undone at the end? Jesus will leave nothing undone. He will: provide for all that we need; satisfy our spiritual thirst and hunger; revive our soul; lead us in the right way, so that we do not go astray; protect us from all evil; bring us comfort; grant victory over our enemies; ensure that we know His goodness and mercy each day; and give us confidence in the unshakeable hope He gives. Isn’t that wonderful? It is all because of the biblical heart of Jesus.

Secondly, He will ensure that His work of shepherd is carried out using the Scriptures. These will be, as it were, the tools of His trade - His shepherd’s rod and staff. Consider how our shepherd feeds us. He leads us to green pastures, so that we can gain the spiritual nourishment that we need. How does He do this? Through His precious word read and preached. Indeed, preaching is a primary means of grace to us. Christ speaks to us through the preaching and grants us appropriate spiritual food for our needs. We can all testify of the blessings that we have received from our shepherd’s hand, as we have gathered under the sound of His word on the Lord’s Day. As His heart is biblical, He will continue to bless His people in this way. May we make the most of those green pastures that He leads us to, rejoicing in His kind provision, and delighting that we have a shepherd with a biblical heart.