

HIRELING

The term hireling is used in the book of John to contrast the shepherd who cares for the sheep – the sheep obviously being the body of Christ.

John 10:12-13

“He who is a hireling, and not a shepherd, who is not the owner of the sheep, beholds the wolf coming, and leaves the sheep, and flees, and the wolf snatches them, and scatters {them.}

{He flees} because he is a hireling, and is not concerned about the sheep.”

The word hireling in the Greek means someone who works for wages. This gives an indication of what the scripture is saying here. The hireling is more interested in himself than the sheep. It may be the wages or money, it may be the title or position, it may be the sense of power over people, or it may be the chance of building his ministry. His concern and his focus is on him, not on the sheep. David realized that a position of authority is totally for the good of those under Him.

John 10:15

“even as the Father knows Me and I know the Father; and I lay down My life for the sheep.”

2 Samuel 5:12

“And David realized that the LORD had established him as king over Israel, and that He had exalted his kingdom for the sake of His people Israel.”

Jesus went to the cross for the sheep. He paid the ultimate price for them, so He has placed a high value on each one. It is, therefore, a wonderful, yet fearful thing to be given the responsibility to care for them. Paul reminds the elders from Ephesus of this in his last meeting with them.

Acts 20:28

“Be on guard for yourselves and for all the flock, among which the Holy Spirit has made you overseers, to shepherd the church of God which He purchased with His own blood.”

The genuine shepherd will stand with the flock as they weather storms, stumble through tests, sometimes taking one step back for every three steps forward. The hireling doesn't see the need to go the extra mile with them.

Additionally, Jesus indicates that the shepherd who loves the sheep is the one who loves Him.

John 21:16

“He said to him again a second time, ‘Simon, {son} of John, do you love me?’ He said to Him, ‘Yes, Lord; you know that I love you.’ He said to him, ‘Shepherd My sheep.’”