

2. Jesus Fed His Sheep Like a Shepherd

In Ezekiel 34:4, we have a passage that speaks of the failure of the shepherds of Israel. That verse says, “The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.” Then, Ezekiel shared several things Christ would do when He came. Ezekiel 34:15-16 says, “‘I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,’ says the Lord God. ‘I will seek what was lost and bring back what was driven away, bind up the broken and strengthen what was sick; but I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment.’”

Then, in Luke 4:18-19, Christ quoted Isaiah 61:1-2a to tell some of the other things He would do as a part of His ministry as a Shepherd. Luke 4:18-19 says, “‘The Spirit of the Lord is upon Me, because He has anointed Me to preach the gospel to the poor; He has sent Me to heal the brokenhearted, To proclaim liberty to the captives and recovery of sight to the blind, to set at liberty those who are oppressed; to proclaim the acceptable year of the Lord.’”

We saw how Christ did some of these things as our Savior. Over the next several topics, we will share some of these things that Christ did as our Shepherd. These are things that we want to help all developing spiritual leaders learn to do as they lead and shepherd those who are new and growing Christians. We will study how Christ did these things and learn what principles He taught and how to apply them, first to our own lives, and then help developing leaders learn to apply them in their ministries.

Today, we will see how Christ fed His flock like a Shepherd. In Mark 3:14, we read, “Then He appointed twelve, that they might be with Him and that He might send them out to preach.” This group of twelve men became the flock that Christ led for the rest of His earthly ministry. Then, after His return to heaven, they became shepherds to others, who in turn became shepherds to still others. Today, as we help developing leaders learn to become shepherds of a part of Christ’s flock, we are continuing the process. The part of the flock they feed may be a home Bible study, a Sunday school class, a one-to-one Bible study, or some other group they lead.

Luke 8:9-11 gives us an example of how Christ fed the twelve. Those verses say, “Then His disciples asked Him, saying, ‘What does this parable mean?’ And He said, ‘To you it has been given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of God, but to the rest it is given in parables, that “Seeing they may not see, And hearing they may not understand.” Now the parable is this: The seed is the word of God.’” Here, we see that Christ took the time to explain the parables to the twelve so that they were being fed spiritually. He taught the crowds, but He explained His teachings to the twelve, so they would gain understanding and know how to apply the Word of God to their lives.

Christ focused on feeding His disciples spiritually, even when there was a much larger crowd of people present. Luke 6:13, 17, and 20 illustrate this, “And when it was day, He called His disciples to Himself; and from them He chose twelve whom He also named apostles...¹⁷ And He came down with them and stood on a level place with a crowd of His disciples and a great multitude of people

Growing Christian Leaders Series – Developing Leaders Who Are Becoming Like Their Shepherd 2. “Jesus Fed His Sheep Like a Shepherd”

Updated October 2025

Copyright © 2002, Duane L. Anderson, American Indian Bible Institute; 2022, DLA, Serve and Equip

Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This resource is available from and distributed free of charge by Serve and Equip <https://sveq.org>

ANY REPRODUCTION OF MATERIAL FOR RESALE OR PROFIT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

from all Judea and Jerusalem, and from the seacoast of Tyre and Sidon, who came to hear Him and be healed of their diseases... ²⁰Then He lifted up His eyes toward His disciples, and said: 'Blessed are you poor, For yours is the kingdom of God.'" We see, in this case, that there was a large crowd, but Jesus focused on the disciples, and taught them while the others listened.

Jesus also fed the twelve by teaching them who He was and why He had come. Luke 9:18-22 says, "And it happened, as He was alone praying, that His disciples joined Him, and He asked them, saying, 'Who do the crowds say that I am?' So they answered and said, 'John the Baptist, but some say Elijah; and others say that one of the old prophets has risen again.' He said to them, 'But who do you say that I am?' Peter answered and said, 'The Christ of God.' And He strictly warned and commanded them to tell this to no one, saying, 'The Son of Man must suffer many things, and be rejected by the elders and chief priests and scribes, and be killed, and be raised the third day.'" Christ fed His flock of disciples by helping them grow to understand who He was. Then, He fed His flock of disciples by telling them what He had come to do.

Jesus fed His disciples and taught them the true meaning of greatness. Luke 9:46-48 says, "Then a dispute arose among them as to which of them would be greatest. And Jesus, perceiving the thought of their heart, took a little child and set him by Him, and said to them, 'Whoever receives this little child in My name receives Me; and whoever receives Me receives Him who sent Me. For he who is least among you all will be great.'" Here, we see that Christ was feeding them to help them develop proper attitudes for spiritual servant leadership.

Jesus also fed His disciples by teaching them how to pray. Luke 11:1-4 says, "Now it came to pass, as He was praying in a certain place, when He ceased, that one of His disciples said to Him, 'Lord, teach us to pray, as John also taught his disciples.' So He said to them, 'When you pray, say: Our Father in heaven, Hallowed be Your name. Your kingdom come. Your will be done On earth as it is in heaven. Give us day by day our daily bread. And forgive us our sins, For we also forgive everyone who is indebted to us. And do not lead us into temptation, But deliver us from the evil one.'" Christ fed the disciples and taught them to pray, so, they would know how to pray when He returned to heaven.

As Christ got closer to the end of His earthly ministry, He spent even more time feeding the twelve. Sometimes, He even fed them in smaller groups. In Mark 13, we see that Christ fed a smaller group and helped them to understand a summary of future events. Mark 13:3-4 say, "Now as He sat on the Mount of Olives opposite the temple, Peter, James, John, and Andrew asked Him privately, 'Tell us, when will these things be? And what will be the sign when all these things will be fulfilled?'" Here, we see that Jesus was feeding just four of the twelve who wanted to get their questions, about the future, answered.

Of course, we have an extended passage where Christ fed His disciples the night before He was crucified. That spiritual meal is given to us in John chapters thirteen through sixteen. That night, Christ talked with them and answered their questions as they ate the Last Supper and then walked to the Garden of Gethsemane. The things He fed them that night, to develop their spiritual understanding, would continue to help them in the months and years to come.

Growing Christian Leaders Series – Developing Leaders Who Are Becoming Like Their Shepherd 2. "Jesus Fed His Sheep Like a Shepherd"

Updated October 2025

Copyright © 2002, Duane L. Anderson, American Indian Bible Institute; 2022, DLA, Serve and Equip
Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This resource is available from and distributed free of charge by Serve and Equip <https://sveq.org>
ANY REPRODUCTION OF MATERIAL FOR RESALE OR PROFIT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

However, Christ did not stop feeding His disciples when He died. We also read that He fed His disciples and gave them spiritual food, after His resurrection, to help them grow and understand. Luke 24:25-27 gives us a summary of how He fed two of His disciples on the road to Emmaus. “Then He said to them, ‘O foolish ones, and slow of heart to believe in all that the prophets have spoken! Ought not the Christ to have suffered these things and to enter into His glory?’ And beginning at Moses and all the Prophets, He expounded to them in all the Scriptures the things concerning Himself.”

Later that same night, Christ fed the eleven as they were gathered in the upper room. Luke 24:44-45 says, “Then He said to them, ‘These are the words which I spoke to you while I was still with you, that all things must be fulfilled which were written in the Law of Moses and the Prophets and the Psalms concerning Me.’ And He opened their understanding, that they might comprehend the Scriptures.” Here, we see that His feeding of the disciples was not just to give them knowledge. Instead, the focus of His feeding the disciples was to also give them understanding.

However, the goal of Christ, in teaching His flock, was not just to give them knowledge and understanding. Luke 24:46-48 shows that Christ fed His flock so they could apply what they had learned and feed others as they had been fed. Those verses say, “Then He said to them, ‘Thus it is written, and thus it was necessary for the Christ to suffer and to rise from the dead the third day, and that repentance and remission of sins should be preached in His name to all nations, beginning at Jerusalem. And you are witnesses of these things.’”

Christ did one more thing, in addition to feeding His flock, to help them to understand, and apply, what they had understood to their lives and their ministry. Christ told them that He would give them the power to feed others. Luke 24:49 says, “Behold, I send the Promise of My Father upon you; but tarry in the city of Jerusalem until you are endued with power from on high.” Here, we see a very key lesson that all developing spiritual leaders need to learn. They do not need to depend on themselves to feed the flock. Instead, they have been given the power of the Holy Spirit to teach them and guide them as they feed others.

Later, before Christ returned to heaven, He emphasized one more time how important it was for the disciples to feed His flock. In John 21:15-17, Christ talked with Peter, as the others listened. “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.’ 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.’ 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.’” Christ wanted the disciples to know that a primary ministry of every spiritual leader is to feed His sheep.

The Lord has given us a great privilege to help developing leaders learn to become more effective in their ministry. One of the key things we want to help them learn to do is to follow the example

Growing Christian Leaders Series – Developing Leaders Who Are Becoming Like Their Shepherd 2. “Jesus Fed His Sheep Like a Shepherd”

Updated October 2025

Copyright © 2002, Duane L. Anderson, American Indian Bible Institute; 2022, DLA, Serve and Equip
Scripture taken from the New King James Version®. Copyright © 1982 by Thomas Nelson. Used by permission. All rights reserved.

This resource is available from and distributed free of charge by Serve and Equip <https://sveq.org>
ANY REPRODUCTION OF MATERIAL FOR RESALE OR PROFIT IS STRICTLY PROHIBITED

and command of Christ to feed His sheep. May the Lord richly bless you as you help developing leaders learn to feed the Lord's sheep.