

The Good Shepherd

Ezekiel 34: 11-16

Our text today was written to the Jews while they were exiled in Babylon. In the preceding verses God sends words of rebuke to the men of God, the shepherds of His flock, [Vv.2-5](#). They were guilty of neglecting the needs of the people, concerned only with their own personal gain.

These are sobering words for every pastor who leads God's people. I am thankful for my pastor and his care for me. But more than that, I'm thankful for the Good Shepherd, our blessed Lord. David pondered the Lord and said, "[The LORD is my shepherd; I shall not want.](#)" I have never found the Lord lacking in His care for me. He tenderly cares for all His sheep, both young and old.

Although this passage was written to Judah while in bondage, there is great comfort and application in this passage for the sheep of our Lord's pasture. There may come a time when I will fail to care for you as I should, but the Lord will never fail. Let's take a few moments to examine the [attributes](#) Ezekiel describes as we consider: [The Good Shepherd](#).

I. The Shepherd's Attention (11) – [For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, even I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.](#) As we've already seen the Lord is mindful of His sheep. He is aware of each of us and where we are in the journey. Here we find the nature of His attention to us.

A. He Knows His Sheep – The Lord [searches](#) His sheep. This has the idea of "*seeking after, inquiring of, or examining.*" He knows each and every one of us better than we know ourselves. He is aware of our strengths and our weaknesses. He knows those who are weary and tired. He knows those who are hungry. He knows those who are wayward, desiring to leave the fold. He knows those who are sick and feeble. He knows those who feel threatened by the troubles of life. He knows when we need that extra nudge to press on to greener pastures.

- Aren't you glad that we have a Shepherd who knows what we need before we even realize it ourselves? The Good Shepherd knows His sheep. [John 10:14 – I am the good shepherd, and know my sheep, and am known of mine.](#)

B. He Watches His Sheep – He not only searches His sheep, but He also [seeks them out](#). He is ever watching over us to guard against wandering from the fold and into harm. When we begin to stray and miss out on what He has provided, the Lord begins to seek us out and call us back to the fold. He knows when one of us is missing from the fold.

- He loved us enough to die for us and He takes no pleasure in seeing us suffer! I can't always see the dangers that lie ahead, but I have One who is ever watching over me. We are never out of view of His all seeing eye.

II. The Shepherd's Assurance (15) – *I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.* We all have those times in our Christian lives when it seems that a contrary wind has begun to blow. We feel as if we'll never survive the storm that has come upon us. It is in those times the Shepherd comforts us and gives us rest. Notice:

A. His Provision (15a) – *I will feed my flock.* The Lord has promised to feed His flock. If you are hungry for the Lord, He is prepared to nourish your soul. He desires that we feed from His table. The Lord takes no pleasure in sheep that are malnourished. We have access to the abundance of God any time we desire. He is ever present to feed our souls.

- I trust you have come to find help and strength for your soul today. We don't have to leave without eating from the Lord's table. His table is always spread and the invitation is always available. If we leave hungry it will not be because what we needed wasn't available. God will feed those who are hungry!

B. His Peace (15b) – *I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.* The Lord can provide peace and rest for those who are weary and battered. *Psalm 23:2 – He maketh me to lie down in green pastures: he leadeth me beside the still waters.* Sheep are nervous animals. It doesn't take much to get them excited. They have very little to defend themselves against attack. We are much like sheep. It doesn't take much to get us excited, assuming the worst, and lose our focus.

- There is peace within the Lord's fold. With our faith in Him we can find rest even when the storm is raging. We can find rest even when the enemy is at hand. I'm glad for those times when the Lord allows us to rest in green pastures.

III. The Shepherd's Affection (16a) – *I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick:* This is the verse that really spoke to me. In it we find the true nature of our Shepherd. He is a Lord of compassion and mercy. I have never known such love as that which the Lord provides. As we look at this verse, consider what the Lord has done for you. I'm sure you can relate to His love and care that is revealed here.

A. He Pursues the Lost – [I will seek that which was lost.](#) Do you remember the time when the Lord sought you out? You had no idea the Shepherd was even aware of your situation and yet He came looking for you. I remember the day that Jesus came to me. I knew I was lost and headed for hell, but I didn't know what to do. It was in my moment of despair that the Shepherd came seeking me with an offer to become a part of His fold. At that moment I found forgiveness and peace in my heart. He lovingly lifted me out of the pit of sin, cleansed me in His precious blood, and now I belong to Him.

- Even now when I stray from Him He comes seeking me to return unto the fold. I'm glad that we serve a Shepherd who pursues men to come unto Him. If you have never been saved, Jesus is looking for you!

B. He Restores the Wayward – [I will bring again that which was driven away.](#) There are times when we as sheep stray from the Lord. The world offers what appears to be a greener pasture on the other side. At the moment we stray Jesus is aware of our move. He would still be God to allow us to remain in that pitiful position, wayward and outside the protection and benefit of the fold, but He loves us too much to allow us to stray without calling to us to return.

- There have been times when I have left the Lord, determined to make my own way, and He was always there to welcome me back into the fold. We certainly don't deserve the compassion we receive, but the Lord is ever gracious. He will restore those who have drifted. [Psalm 23:3 – He restoreth my soul: he leadeth me in the paths of righteousness for his name's sake.](#)

C. He Heals the Broken – [I will bind up that which was broken.](#) We are not saved and left alone to make our own way. The Good Shepherd cares for His sheep and is well able to bind up our wounds and provide healing.

- Life is hard and sooner or later we'll be wounded and hurting. We've all had those times when the enemy came and we were wounded in battle. We've all endured times when circumstances of life left us with a broken heart. We've had those times when we strayed into sin and lost our joy and victory in the Lord. But praise God He didn't leave us in that miserable shape. He is always there to minister unto our needs. Where would we be if it were not for the compassion and healing of the Lord?

D. He Strengthens the Weak – [I will strengthen that which was sick.](#) Often the journey of life becomes more than we can bear. We find ourselves helpless and without strength to go on. Jesus

will not leave us to die in our misery. It is in these times that He comes to where we are and puts us upon His shoulders and carries us back to the fold.

- You may be weary in the journey today. You may feel as if you don't have enough strength to continue. Trust in Jesus; He will supply the strength you need. [2 Cor.12:9 – And he said unto me, My grace is sufficient for thee: for my strength is made perfect in weakness. Most gladly therefore will I rather glory in my infirmities, that the power of Christ may rest upon me.](#)

IV. The Shepherd's Admonition (16b) – [but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.](#) Our text closes with a warning to those who will not heed the call of the Shepherd. The **fat** speaks of "*those who have filled themselves with the pleasures of this world.*" The Lord will not compete for your loyalty. We as sheep of His pasture are to feed upon the things of God. If we reject the pasture He provides, chastisement will come upon us. It is dangerous to leave the fold of God in search of the pleasures of the world!

- He also gives a warning to the **strong**. Here the Lord is referring to "*those who no longer see a need for His guidance, those who have pride in their hearts.*" The Lord wants to meet our needs, but we must live in submission to Him and follow His direction. We must guard against setting ourselves on a pedestal assuming we could never fall. There will never come a time that we don't need the Lord's help and presence in our lives.

Conclusion: I trust you have been encouraged and reminded of what we have in the Lord. He is our Good Shepherd and is constantly aware of our needs. If you are enjoying the blessings of the fold, rejoice in the Lord.

Maybe you once enjoyed the security and abundance of the fold, but you have strayed and are wandering in the world. Jesus is ready to welcome you in. He will restore that which has been lost.

You may not know Jesus as the Shepherd of your soul. He desires that you come to know Him and become a sheep of His pasture. Whatever your need, the Good Shepherd stands ready to meet your need!