

God's Heart for His Sheep

Ezekiel 34: 11-26

8/24/03

Intro

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In the verses we are studying today, God is speaking through Ezekiel and is clearly expressing His heart for His sheep.

The Lord has been using the common, everyday things they would have in their lives to teach them about what he desires for them.

Certainly, sheep would be an important part of their lives and they could understand the connection to their relationship to God.

In this chapter, God is saying that there have been false shepherds over the house of Israel who have **not** cared for God's sheep in the way He desires.

From these verses we can understand God's heart for His sheep and apply those things in our lives, because we are also God's sheep.

We are the fulfillment of the words of Jesus when he said told the Jews, "**And I have other sheep, which are not of this fold, I must bring them also, and they shall hear My voice and they shall become one flock with one shepherd.**

John 10:16

These, then, are those things which show us God's heart for sheep.

I. He will care for them

A. He will seek them out

- many of His sheep have been scattered out into the world

Isaiah 53:6, "All of us, **like sheep**, have gone astray, each of us has turned to his own way; But the Lord has caused the iniquity of us all to fall on Him.."

- There is great comfort in knowing that if we go very far from the Lord that He will not let us stray.

Jesus also said the same thing.

Luke 19:5-10 Zaccheus and Jesus... I have come to seek and save that which was lost.

- May we have the same heart as the psalmist who wrote, "If I have gone astray like a lost sheep; seek your servant." (Psalm 119:176)

B. He will feed them in good pasture

- When Chuck Smith was pastoring the small church called Calvary Chapel, he used to bring an evangelistic message each Sunday.

Illus – then he discovered that God wanted him to feed the sheep on the Word of God.

- **healthy sheep reproduce**
- **healthy sheep have an authentic response to God in worship**

Isaiah 55:11, "So will My word be which goes forth from My mouth; It will not return to Me empty, without

accomplishing what I desire, and without succeeding in the matter for which I sent it.

C. On the mountains of Israel

- In other words, God will give them a place where they can be near Him.
- This is a place where they can be fed, not just once, but stay in a place of relationship with Him and being constantly fed in rich pasture.

II. He will lead them to rest

Vs 15

A. He restores the soul

- The condition of the soul will determine the joy you have in your life.

Illus – Things could be going really well, but if the soul is disturbed, then there is still no joy.

In contrast, if the soul is restored, then even in trials, there is a peace that passes understanding.

- Vs 14 – they will “**lie down**” in good grazing ground.

Psalm 23:2, 4, “He makes me lie down in green pastures. He restores my soul; He guides me in the paths of righteousness for His name’s sake.”

Illus – I remember laying flat on my back and thinking, “He makes me lie down.” When I push myself too hard, I

can start to feel myself getting sick and I know that I need to lie down in green pastures.

B. He leads me beside still waters

- There is far too much turbulence in our lives...

Illus – Sheep do not like to drink in turbulent waters.

- So he leads us beside still waters where we can be refreshed.
- This is in contrast to the world which lacks peace.

Isaiah 57:20, “But the wicked are like the tossing sea, for it cannot be quiet, and its waters toss up refuse and mud.”

C. And God Himself is the Shepherd

- Vs 12 – “I myself will care for My sheep.”
- We can rest because He is the One who is standing guard. **And He is not as a hireling.**

John 10:7-17, not a hireling, but a true Shepherd

III. He will bind up the broken

A. Beginning with the broken of heart

- Jesus said this was why He was sent.

Illus – early in Jesus’ ministry, He entered Nazareth, His hometown, and entered the synagogue where He was handed the scroll and He read from Isaiah 61:1

Isaiah 61:1, “He has sent Me to bind up the brokenhearted.”

- This is where most people are broken.

B. He will strengthen the sick

Vs 16

- Jesus said that He did not come for those who think they have no need for a physician.

Mark 2:17, “And hearing this, Jesus said to them, "It is not those who are healthy who need a physician, but those who are sick; I did not come to call the righteous, but sinners.”

C. He will have us care for one another

- Vs 18 – should we not consider what are the needs of others?

Illus – some were trampling down the pasture and spoiling the water with dirty feet.

Conclusion

The heart of a shepherd is to bless his sheep, and God desires to send “showers of blessing” upon us. (vs 26)