

# Proclaiming the Gospel

For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness;  
But unto us which are saved it is the power of God" (*1 Cor. 1.18*).

Edifying the Body of Christ (*Eph. 4.10-16*)

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The Wise Still Seek Him

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## Woe to the Shepherds!

**S**on of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; **Woe [be] to the shepherds** of Israel that do feed themselves! **should not the shepherds feed the flocks?** (Eze 34.2)

Read Ezekiel, Chapter 34. This chapter makes plain God's displeasure with the shepherds of Israel who had been feeding themselves and NOT the flock of the Lord. The shepherds were clothed with the wool of those they killed and fed with the fat, but they fed **not** the flock (v 3). The flock became scattered; the shepherds failed to search for the flock, allowing them to become a prey. The shepherds had met their own needs and desires, but had neglected the flock.

Verse four says the diseased were not strengthened, the sick were not healed, the broken were not bound up. The shepherds had not brought again those which were driven away nor searched for those which were lost. Instead, they ruled over them "with force and cruelty." Ezekiel continues the Word of the Lord **against the Shepherds:**

And they were scattered, because *[there is]* no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered.

*[As] I live, saith the Lord GOD, surely because my flock became a prey, and my flock became meat to every beast of the field, because *[there was]* no shepherd, neither did my shepherds search for my flock, but the shepherds fed themselves, and fed not my flock;*

Therefore, O ye shepherds, hear the word of the LORD; Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, **I [am] against the shepherds;** and I will require my flock at their hand, and cause them to cease from feeding the flock; neither shall the shepherds feed themselves any more; for I will deliver my flock from their mouth, that they may not be meat for them (Eze 34.5, 8-10).

The condition of God's flock was malnourished, diseased, and scattered; they were neglected and preyed upon by the enemy. Because of the condition of God's flock, because of the shepherds who were concerned with themselves only, God said, "... Woe to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! ..." (v 2).

Is this not rapidly becoming a picture of the "churches" today? Are God's people being fed in the "churches"? Is the Word of God going forth? Are the pastors, so

Truth of God's Word. We need to seek the Lord and His righteousness, seek His will in what He wants of each of us, that we might go forth sharing the Word of God (Mt 6.33). It is then that the body of Christ shall be edified and souls will be led to Jesus Christ, souls who have repented of their sins and accepted Him as Lord and Savior.

These are days that we need to be praying one for another, **praying for the pastors to stand firm, to speak forth the Truth of God in Christ Jesus.** We each are in ministry if we know Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior. Yes, each of you is in ministry, called to go forth in the Name of Jesus Christ to give forth the Word of God to others that they shall know Him and His Word.

**Love the Lord and His Word with your heart, your life, and speak the Word to those around you – as time is of the essence.**

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**Co-laborers together for Jesus Christ**

*Come apart and rest (Mark 6.31).*

many of them “feeding” themselves, meeting their own needs and allowing their flocks to become spiritually malnourished?

We are living in the day when there is a famine in the land for hearing the Word of the Lord (Am 8.11). If you have a pastor who does **NOT** compromise, but preaches the pure Word of the Lord, **thank God for that pastor; keep that pastor in your prayers.** Your pastor needs strength from the Lord because Satan will be fighting to make that pastor be slack and preach a polluted Word.

We have traveled throughout the United States these past eight years, edifying the body of Christ and witnessing for the Lord. How many times have we met those who have said, “The ‘church’ is not The Church today!” Others have said that when they leave the “church,” they realize that they have not been touched by the hand of God; and others have said, “The ‘church’ has let us down.” Many times we have found this to be true when we have visited churches.

The pure Word of God is being preached less and less, not only from the pulpit, but in the lives of those saying they know the Lord, causing those in the pews to live more and more in **sin** – believing they are right with the Lord.

Many pastors are preaching a watered-down “gospel,” one that negates the commandments of the Lord, one that can be interpreted as one desires – in such a way **not** to offend. They believe that to show the love of God is to “preach” nothing that would be offensive. Jesus offended many people, especially the religious ones. And, Jesus is greatly offended by the “non-offenders.”

I believe God is saying to the pastors, the shepherds, today, “Woe! Woe! Woe!” “I [am] against the shepherds; and I will require my flock at their hand . . .” (v 2). Woe to those shepherds. Woe to those who no longer preach the Truth of God’s Word, who no longer name sin and the results of living in sin, who no longer preach that God demands a life of holiness.

People of God, this does not excuse you and me (Ex 33). Each individual is responsible! Yes, we each are responsible to be in the Word of God, and we are responsible as the body of Christ to live the Word of God. Read the Bible; read it with your heart, asking the Lord to guide you into His Truth.

Many people have not been taught how to study the Word of the Lord and glean from the Word what is needed in these days to remain faithful to the Lord; they cannot survive on their own – nor were we meant to walk alone. The Word of God makes it clear that we need each other, the body of Christ, the different ministries set in the body of Christ “For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ” (Eph 4.11-13; I Cor 12.4-12).

If you do **not** have a pastor who preaches the unadulterated Word of God, and you cannot find one who does, concentrate on spending time in prayer and reading the Bible every day. If reading the Bible is new to you, start with the Psalms or perhaps one of the Gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke, or John. Read with your heart to receive what the Lord Jesus has for you, seeking guidance from the Holy Spirit. Surround yourself with others who know and love the Lord Jesus Christ, and encourage each other in living a godly life for Jesus Christ. This is part of assembling together with the

body of Christ. As the Holy Spirit leads, you will begin reading more and more of the Bible as your love for the Bible increases and your hunger for more of the Truth of the Lord increases. Always begin with prayer, especially asking God to teach you from His Word. Do not try to understand every word you read, but let it go to your heart that it will be there when the Holy Spirit chooses to bring it to your remembrance; He will do that.

**Sin** in the world today is running rampant. Those who live in **sin** – whether they “feel” like it is sin – will one day know from experience that there is a hell! They need to hear the Truth of God’s Word and know that it has **NOT CHANGED** (Mal 3.6; Heb 13.8). **Sin** is sin regardless of what society and/or “churches” accept; God does not accept sin. Be very aware that the Lord calls us **NOT** to sin. He makes clear the sins all through the Bible: Old Testament and New Testament! “For the wages of sin [is] death; but the gift of God [is] eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord” (Rom 6.23).

The *Message* this month includes this word to God’s people in Ezekiel 34.11-15: **God will feed His people in the good pastures on the mountains of Israel!** God has given us wonderful hope in the last portion of Ezekiel, Chapter 34. If the shepherds fail, God is still on the throne; He is faithful to His flock. The Holy Spirit will teach His people, those who have been starved and are hungry for God’s Word. The Church, Christ’s Holy Church, the true body of Christ, will be fed at God’s hand. Oh! Praise the Lord – for He is faithful (Eze 34.11-15).

For thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I, [even] I, will both search my sheep, and seek them out.

As a shepherd seeketh out his flock in the day that he is among his sheep [that are] scattered; so will I seek out my sheep, and will deliver them out of all places where they have been scattered in the cloudy and dark day.

And I will bring them out from the people, and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land, and feed them upon the mountains of Israel by the rivers, and in all the inhabited places of the country.

I will feed them in a good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel shall their fold be: there shall they lie in a good fold, and [in] a fat pasture shall they feed upon the mountains of Israel.

I will feed my flock, and I will cause them to lie down, saith the Lord GOD.

God promised to feed His people – not just meager fare with which to barely exist; He promised a “good pasture, and upon the high mountains of Israel.”

Often, the mountain top is the place where God’s presence dwells, especially the mountains of Israel, and He has promised to feed His people there. In verses 12-16, He promises to do what the shepherds had failed to do in verses four and five. He would seek out His people and bring them to the mountains of Israel to eat from the green hillsides and to drink from the *Rivers of Life* (v 13). This is a promise to His people, even today; but notice judgment upon the Shepherds in verse 16.

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: **but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.**

The days that lie before us are precarious and people’s souls are at stake. The pastors, and each one of us, need to search our hearts to see if we are living and “preaching” the