

Ezekiel 34:1-16—God The Faithful Shepherd Feeds His Flock

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 36:26-27 NKJV

I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh. ²⁷ I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Introduction

This week we see the difference between foolish shepherds (both spiritual and civil leaders) and God the Good Shepherd. We will see the devastating effects of poor and selfish leadership and how it so negatively affects the rest of the people. God promises to deal with the ungodly leaders who scatter the flock for their own gain.

In the second half of the chapter we will also see more promises of God for Israel which have already started to be fulfilled now, but will find their complete fulfillment in the Millennial Reign when David rules as their prince or leader (a good shepherd, a man after God's own heart—see 1 Samuel 13:14), and Jesus will be their God.

Outline of Ezekiel 34

1. God speaks to and warns the foolish shepherds—this week (vs 1-16)
2. God speaks to and warns the sheep of the flock—next week (vs 17-31)

Ezekiel 34:1-16 NKJV

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ² “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? ³ You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. ⁴ 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. ⁵ So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. ⁶ My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.”

⁷ ‘Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: ⁸ “As I live,” says the Lord God, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock” —⁹ therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord! ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.”

¹¹ ‘For thus says the Lord God: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. ¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their

own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴ I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord God. ¹⁶ “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.”

God speaks to and warns the foolish shepherds (vs 1-16)

Ezekiel 34:1-2 NKJV—Woe to the foolish shepherds

And the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ² “Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: “Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?

v 1 **Prophesy against the shepherds of Israel:** In the culture of the day in the Near East, both civil leaders (kings and princes) and spiritual leaders (priests prophets) were referred to as shepherds. Examples of civil leaders referred to as shepherds include Joshua (Numbers 27:17), and King Saul (2 Samuel 5:2). An example of a spiritual leader referred to as a shepherd is Jeremiah (Jeremiah 17:16).

“Primarily, the shepherds refer to Israel’s kings and political leaders. Secondarily, it speaks to any of us who are shepherding people—as pastors, elders, employers, or parents.” (Jon Courson) As you can see, the range is broad. It basically means that for anyone I have authority over, whether it be civil, parental, or spiritual, I have a responsibility toward them to lead them in a way that glorifies God, and not abuse my authority over them or renege on my responsibilities towards them.

Peter tells us what it means to be a good shepherd or pastor. However, it’s easy to see that this definition of leadership can easily be applied to all positions of leadership, especially parents.

1 Peter 5:2-4 NLT

Care for the flock that God has entrusted to you. Watch over it willingly, not grudgingly—not for what you will get out of it, but because you are eager to serve God. ³ Don’t lord it over the people assigned to your care, but lead them by your own good example. ⁴ And when the Great Shepherd appears, you will receive a crown of never-ending glory and honour.

Notice the contrasts here:

- willingly **vs** grudgingly
- eager to please God **vs** for what you can get out of it
- lead by good example **vs** lording it over or dominating and intimidating

Another thing to notice is that anyone in a position of leadership is always an “under shepherd”, meaning that there is always someone above them—ultimately Jesus Himself, the Great Shepherd. All of us in positions of authority, including parents, will be held to account for how we used our authority—did I use it to build up those I was leading, or did I use it for my own gain.

v 2 **Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves... Should not the shepherds feed the flocks?** All leaders should be servant leaders—whether parents, civil leaders, or spiritual leaders. Anytime God puts us in a position of leadership, it is an opportunity to serve others, to die to self, and to esteem others as being more important than ourselves. Basically, a leader is there to serve and sacrifice himself/herself for those they have authority over: Jesus is the ultimate example.

Luke 9:23 NKJV

Then He said to them all, “If anyone desires to come after Me, let him deny himself [*you must give up your own way*—NLT], and take up his cross daily, and follow Me.

Philippians 2:4 NKJV

Let each of you look out not only for his own interests, but also for the interests of others.

John 10:11 NKJV

“I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd gives His life for the sheep.

Acts 20:28 NKJV

Therefore take heed to yourselves and to 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.

Notice here why Jesus is so invested in His church—it’s very valuable—Jesus purchased it with His own blood.

Ezekiel 34:3-4 NKJV—Greedy and negligent shepherds

You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. ⁴ 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.

v 3 **You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool...but you do not feed the flock:** Notice that it’s not wrong for a leader to make a living from the flock—after all, they are providing a service and everybody needs to eat. However, there is a big difference between getting a fair reward for your labour and exploiting or neglecting the people. In Ezekiel’s day, many of the leaders were self-serving and only looking to increase their own enjoyment and pleasure.

David Guzik applies this to leaders in the church. *The New Testament clearly teaches that those who serve God’s people have the right to be supported by those they serve (1 Corinthians 9:7–14; 1 Timothy 5:17–18). Yet that is a right that can be and should be set aside when it is better for the kingdom of God to do so (Acts 20:33–35).*

1 Timothy 5:17-18 NKJV

Let the elders who rule well be counted worthy of double honour, especially those who labor in the word and doctrine. ¹⁸ For the Scripture says, “You shall not muzzle an ox while it treads out the grain,” and, “The labourer is worthy of his wages.”

Acts 20:33-35 NLT paraphrase

“I have never coveted anyone’s silver or gold or fine clothes. ³⁴ You know that these hands of mine have worked to supply my own needs and even the needs of those who

were with me. ³⁵ And I have been a constant example of how you can help those in need by working hard. You should remember the words of the Lord Jesus: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'

v 3 **You do not feed the flock:** This was the main problem—the lack of spiritual nourishment. We have seen just how far the Israelites strayed from God, mostly because they chose to follow the false teachers. How does a godly leader in a position of spiritual leadership, be it pastor or parent, feed those in their care? Let's see what the Scriptures have to say about this.

Jeremiah 3:15 NKJV—**God's heart is to feed us with knowledge and understanding**
And I will give you shepherds according to My heart, who will feed you with knowledge and understanding.

God desire or heart is for us to grow, and so a genuine and godly shepherd who shares the desires of God's heart will also seek to feed those under them with knowledge and understanding. Again, this applies to both parent and pastor. The fact is that every Christian man is the pastor of his own home—he is the spiritual leader. It's not that the mothers can't teach the children as well, but the Christian husband must take the lead in this area of the home. Paul tells us how in the letter to the Ephesians.

Ephesians 6:4 AMP

Fathers, do not irritate and provoke your children to anger [do not exasperate them to resentment], but rear them [tenderly] in the training and discipline and the counsel and admonition of the Lord.

Hebrews 5:11-14 NLT—**The consequences of not being feeding on the Word of God**
There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen. ¹² You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food. ¹³ For someone who lives on milk is still an infant and doesn't know how to do what is right. ¹⁴ Solid food is for those who are mature, who through training have the skill to recognise the difference between right and wrong.

There are three things to notice here. Firstly, their comprehension of the Scriptures was very limited, and therefore the writer of Hebrews was limited in what he could teach them—***There is much more we would like to say about this, but it is difficult to explain, especially since you are spiritually dull and don't seem to listen.*** These people had no appetite for the Word of God, and were therefore spiritually dull. Each of us needs to ask ourselves, "What is my appetite like? Do I hunger for the Word of God? Or am I spiritually dull?"

Secondly, consider that this is not just talking about Bible knowledge, but also obedience (***and doesn't know how to do what is right***): bad doctrine and ignorance leads to sin.

Thirdly, verse 12 is absolutely tragic—***You have been believers so long now that you ought to be teaching others. Instead, you need someone to teach you again the basic things about God's word. You are like babies who need milk and cannot eat solid food.*** Many of these believers had been saved for a long time (***so long now***). Unfortunately, this stunted growth is very common in the church today.

Consider this quote from Answers in Genesis:

Ignorance of the Bible isn't just a problem in our culture. It's a problem in the church, and it's scandalous.

While America's evangelical Christians are rightly concerned about the secular worldview's rejection of biblical Christianity, we ought to give some urgent attention to a problem much closer to home—biblical illiteracy in the church. This scandalous problem is our own, and it's up to us to fix it.

How bad is it? Researchers tell us that it's worse than most could imagine.

Only half of all Christian adults can name the four gospels. Many Christians cannot identify more than two or three of the twelve disciples. According to data from the Pew Research Center, nearly half don't even realize that the Golden Rule is not one of the Ten Commandments.

Multiple surveys reveal the problem in stark terms. Most Christians in the United States believe the Bible teaches, "God helps those who help themselves" (and some even believe this quote is a Bible verse). A series of Barna surveys shows that only 19% of "born again Christians" hold to the simplest elements of a basic biblical worldview.

1 Peter 2:1-3 NLT—**Why feeding on the Word is so important**

So get rid of all evil behaviour. Be done with all deceit, hypocrisy, jealousy, and all unkind speech. ² Like newborn babies, **you must crave** [*long for, yearn after, deeply desire*] pure [*unadulterated, true, genuine*] spiritual milk so that you will grow into a full experience of salvation. **Cry out for this** nourishment, ³ now that you have had a taste of the Lord's kindness.

Notice here that if we are to "grow out of" being worldly (deceit and unkind speech etc), then we must "grow into" the image of Christ. So how do we grow and change? There's only one way. We can't change ourselves so don't bother trying. Instead, we must make the choice today to crave, yearn after, and deeply desire only the pure milk of the Word, not milk that has been corrupted or adulterated or changed or diluted by the traditions and false teaching of men—that kind of milk will only poison us.

1 Timothy 4:6 AMP—**Nourished by the truth**

If you lay all these instructions before the brethren, you will be a worthy steward and a good minister of Christ Jesus, **ever nourishing your own self on the truths of the faith** and of the good [Christian] instruction which you have closely followed.

Matthew 4:4 NKJV—**We are primarily sustained by the word of God, not physical food**
But He answered and said, "It is written, '**Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceeds from the mouth of God.**' "

Summary for, "v 3 you do not feed the flock"

A godly and faithful shepherd is one who faithfully teaches God's Word to the people. We must be nourished by words of faith, understanding that the Word of God is the spiritual nourishment that we must partake of if we are going to continue to grow into the image of Christ. Don't remain a babe, grow up, and keep on maturing.

v 4 **The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick:** This is a description of a negligent shepherd.

v 4 **Strengthened ... healed ... bound up ... brought back ... sought:** *These words describe the actions of the faithful, godly shepherd. Many of these ideas are included in the concepts of equipping and edifying described in Ephesians 4:11–12. The variety of terms suggests that the godly shepherd will have something of the wisdom of a good doctor, able to diagnose the condition of the sheep.*

- *Where there is weakness, he looks for the sheep to **strengthened**.*
- *Where there is illness, he looks for the sheep to be **healed**.*
- *Where there are wounds or brokenness, he looks for them to be **bound up**.*
- *Where the sheep are disobedient, he looks for them to be **brought back**.*
- *Where the sheep are lost, he wants to them to be **sought**.* (David Guzik)

v 4 **But with force and cruelty you have ruled them:** This is the opposite of the care, wisdom, and compassion of a faithful shepherd. This is the worldly or satanic style of leadership. Jesus clearly states that this kind of cruel, manipulative, threatening, coercive, lording over others style of leadership should never be found in the church.

Matthew 20:25-28 NLT paraphrase

But Jesus called them together and said, “You know that the rulers in this world lord it over their people, and officials flaunt their authority over those under them. ²⁶ But among you it will be different. Whoever wants to be a leader among you must be your servant, ²⁷ and whoever wants to be first among you must become your slave. ²⁸ For even the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve others and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

This does not mean, however, that leaders don’t have to make difficult decisions that will cause some people to be upset, at least some of the time. Often, speaking the truth in love will hurt people, but this is a good hurt that can lead to repentance. It’s like a doctor never enjoys telling people that they have cancer, but if they don’t the person will certainly die.

Ezekiel 34:5-6 NKJV—The sad consequences of bad shepherding: isolation

So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered. ⁶ My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and on every high hill; yes, My flock was scattered over the whole face of the earth, and no one was seeking or searching for them.”

“When the sheep scattered, they became prey to wolves. This is not surprising, for whenever a sheep is in isolation, he is vulnerable to annihilation. That’s why we, as sheep, need each other.” (Jon Courson)

v 5 **So they were scattered because there was no shepherd; and they became food for all the beasts of the field when they were scattered:** Many people today have been hurt by worldly leadership in the church. These worldly leaders coerce people to serve, to give, to sacrifice—but when they are exhausted they are just let go and more people come in to feed the machine with their money and time. So they drift away from the church thinking that no leader is better than a bad leader. However, this is not the case—they are in grave danger. Look at what happens to them. They become food for all the wild beasts of the field. The application is clear: a Christian in isolation is an easy meal for the devil.

1 Peter 5:8-9 NLT paraphrase

Stay alert! Watch out for your great enemy, the devil. He prowls around like a roaring lion, looking for someone to devour. ⁹ Stand firm against him, and be strong in your faith. **Remember that your family of believers** all over the world is going through the same kind of suffering you are.

We are only strong in our faith if we are in community, working together with other believers in a local church. The message is clear. If you are in a worldly church, don't stop going to church altogether, rather just leave the worldly church and find a godly church—one that teaches the Word and displays servant leadership. It's like having a bad experience with a dentist or doctor—you don't stop going to the doctor altogether, you just find a better one, one who does their job properly.

Hebrews 10:24-25 NLT paraphrase

Let us think of ways to motivate one another to acts of love and good works. ²⁵ And let us not neglect our meeting together, as some people do, but encourage one another, especially now that the day of his return is drawing near.

“When the sheep scattered, they became prey to wolves. This is not surprising, for whenever a sheep is in isolation, he is vulnerable to annihilation. That's why we, as sheep, need each other.” (Jon Courson)

v 6 **My sheep ... My flock:** In the early days of my pastoring at Calvary Chapel, I had to go back to someone I was talking to at school I work at and apologise. We were talking about our respective churches, and I referred to Calvary Chapel Esperance as “my church”, because I was the pastor there. My conscience pricked me, so I went back to the guys office and corrected myself, “Calvary chapel is not *my* church, it's *God's* church. It's just where I happen to pastor currently.”

“Godly shepherds should never use the phrase “my church” in any way other than indicating the church *entrusted to them*, the congregation *they serve* and are part of. “My church” should never be used in a possessive sense; the church always belongs to Jesus Himself (Matthew 16:18).” (David Guzik)

It's the same with our children. They are ultimately God's children. God entrusts them to us for twenty or so years to see whether or not we will be good stewards of the gifts that He gives us. Just as a pastor has a great responsibility and accountability to lead God's church in a way that brings glory to God, so there is a great responsibility and accountability for Christian parents to raise their children in the same way. Will we as parents make the deliberate, conscious, and intentional choice to raise the children God entrusted to us in the nurture and admonition of the Lord, or, just do nothing and, by default, allow them to be influenced by and grow up to become like the world, allowing them access worldly music, TV, movies, books, computer games, internet content, and also trying to satisfy them with material gifts.

Never forget that this world is an evil world system that is designed by satan himself to draw people away from God and get them to forget God. There is no neutral ground. Notice in the verses from Joshua that we will read soon how Joshua tells the people that if they are to serve the Lord, they must first get rid of the foreign gods. This is how it works in our homes as well; we must purge them of worldly influence to the best of our ability—our children get more than enough worldly influence every time they leave the front door. Let's make our homes safe places, and not where our children are led astray and their thinking corrupted.

Joshua 24:14-15 NLT paraphrase

“So fear the Lord and serve him wholeheartedly. Put away forever the idols your ancestors worshiped when they lived beyond the Euphrates River and in Egypt. Serve the Lord alone. ¹⁵ But if you refuse to serve the Lord, then choose today whom you will serve. Would you prefer the gods your ancestors served beyond the Euphrates? Or will it be the gods of the Amorites in whose land you now live? But as for me and my family, we will serve the Lord.”

As for me and my house, the Howse family, we will serve the Lord. This is our position, our decision. To the best of our ability we cut the worldly influence out of our house, replacing it with godly music, movies, books and regular bible reading. We want to give our children every opportunity to come to know Jesus as their Saviour.

v 6 **No one was seeking or searching for them:** Just try to imagine the sadness in God’s heart as He speaks these words. To see His own people wandering and spiritually homeless must have broken His heart. God is the Good Shepherd who gives His life for the sheep. There is no greater demonstration of love or sacrifice possible than what Jesus has already given, “*There is no greater love than to lay down one’s life for one’s friends.*” (John 15:13 NLT) God by nature seeks and searches for the lost. He invites us to join Him in His work of reconciling lost people that He loves back to Himself. Will you join Him, starting with your own children (if you are a parent).

This leads to the next section where God will hold the foolish shepherds accountable.

Ezekiel 34:7-10 NKJV—God will hold the foolish shepherds accountable

“Therefore, you shepherds, hear the word of the Lord: ⁸ “As I live,” says the Lord God, “surely because My flock became a prey, and My flock became food for every beast of the field, because there was no shepherd, nor did My shepherds search for My flock, but the shepherds fed themselves and did not feed My flock” —⁹ therefore, O shepherds, hear the word of the Lord! ¹⁰ Thus says the Lord God: “Behold, I am against the shepherds, and I will require My flock at their hand; I will cause them to cease feeding the sheep, and the shepherds shall feed themselves no more; for I will deliver My flock from their mouths, that they may no longer be food for them.”

v 10 **Behold, I am against the shepherds,** “They have provoked me to displeasure to be their enemy, and I will appear and act so. They are enemies to my sheep, yet pretended to be shepherds, I will be an open enemy to them.” (Poole)

v 10 **And I will require My flock at their hand:** “It expresses the legal disposition of calling an evildoer to account, in this case holding the criminal shepherds accountable for the fate of the flock.” (Block)

James 3:1 NLT paraphrase

Dear brothers and sisters, not many of you should become teachers in the church, for we who teach will be judged more strictly.

Where there is more responsibility, there is also more accountability, which means a much stricter standard of judgement. Again, we can apply this to parenting. The life and future of our children is at stake. While children ultimately make their own choices, parents can be a godly, or a worldly influence on them. Don’t take this responsibility lightly.

Ezekiel 34:11-16 NKJV—God, the Good Shepherd, will gather the scattered sheep
‘For thus says the Lord God: “Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. ¹² As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them from all the places where they were scattered on a cloudy and dark day. ¹³ And I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land; I will feed them on the mountains of Israel, in the valleys and in all the inhabited places of the country. ¹⁴ I will feed them in good pasture, and their fold shall be on the high mountains of Israel. There they shall lie down in a good fold and feed in rich pasture on the mountains of Israel. ¹⁵ I will feed My flock, and I will make them lie down,” says the Lord God. ¹⁶ “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.”

v 11 **I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out:** God will not only discipline the foolish shepherds, but He Himself would also be the Faithful Shepherd to Israel.

An application here is that we should never look to, esteem, or rely upon another man as we do God; even king David, the man after God’s own heart, failed several times and would have disappointed those who looked up to him at least several times. Only follow a man to the extent that they follow the Lord—As Paul would say, *“Imitate me, just as I also imitate Christ.”* (1 Corinthians 11:1 NKJV)

v 11 **For thus says the Lord God: “Indeed I Myself... so will I seek out My sheep and deliver them:** Who is the Great Shepherd? It’s God Himself. The whole chapter points to Yahweh or Jehovah being the good and perfect shepherd of Israel. Then Jesus comes on the scene in the New Testament and says, **I Am the Good Shepherd** (see John 10:1-18); this is yet another proof for the deity of Christ. Jesus also shares the parable of the lost sheep in Luke 15:3-7.

v 12 **He is among his scattered sheep:** You could say that this was literally fulfilled when Jesus came to earth and dwelt among His covenant people Israel.

v 12 **On a cloudy and dark day:** “The reference to *a day of clouds and thick darkness* (12, RSV) has eschatological overtones (compare Psalm 97:2, Joel 2:2, and Zephaniah 1:15) and suggests that this deliverance is to be the day of the Lord for Israel, that is to say, the day when the Lord acts in salvation and judgment to usher in a new age of his righteous rule on earth [the Millennial Reign of Christ on earth following the second coming].” (Taylor)

v 13 **I will bring them out from the peoples and gather them from the countries, and will bring them to their own land:** This promise to gather Israel from **the countries** is also found in Ezekiel 11:17 and 36:24. These are God’s promises to Israel that are “associated with the New Covenant. These promises had a partial fulfilment in the return from exile, but still await their true and perfect fulfilment.” (David Guzik)

“In beautiful and unforgettable words Ezekiel predicted a literal return and restoration of the people of Israel to their own land. Notice it will be a regathering from worldwide exile and dispersion.” (Feinberg)

“In Ezekiel’s time, the Lord brought His people back from Babylon; but the picture here is certainly much broader than that, for the Lord spoke about ‘countries.’” (Wiersbe)

This is such an exciting time to live. Why? This prophecy is being fulfilled before our very eyes. It began with the Zionist movement in the late 1800's, and then accelerated when Israel became a nation in 1948. It will not be completely fulfilled until Jesus comes back to earth at His Second Coming.

v 15-16 **I will feed My flock ... I will seek ... bring back ... bind up the broken ... strengthen:** Again, this is God's will, God's heart, and God wants every believer to join Him in His work as He seeks to reconcile a lost world to Himself (see 1 Corinthians 3:9). Even more importantly, this is what God is doing in the lives of all believers today. God accomplishes this through the work of the Holy Spirit in us and also through the body of Christ around us. Again, we need to remain in fellowship.

v 16 **I will destroy the fat and the strong, and feed them in judgment:** Again, another warning against the proud sheep. God will have to humble those sheep who are proud. This will be explained more next week.

Conclusion and summary: What does it feel like when we are submitted to God as the Good Shepherd of our soul?

Matthew 11:28-30 NLT paraphrase

Then Jesus said, "Come to me, all of you who are weary and carry heavy burdens, and I will give you rest."²⁹ Take My yoke upon you. Let Me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.³⁰ For My yoke is easy to bear, and the burden I give you is light."

You might say to me, these kids are driving me crazy, there's so much pressure at work, my marriage or family relationships are grievous to me, people I love are dying—I feel like I am **weary and carry heavy burdens**.

I invite you again to look at this precious promise given to us by Jesus. If I am **weary and carry heavy burdens**, it simply means that I have yet to accept Jesus' invitation to "**come to Me**", lay my burdens down at His feet and receive the **rest** that He promises me if I do. If I am to experience His rest, I must **come to Jesus** and lay each and every burden at His feet and not try to carry it on my own strength.

Another condition to this promise is that we have a teachable spirit—"**Let Me teach you, because I am humble and gentle at heart, and you will find rest for your souls.**" If I proudly continue through life thinking that I know best, then I will never experience God's rest. It's really that simple—surrender your burden by giving it over to God and allow Him to teach you to become like Himself, *humble and gentle at heart*.

Psalms 23 NKJV

¹ The Lord is my shepherd; I shall not want.

² He makes me to lie down in green pastures; He leads me beside the still waters.

³ He restores my soul; He leads me in the paths of righteousness for His name's sake.

⁴ Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for You are with me; Your rod and Your staff, they comfort me.

⁵ You prepare a table before me in the presence of my enemies; You anoint my head with oil; My cup runs over.

⁶ Surely goodness and mercy shall follow me all the days of my life; and I will dwell in the house of the Lord forever.