**Ezekiel Sermon #5**

**God’s Remnant**

**Themes in Ezekiel:**

1. The sovereignty/glory of God.

2. The utter sinfulness of human beings.

3. The inescapability (and justice) of God’s judgment.

4. The return of the King and the restoration of God’s remnant to glory. This is the theme of Ezek 34-48.

So far: **I Ezekiel commissioned as the Watchman of Judah.**

**II Powerful Symbols: God is coming in judgment on his people because of their sin.**

**III. Ezek 18 God’s Justice.**

**IV. Ch 19-24 The End of the Road**

**V. Ch 34-36 The Messiah is coming. God Will Call a Remnant.**

Now that the working of God’s wrath is complete, the rest of the book will be a comfort. Ezekiel preaches good news. A remnant will repent, return, be restored and the City will be rebuilt!

This was all prophesied in Deut 30:1-6

v. 4 Some of us were banished from God to the most distant land under the heavens.

God can still bring you back into a relationship with him. There is hope as long as you are alive!

There is double (and even triple) prophecy here:

1.The restoration of Judah to Jerusalem under Cyrus.

2. The restoration of God’s kingdom under the Messiah.

3. The final restoration of God’s people in the ultimate Messianic kingdom (heaven).

**Ezekiel 34 Shepherds, sheep and the Good Shepherd.**

Bad leadership/shepherding is condemned,

Godly leadership/shepherding is described

A future perfect leader/shepherd is prophesied. Jesus Christ, the “good shepherd

Ezek 34:1-6

What is the job of the shepherd?

1. Ezek 34:2 To take care of the flock. Make sure they are fed. Keep enemies away.

NOT to take care of yourself! They had taken advantage of their position as shepherd and had used the sheep.

2. 34:4 Take care of the weak. One key measure of a Jesus church is how the shepherds care for the weak (as opposed to the “sharp”)

3. 34:4 Bring back the strays. Bringing back those who have strayed is hard work and it can get messy. But…

4. 34:4 To bring in the lost. Have you been involved in helping people to be saved? The good shepherd takes care of the sheep, first and foremost, but he is also out looking for new sheep.

This has been my goal, personally, since I came here and it is my goal for 2023.

My goal: 20 members by the end of 2023. Can that happen?

Q: Who will you take care of?

Q: Are you willing to hang out with the “weak?”

Q: What stray will you bring back this year?

Q: Do you have a vision to bring in the lost this year as well?

The worst possible charge against a shepherd: v. 4 You have treated them harshly and brutally. The result of bad shepherding: The sheep are scattered.

Sheep can be annoying. Young Christians create problems. They need their spiritual messes cleaned up.

You have been impatient with them. You have “called them out” when they needed help and comfort.

Teach first.

Then admonish.

Then, and only then, rebuke.

v. 5-6 Result: the sheep are scattered. This is exactly what was happening at this time, as Jerusalem had been destroyed.

May this never be with us!!!

Ezek 34:7-10 God’s response to bad shepherds.

v. 10 1. I will hold you accountable.

2. I will remove you from leading the flock. I will rescue my flock from you. May it never be that God has to rescue his flock from us.

34:11-16 God: If the shepherds will not do it, then I will shepherd my sheep, and I will create a remnant.

This is a double prophecy about Judah and about the Church.

This is exactly what God did for Judah through Cyrus the Persian.

v. 13 I will gather them from Amazon, from UC Merced, from Atwater, from Merced College and even from Planada.

v. 16 Hopefully you are not the “sleek and the strong.”

34:17-21 The sheep are not completely without responsibility. Do not blame it on bad leadership.

Do not muddy the water—keeping the best for yourselves. Do not make of yourself a “fat sheep.” (v. 20)

Q: Have you muddied the waters (v. 18) for other Christians by your actions?

Q: Are you a “fat sheep.” (v. 20) Do you take care of yourself first and others come in a distant second?

Have you shoved the other sheep aside so you could get the good grass?

34:22-31 God’s shepherd—the Messiah—is coming! (John 10:14 I AM the Good Shepherd). Jesus the branch of Jesse, David will tend them!!! John 10:11-18 v. 14 I AM the good shepherd. What is a good shepherd? One who lays down his life for his sheep. (John 10:18)

v. 26 Showers of blessing!

v. 27 Much fruit! Security. Freedom (John 8 31f)

v. 28 Living without fear (1 Jn 4:18 perfect love drives out fear)

v. 29 Spiritual food. He will give us the bread of life. No longer will we hunger. Life to the full John 10:10

Ezekiel 36 The mountain of the Lord: God is calling a remnant back to Him.

36:22-23 It is not for your sake that I do this. It is for my holy name and for my holiness. We need to remember this. Reminds of Deut 7:7-9

At one time you were Oholah or perhaps even Oholibah. But I will make you a people of God again.

36:24-32 You will be a remnant devoted to me. A prophecy of the New Covenant.

-from all nations 24

-cleansed with water 25

-a new heart and a new spirit (born again) 26

-receive the Holy Spirit 27

No wonder Jesus challenged Nicodemus that he should have known this was coming. (John 3:10)

-blessings (physical rather than spiritual because this is the Old Testament) 29-30

-be ashamed and repent 31 (reminds of Acts 2:36 God has made this Jesus whom you crucified…)

- v. 32 But remember I am not doing this because you were doing so awesome. Note: he says this twice for a reason.

Ezek 36:33-38 God calls a remnant.

Your ruins will be rebuilt. This is your life in Christ.

Your life was ruins before God came into it.

…like the garden of Eden v. 35 Symbolic of being in the Kingdom of God.

This is how the story ends. We end up back in the Garden of Eden.

v. 37-38 God’s vision for your life:

You will be numerous here in Merced.

Our church will be filled with flocks of people!!! Get the vision.

**Finish: Isaiah 65:19-25**

Summary:

God wants us to be good shepherds.

But whether we are or not, either way, God is sending a Good shepherd to take care of his flocks. If we will not help the weak, bring in the strays and seek the lost, then God will find other shepherds.

God is establishing his remnant.

With his Messiah, he will lead them back to the new Garden of Eden.