

In the Pasture with God's People

The Flock

Ezekiel 34:15-17

I myself will be the shepherd of my sheep, and I myself will make them lie down, declares the Lord GOD. (16) I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. (17) "As for you, my flock, thus says the Lord GOD: Behold, I judge between sheep and sheep, between rams and male goats.

The Good Sheep

- Acts unselfishly toward the other sheep
- Follows the Good Shepherd

The Fat and the Strong

- Enjoy the blessings of God and then deny the same blessings to others –
Eze 34:18-20

Ezekiel 34:18-20

Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? (19) And must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet? (20) "Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: Behold, I, I myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep.

The Fat and the Strong

- Enjoy the blessings of God and then deny the same blessings to others –
Eze 34:18-20
- Push aside and scatter the weak -
Eze 34:21-22

Ezekiel 34:21-22

Because you push with side and shoulder,
and thrust at all the weak with your horns,
till you have scattered them abroad, (22)
I will rescue my flock; they shall no longer
be a prey. And I will judge between sheep
and sheep.

Who Are The Weak?

- New in the faith
- Hindered by incomplete spiritual knowledge
- Hindered by scruples (Rom 14:1)
- Hindered by sin
- Struggling with trials of this life
- Have fewer or less obvious talents
- Not fully comfortable among God's people

The Needs of the Weak Come First

- Acts 20:35 - Elders have special obligation

Acts 20:35

In all things I have shown you that by working hard in this way we must help the weak and remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he himself said, 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.'"

The Needs of the Weak Come First

- Acts 20:35 - Elders have special obligation
- Rom. 15:1-2; 1 Th. 5:14 - Not just elders, but all members

Romans 15:1-2

We who are strong have an obligation to bear with the failings of the weak, and not to please ourselves. (2) Let each of us please his neighbor for his good, to build him up.

1 Thessalonians 5:14

And we urge you, brothers, admonish the idle, encourage the fainthearted, help the weak, be patient with them all.

The Needs of the Weak Come First

- Acts 20:35 - Elders have special obligation
- Rom. 15:1-2; 1 Th. 5:14 - Not just elders, but all members
- Mat. 25:31-46 - Physical as well as spiritual needs

Matthew 25:31-46

"When the Son of Man comes in his glory, and all the angels with him, then he will sit on his glorious throne. (32) Before him will be gathered all the nations, and he will separate people one from another as a shepherd separates the sheep from the goats. (33) And he will place the sheep on his right, but the goats on the left.

Matthew 25:31-46

(34) Then the King will say to those on his right, 'Come, you who are blessed by my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world. (35) For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me, (36) I was naked and you clothed me, I was sick and you visited me, I was in prison and you came to me.'

Matthew 25:31-46

(37) Then the righteous will answer him, saying, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you drink? (38) And when did we see you a stranger and welcome you, or naked and clothe you? (39) And when did we see you sick or in prison and visit you?' (40) And the King will answer them, 'Truly, I say to you, **as you did it to one of the least of these my brothers, you did it to me.'**

Who Are The Weak?

- Not necessarily obvious who is weak and strong
- All who are strong were once weak
- All are susceptible to periods of weakness
- All are weak compared to God
- If we are not weak maybe we should be –
1 Cor. 9:22-23

1 Corinthians 9:22-23

To the weak I became weak, that I might win the weak. I have become all things to all people, that by all means I might save some. (23) I do it all for the sake of the gospel, that I may share with them in its blessings.

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- All are susceptible to periods of weakness
- All are weak compared to God
- If we are not weak maybe we should be – 1 Cor. 9:22-23
- We should take care of each other, regardless of how weak are strong we are – Phi. 2:1-4

Philippians 2:1-4

So if there is any encouragement in Christ, any comfort from love, any participation in the Spirit, any affection and sympathy, (2) complete my joy by being of the same mind, having the same love, being in full accord and of one mind. (3) **Do nothing from rivalry or conceit, but in humility count others more significant than yourselves.** (4) **Let each of you look not only to his own interests, but also to the interests of others.**

Applications

- Do I make sure that everyone feels welcome among us?
- After services, do I talk to the people I know best, or do I go out of my way to welcome the visitors?
- When I am not at services, do I think about my brethren and take action to be of service to them?
- Do I regularly pray for my brothers and sisters who are facing difficulties?
- Do I notice when one of our members is not here? Do I do anything about it?
- Am I aware of my opportunities to be of service to the saints? Do I take advantage of those opportunities?
- Do I know of any saints who have left the fold? Have I made any effort to encourage them to return?
- When I have a choice between serving others and pleasing myself, what do I pick?

The Good Sheep

- Acts unselfishly toward the other sheep
- Follows the Good Shepherd –
John 10:1-5, 14-15

John 10:1-5, 14-15

"Truly, truly, I say to you, he who does not enter the sheepfold by the door but climbs in by another way, that man is a thief and a robber. (2) But he who enters by the door is the shepherd of the sheep. (3) To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out. (4) When he has brought out all his own, he goes before them, and the sheep follow him, for they know his voice. (5) A stranger they will not follow, but they will flee from him, for they do not know the voice of strangers...

(14) "I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, (15) just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep."