**I Myself Will Search for My Sheep**

**The Word**

Read Together Ezekiel 34:1-16

**The Big Idea**

In light of the selfishness and irresponsibility of Israel’s past shepherd kings, God removes those shepherds and promises to be the faithful shepherd of his people. In Christ, we see the fulfilment of a God who uses his power and authority to protect and sacrificially serve his flock.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. The theme of God as shepherd is obviously a familiar one to most of us. As you consider Ezekiel 34 and John 10, is there an idea regarding God’s shepherding role that struck you in a new or deeper way from Ezekiel 34 and John 10?

2. How specifically have you experienced God as your faithful shepherd in this most recent season of your life?

3. Consider the final question raised on Sunday: Where do you think you need to be shepherded by God in this season of your life? If it’s helpful, identify one of the phrases from Psalm 23 that accurately reflects what you desire.

4. Consider a specific context where you are in a place of power and authority (family, work, community, etc.). What would it look like specifically for you to use your power and authority in ways that reflect God’s care for the needy and vulnerable in that specific context?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

A. The destruction of Jerusalem (Ezekiel 33:21) marks a turning point in Ezekiel’s ministry. Before then, his ministry is one of warning of impending judgment. Now that judgment has come, his ministry is one of promise of hope and restoration.

 B. In Ezekiel 34 God promises to shepherd his people.

II. The Passage

A. The Problem: Irresponsible Shepherds (v. 1-10)

1. The shepherds God refers to are most likely the past kings of Israel

2. There had always been tension in the idea of a human king for Israel as God had always wanted to be their king/shepherd himself (see 1 Samuel 8)

3. God presents his case against the shepherds of Israel (v. 1-10)

a. They use their power over the sheep to serve themselves (v. 2-3)

b. They neglect the weak and vulnerable (v. 4)

c. The shepherds have actually become wolves! (v. 10)

d. The result is the flock is scattered (v. 5-6) = exile

 4. God will remove those shepherds from leadership (v. 10)

 = the end of the monarchy

B. Solution: God himself will be their shepherd (v. 11-16)

 1. He will search out for his lost, scattered sheep (v. 11-13)

2. He will offer protection, care, and safety to his flock (v. 14-15)

-He will pay particular attention to the needy and vulnerable (v. 16)

 3. He will shepherd with justice (v. 16-22)

 C. Solution: God will send David to shepherd his people (v. 23-24)

1. At first glance, this sounds like a contradiction, but in Christ God has both sent a human being to shepherd his people and has himself come to be shepherd of his people.

2. See John 10 on Jesus’ comments as the good shepherd

 a. Jesus here is assuming the role and heart of Yahweh in Ezekiel 34

b. Jesus contrasts himself with all other would-be shepherds who are in fact “hired hands” and “thieves and robbers”

c. Jesus uses his power and leadership in sacrifice and service to the flock in giving his life to protect the flock

d. Consider Jesus’ earthly ministry

1) He searches for the “lost sheep of Israel” (tax collectors, sinners, etc.)

2) He gathers them into a community of love and grace and servant leadership

3) He leads with justice

III. Conclusion

 A. Where do you need to be shepherded by God in this season of your life?

-We like to be in control, but control is an illusion, and God longs to be our shepherd.

B. Consider Psalm 23: is there a phrase in that psalm that connects with how you desire God to act at this time in your life?