

Of shepherds and sheep (Quality: Average)

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[0 : 00] Again, I would desire to draw your attention to the words you will find in the 34th chapter of Prophet Ezekiel, verses 22 and 23.

The 22nd and the 23rd verses of the 34th chapter of Prophet Ezekiel.

Therefore I will save my flock, and they shall no more be afraid. And I will judge between cattle and cattle, and I will set up one shepherd over them.

And he shall feed them, even my servant David. He shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd.

Those of you who are unable to be here this morning will remember that we spoke a few words, a few words from...

[1 : 23] I think we'll get just one more, if you don't find that. Thank you. Thank you. We spoke a few words from how that God in his love and mercy saved his people from, and also to.

We spoke concerning what they were saved from, that they were saved from their enemies, saved from this wicked world, saved from their sins.

And he'll save them from their sins, and he'll save them from all their sad condition, though they are a rebellious people.

We did mention at the onset, too, how through this chapter, how the prophet was led to acknowledge that there were shepherds who cared not for the flock, and how one felt tried upon this point.

But you know, when we consider these things aright, there is, I feel, a principle within us that we care much for the flock and desire their welfare and their good, and would be in the means of God, in the hands of God the means, in administering those things that shall be for the soul's good and welfare, while we, our souls, are nothing.

[3 : 24] God's servants, we said, stood in a very solemn place, indeed. And some of us feel it more and more and more as we journey on, so that we were led, we hope, a bit through, into the truth that he saves them.

Well, we were speaking how he saved them by his mighty power. He saved them from the fear of destruction, and that he came here on earth as the Lamb of God, offered up himself a sacrifice for sin, that he might save his flock, his people.

And they shall be no more, be afraid. Well, may we be enabled to look a little further into these things here before us, as we look a moment at what we believe it means here, that they shall no more be afraid.

Well, this is separate, I believe, to that word that our life is given us for afraid. That is to say that life, the life of God in the soul, will be pounced upon from time to time.

But they shall no more be afraid to sin. They shall be no more be afraid to the world, or to those things that are the flesh.

[5 : 15] For he in his love and compassion delivers them from the prey. And also they shall no more be afraid unto Satan, who once dwelt within, but have been cast out by the mighty power of God, himself having taken off his abode within.

So that, I believe, here, it is perfectly evident that another word in the sacred script comes to us, that it is said, from the mighty he will take the prey.

And so he took the prey, the child of God, from the mighty power of Satan, and once taken from his power, there is no more hope of him gaining the prey, that is to destroy it.

So they shall no more be afraid. There shall be no more of that time when there will be the powers of hell within them to destroy.

God having bound the strong man in heart and cast him out, himself having entered, and there, we hope, taken up his abode.

[6 : 51] So I might say, well, I don't feel much like that. Well, you won't. I know anything of a fire. But there will be times, my friends, God will make us strong in faith, will make us believe that he hath taken possession and dwelt with him where it has not been the case.

We should have been overcome nor mere this, so that he saves his people from sin and all its consequences.

And then, just here for a few moments before we pass on, he saves them too. That is to say, saves them to an everlasting and eternal salvation, saves them to inherit a kingdom that the world will never know, a kingdom where none can enter, save those who belong to his flock.

And so then, he saves them with an ever-ending salvation, saves them to an eternal inheritance, saves them to enter into an eternal and everlasting rest, that rest which we remain for the people of God, a glorious rest.

What a mercy if we know a little of that rest while here below to be able to rest in the Beloved, rest in him who bears all our sorrows and on whom all our grief was laid.

[8 : 58] Oh, when we think of his love in that he bore all our sorrows, when we see him as a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, when we see him as one who condescended to be made a little lonely angels to the suffering of death, condescended to come for the sake of his flock, so that you see how he came to purchase and to deliver his people, and so that they should no more be taken by Satan from him who have entered in and resides there, we hope, as king of grace.

we read in the 24th verse that he is, though he says he had my servant David, a prince among them, well, this is our spiritual David, he is a prince among his people, oh, what a mercy it is if he's a prince amongst us, he has a few people, only a few of us, but what a mercy it is if we witness a people from time to time of his coming to us and giving us it may be but one quote of his mercy to feel it and to know it.

surely, my friends, it's better to be a few with union and love, better to be a few and have him come into our midst than to be a multitude with contention.

I don't speak that wrongly. There will be and there are misunderstandings that arise from our wretched abominable flesh. We shall never get above flesh, but blessings be on God's holy name, he comes and subdues it and he gives us a forgiving spirit, a blessed forgiving spirit.

Oh, what a mercy it is if we can come and walk in that way of which Christ spoke unto those that asked him as a gospel forgiveness.

[11 : 42] He says, just seven times, he's under seventy times seven, so that God does, I believe, so who?

And have we not desired it here that he may come and dwell amongst us? We do desire that we might see a growth in grace, that we may see that his hand is with us, that we may indeed know what one of his dear servants said here recently, what we want is children, what we want is to see those that are brought forth into divine life.

If indeed there be any that are of all yet ready be brought forth, what we want to see is the fruits following the declaration of the gospel, what we want to see is some poor sinner being brought forth to be able to declare what God has done for their never dying soul, and that they may be enabled to walk in the ordinances of his house.

These things, my friends, are the fruits of the Spirit, and are, I believe, are those things which he saves his people unto, he causes them to walk in those paths how that the flesh hesitates to walk in.

I often wonder in my quiet moments if there's one or more here standing upon the brink of the waters. For Christ said suffering to be so now.

[13 : 32] for thus he becometh asked to fulfill all righteousness. Oh, that it might come to pass that there might be rejoicing in heaven and among the few that gather.

Well, God is a sovereign in these things, and he will work, and none can let hinder when the appointed time appears.

But to return. So then he will preserve these people from the power of the enemy, and then he says, I will judge, and I will judge between cattle and cattle.

cattle. I touched upon that this morning just very briefly, how he says, concerning in the same chapter, that he will divide and separate.

And so he has made it clear here, as it is throughout the world, that he will divide and separate, and judge between cattle and cattle.

[14 : 51] And I believe I mentioned it not for us to judge the cattle one from the other, but it's definitely clear here that it is to judge betwixt the goats and the sheep, or the sheep and the goats, I rather like to put it, as the sheep are worthy of being named for us, in the sense that they are in Christ, that we might not belittle his purchase, they are purchased.

So then, this is very close, but as I mentioned with regards to the prophet, he was bidden to go and preach, the preaching that God bid him.

And I said too, it's not easy to stand in a pulpit and preach the preaching God bids, I am sure of that. I know what my human nature would love.

I know full well it would like to pass by this part, which many do. They pass by, how those things are cut into the very flesh, like the word is, sharper than any two-edged sword.

But you know, if we are rightly taught, we shall want to face the divine realities of the sacred wit. For he is God and there is none else.

[16 : 22] And he says here in the twenty-fourth verse, I, the Lord, have spoken it. Meaning there is no change in the declarations of the truth that he has declared through the prophet Ezekiel.

Well, I believe that there will be evidence when we are tried as to our standing and to know whether we are among the sheep, we shall know by the leading and teaching of the spirit within dead and how he has brought us.

If we can look upon a day when we were alienated from God by wicked works, if we can look upon a day when we went after the things that the heathen has spoken of in this word, rejoicing, if I say we can say with one in the word, whereas once I was blind, now I see, I see myself as a hell deserving sinner, I see myself as one that deserves everlasting and eternal good.

Well, then to have some humble hope, that he, Christ in his love and mercy, has delivered us from that state.

Surely there is enough in these truths to prove that we are among the sheep. I don't believe any others know anything of it, really, savingly.

[18 : 23] You see, there is such a thing as looking upon these things and seeing them nothing but history, as it were, as the historical part of God's word.

Well, that's all doing well in itself, but there is such a deep meaning when we are able to look into it and have it revealed that he has and does judge between cattle and cattle.

Well, he is a righteous judge. He judges righteously so that when he judges, it is that judgment that cannot but be right and true, since he knoweth all things.

You see, we are not to judge, judge not, we are told, that he be not judged, but should we get into the judgment seat in our weakness? You see, we do not know.

We cannot point a finger of one, even around us in the world, to say they are not a sheep, other sheep I have. There are not of this fold.

[19 : 46] Oh, I often look into that word. therefore also I must bring and he will, though they may be still in the ruins of the fall.

Oh, how this has been abundantly known in times past. I believe my own dear father was in one of those sheep that were foul. Can't go into that, but I say I believe, knowing the testimony that he had given unto me from time to time, there was a time when he went his way into one of the places where he lived, and he heard the truth, and it entered.

Oh, that some poor sinner might enter, even healed, that they might hear the truth enter. Then we might be surprised, might say, well, I didn't think they were a sheep.

We cannot judge, my friend, but God judges, righteous judgment. He does indeed, and so it is in a family. You see how we might look at this one of that one who say, well, I feel that they're all right, but as for the other, men are.

But how many times has God ruled, that he's been right, obviously, judged between cattle and cattle. Oh, how sovereign is God in his choice, and in his divine power, to bring a sinner out of darkness, into his marvelous light, and the most unexpected.

[21 : 23] He does indeed. Look how he was just on these points for a moment. Oh, he judged between his couple and cattle when he was here on earth, when that dear woman came to him to anoint his feet, you see, with ointment, see how she was misjudged, and the very one who misjudged her, you see, was one of the goats that appeared to be a sheep.

Oh, how terrible isn't it? Isn't it close? I say, that appeared to be a sheep, but a wolf had sheep's clothing. Oh, may that never be my solemn case, but I say, how there and then how he misjudged her, but God in his love and compassion had mercy upon her.

And he did indeed, one that didn't appear to be a sheep, but he separated on that very spot the cattle from cattle. He did indeed.

And so you find it, throughout the word of God, how he separated between cattle and cattle. It was on the cliff across itself, across itself, there was a separation there with the two dying thieves.

There he separated. Who would have said when the dying thief was hoisted upon the cross that he was one of the sheep? Oh my friends, the deep unhavenable mystery of the sovereignty of God and the separating world, separating these things.

[23 : 03] So that he has been right through all ages and it was even at the very beginning you know, with those two brothers, there again, God in his great omnipotent power, separated from cattle and cattle.

He received at the hand of dear Abel that sacrifice. Why? Because it was a sacrifice of the lamb. It was a shedding that blood that he received, you see, as being the sacrifice.

But you see how it separated so that Abel born of the same hands, yet you see, how he brought a sacrifice, but it was a sacrifice of the earth, that God could not receive because the earth had been cursed, so that he could not receive that sacrifice, and therefore he separated their cattle from cattle.

So how close then these things are, and yet we have we hope a principle within us that we desire to come to his womb, that he may give us some humble hope that he separated us from above mankind, and that he has separated us from every false way over fear it may appear unto human nature.

God, and I will set up one shepherd over them. You are set up one shepherd over them.

[24 : 42] Ah, here we have that shepherd our savior. One shepherd set over them. and so he is over them to rule them, and to gather them together.

You see, it's a mercy if he gathers his sheep together, he or her, isn't it? If he gathers together, you see, I'm sure of this, when God gathers the people together, in a time of danger, how they will cling closer together.

When the enemy might come to try and scatter the sheep, as he does, God, in his love and compassion, will lift up a standard against him, and he'll overthrow all his evil desires, so that, you see, he will be a shepherd over them, and the one shepherd, all his servants, you know, who are under shepherds, are under his divine power and rule, and it is he alone that teacheth them what to speak, how to speak, and the time to speak.

I can honestly say, I hope, that when I come before the people to speak, I haven't had any premeditation what to speak, never been able to do it.

Oh, I'd say this if I believed here, if I did, well, bear with me, when he sent his disciples forth that purse or script, he said, lachy, anything, I've had to go like that.

[26 : 43] I remember going along in the train once to preach somewhere, and I thought, oh, he's going along, why am I coming all this long journey when I would stay at home?

Why should I have to come here or go there? And those words stopped it, you know, as I was going along the train, when I sent you for, without purse or script, lachy, anything, oh, it says nothing, nothing.

Therefore, you see, how we haven't been able to walk that path, I'm not touching anyone else here, every man in his own order, according unto God's teaching, but he's led me that way, I feel, and I have to become so dependent, so what I speak is not premeditated, and no thought of any in one's mind at all, I can honestly say, before him who knows if we lie.

As I said this morning, they will not come before him with a lie. so he'll be a shepherd over them, well, and he will feed them, so that he being a shepherd over them, he will feed them, he'll feed them with the finest of the wheat, what's that?

The finest of the wheat, well, it's that that's been winnowed with the shovel and the pan, that which we have, his servants have had to gather, gleaned, as it were, from his word, and that he has given us to speak, and that to his honor and glory, and I believe, too, it sets forth the gospel, for I believe that is the finest of the wheat, is that which is for the nourishment of the sheep, and you know, the sheep are very particular, they are literally, you won't find the sheep like the goats, they will eat any rubbish, and nor will they drink anything that is not a pure, in the sense that it must not be stagnant, oh, what a wonderful big old, are you a sheep, sinner, do you walk clean from it, that's one big evidence of it, you see, there are those who are left, solemnly left, to be able to swallow anything that's put over, whatever it may be, and take it for food, but my friends, the sheep want clean from her, he wants that that shall be nourished to his poor, punishing soul, they want that that shall help them when they feel ready to perish, they want that, that shall have strength in it, to strengthen their poor, weak, tried soul,

[30 : 23] I'm sure when we come to the house of God, both speaker and hearer, we shall not be satisfied without clean promulgation that God hath prepared in his gospel for sinners, and if you'll come into God's house, this evening, needing a taste of this clean promulgation, you'll find it in the Savior, as he came here on earth, and he, who did say that he was the bread of life, that is the clean promulgation, and they are favored sometimes to come and taste it.

I wish we could get there more often. I don't know how you find it, sometimes we seem to, or we do, not seem, but we do get a little taste it may be in the house of God, and then how do you find it during the week?

Do you find that it only seems to revive you for a few moments, and then you go back to your own same place again?

Well, you know, we want nourishment continually for our bodies, don't we? Not satisfied with one meal, aren't we? So, you see, God causes people to go from strength to strength, every one in Zion, God's love, so he gives us a little here and little there, as we need it, when they are weary and faint, when they are ready to die, then he sees their condition, and he comes and gives them a little taste of himself.

How do they taste him? why, when he comes with his heavenly love into your heart, you are favored then by faith to a taste of him, as you view him as your Savior and your Redeemer.

[32 : 45] Here it is, you can feel him to be your shepherd, and you hope to say, you can say that you are among his sheep, the sheep of his pasture, and he shall feed them, well he'll feed them in the green pastures of his womb, so that they are favored to come, and feed in the green pasture of his mercy, their favored to come, and feed in the green pasture, of his grace, and God.

They are indeed, and as it says in the 23rd Psalm, to go in and out, and find this pasture, that is, I believe, in and out trouble, and trial, and difficulty.

It's a wonderful thing, if your trials and troubles have caused you to find pasture, it's a wonderful thing to go into trouble, and then come out of it, and we've found pasture in it, they shall go in and out, and find pasture.

Oh, yes, and so they shall, also, I believe, be favored to go in and out of these earthly courts, and find pasture, he's ordained it so, for it is there, that he has spread the provision, oh, what a mercy he's promised a blessing, for he will bless the provision of his house, and satisfy who, those who are not hungry, know, out satisfy the poor with bread, what a mercy to be among the poor, we might have much of this world's goods, and rightly so, as God has given it to us, and we are unable to view it as such, and prize his great goodness to us, but we shall be poor, if we are one of these sheep, we shall be dependent upon him for food and for dreams, and I did mention this morning with regards to the diseases, he will look after them and take care of them, as he is as one shepherd over them, cannot only feed them, but he'll feed them with those things that shall heal their maladies, oh yes, he will indeed, when sin with his wrinkling sore, see you treating your very being, he will in his love and compassion feed you with his mercy, and his grace, and love, he will indeed, and then as we read this evening, he'll sprinkle on them pure water, yes, that precious water that flowed from Calvary's cross, the blood, you know, and the water, we read, first to atone, the second to cleanse, oh my friend, the precious, a cleansing power of that water that flowed from Calvary's cross, and also he'll give them the taste of the waters of the wells of salvation, oh how he grants them sometimes to have a taste of them, therefore, with joy, shall they draw water from the wells of salvation, oh what joy filled the heart when we are favored to come and have one soup of that sacred well, and how true we then find it and witness within our hearts that there's curse and death in every stream, save in this sweet well of

Bethlehem, the shepherd is over the sheep, he feeds them and he waters them, he gives them to partake then of those things that shall strengthen them to go on a little further in the way, and then to he'll feed them to them to them to them to them to come before him in private sometimes, and there's sweet times when we are favored for a few moments to be before him in private alone, yet not alone.

[37 : 51] You know, those times are very, very few in one's life, but you will find now and again, he will come, come over all the mountains, come over all the fields, and when there's been a tumult within, and many accusations from the enemy against us, he'll come with a still small voice, he will indeed.

oh, and true it is, not only at the beginning, but when the spirit enters into the soul, so it is sometimes when that voice comes, the wind blowing where it is, you can hear the sound that is in the soul, but you cannot tell whether it cometh, or whether it goeth, so you see how he comes, and you feel that sweetness in the soul, and you rejoice, you say, this is my beloved, and you feel that sweetness, then you'll know it's right and real, because where you had this tumult, where you had these fears, and these things arise in your heart as a blessed and sweet car, there it is he brings them, as we read in the world, to their desired haven, he does indeed, after you have been through many storms, in your soul's experience, he'll bring you to that desire, even, these sheep, then I say, are timid, they are indeed, oh, how timid is a sheep, naturally, haven't you ever noticed when even a dog, a strange dog, or even a sheep dog, too, how when it comes in sight, how they look up with some measure of distress, and fear, and you'll see them so alert, ah, do you know what I mean, sinner, are you a sheep, do you know what it is when this great dog with a bottomless pit, this great enemy of

God, when he comes, does it not make you alert, and make you tremble, and in much fear, but remember the shepherd is at hand, like it is there, the shepherd watches over the sheep, here on earth, he does indeed, and so, our shepherd is such, that when he sees us timid and afraid, he flies to our relief, he does, he flies to our relief, and he says, wherefore didst thou doubt, oh, ye of little faith, so my service spoken to the disciples, it will be spoken to you in all conditions, my friends, wherever you may be, you have that, there was doubt in your thought, he'll come in his own way, and speak whatever word he sees fit, that should be for your good, and you'll be able to eat it, and taste it, this is where they are fed, fed by him, even my servant

David, ah, you say, that says David, ah, I know it does, but it's our spiritual David, for you see how Christ descended from David, and he is our spiritual David, and he is here alluded unto, ah, in the figure, as David is a lively type of Christ, so then he shall feed his people, his flock, he shall indeed, he shall feed them, again, you see how it's emphasized here, that he shall feed them, so there is no peradventure, of not being sufficient to provide, for there is in him an abundance, oh, yes, as no, like it might be with the earthly shepherd, who may have to scan around, as it were, for food, in the time of famine, there's no famine here, blessings from his holy name, there's no famine here, there's such a fullness in Christ, there's such an amount in Christ, to supply every sheep, and I may say to hear, however much hunger you may have, as an abundance again and again, to provide, there is indeed, he shall feed them, so that there's no peradventure of starving or coming to want, he'll feed them, he will indeed, and he'll leave them to fountains shortly, to fountains of living water, he says, and he shall be their shepherd, so then he'll be their shepherd, through time, he will indeed, he'll be their shepherd, in the time of their most medium, shortly to come upon each one of us, and he'll be their shepherd, forever and ever.

Well, my friends, I feel I'm only touched upon the fringe of the depths, it is contained in these worlds, but I hope we can say we've sucked a little honey out of these precious things, things, you know how the same dear man, Ezekiel, how one time he was shown a role, and how he was commanded to swallow it, and when he did swallow it, he said it was in his belly, as sweeter than honey, all I say, is that so with you, sinner?

[43 : 53] are these things, sweet and honey to you, or the honeycomb? Well, his words are sweet and honey, they are indeed, and his sacred volume is that which we love in death, as it reveals unto us those things that are hidden, and were hidden from us, until the time he appointed to reveal them.

Well, may the Lord be pleased to add his blessing, and may he grant that these things may remain our meat and our drink, and we may have them sealed upon our hearts, now and also when we come to the swelling floor.

Amen.