

Growth Group Discussion Guide

Passage: Ezekiel 34:1-16

Introduction: Prior to the sermon, had you heard about the topic of spiritual abuse?

Overview: In this passage the Lord condemns the shepherds (political and religious leaders) of Israel over their failure to shepherd his people and declares that he will shepherd his people himself.



Into the Word

Ezekiel prophesied among God's people during the time of their exile in Babylon. In Ezekiel 34:1-10, the Lord lays out his complaint against the shepherds of Israel, detailing their sins of omission (the good things they failed to do) and sins of commission (the evil things they did instead). Take a moment to discuss them.

How do God's expectations for the Shepherds of Israel compare to his expectations for pastors and elders today? Will the Lord hold bad shepherds to account?

Compare: Acts 20:28-35; Hebrews 13:17; 1 Peter 5:1-4



Into the Heart

Read John 10:1-16 and the article linked below. The author quotes John Calvin as saying, "We are already God's sheep, before we are aware that He is our shepherd." How does meditating on the surety that you are numbered among God's sheep bring comfort to you, no matter how well or poorly your earthly shepherds are performing?

Resource: *The Shepherd Who Knows His Sheep*



Into the World

Talk openly about some of the expectations people in our culture place on pastors. If one had to compare the "job" of pastor to some other position in the work-world, what do you think people would say? What kind of temperament / personality is frequently associated with people in such positions?

Read 1 Samuel 8:1-9, 19-20 and the article linked below (5-minute read). Is it possible we look for the wrong kind of leaders? What kind of leaders should we be looking for?

Resource: *Standing Up to Bully Pastors*