
Sermon Notes

December 10, 2017

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

FEAR NOT: God is Your God

Isaiah 41:10, Ezekiel 34:22-31, Isaiah 40:11

FEAR NOT!

- ❖ Against a backdrop of impending national calamity and disaster, Isaiah, delivers a message of hope to God's people
 - *Fear not, for I am with you; be not dismayed, for I am your God; I will strengthen you, I will help you, I will uphold you with my righteous right hand.* (Isa. 41:10)
 - even on your darkest day, God promises to be with you and to be your God
- ❖ What does it mean to you that God is your God?

Ezekiel

- ❖ Act I: while living among the Jewish people who have been deported to Babylon, Ezekiel predicts the impending destruction of the Temple, Jerusalem and surrounding cities
- ❖ Act II: after a 13 year intermission, Ezekiel delivers a message of hope—God will bring His people back to their homeland

- ❖ Ezekiel 34:24-31 is a message packed full of hope and amazing promises
 - the importance of clinging to God's promises when life is challenging
 - God's promises strengthen and encourage us
 - God's promises are the fuel that hope needs to keep it alive
- ❖ God promises to provide a shepherd: *you are my sheep... I am your God*

The Identity of God's Shepherd

- ❖ *My servant David*
 - between the time of David's death and the time of Ezekiel, no one ever is identified as or with "David"
 - before becoming king, David was a shepherd
 - as a king, David is a conquering hero, a champion for the people of Israel
 - David is also a poet who prophesies about the coming of God's Messiah
- ❖ David prefigures Jesus
 - what is true about David's life becomes even more true about Jesus
 - Jesus is known as the Son of David
 - Jesus and David are both born in Bethlehem

- Jesus is described as reigning on the throne of His father, David (Luke 1:32-33)
- in his role as shepherd, David anticipates the way Jesus will be the Good Shepherd who lays down His life for His sheep
- what David does on a small scale, Jesus does on a large scale
 - Jesus is constantly seeking the lost, binding up the broken, strengthening the sick, attending to the needs and necessities of those around Him
 - in a greater way than David, Jesus is *a man of sorrows and acquainted with grief*
 - in a greater way than David, Jesus is hunted down by a despotic king and, later on, betrayed by one of His close friends
- ❖ Jesus is the shepherd Ezekiel has in view in 34:23
 - unlike Israel's false shepherds, Jesus is the faithful shepherd of Ezekiel 34
 - Jesus is the shepherd who says, *I am your God*

What Does God's Shepherd Do for His Flock?

- ❖ Jesus, our Good Shepherd, protects, comforts, nurtures and feeds His flock
 - the God who is our God is powerful and personal (*cf.* Isaiah 40:10)
 - our Shepherd comes as a conqueror

- *He rules the world with truth and grace!*
- at the same time, He is present and active in our lives
- Jesus comes in power with the sheep of His flock snuggled in His bosom
- ❖ This Good Shepherd wants to care for you and carry your burdens for you
 - only those who accept their role as Jesus' sheep can "cash in" on all the wonders of God's love (Ezekiel 34:31, John 10:14, 27)
 - do you listen for and respond to the call of Jesus, the Good Shepherd?
 - Jesus is the ONE shepherd of Ezekiel 34:23
 - there is NO OTHER shepherd

Personal Application

1. Are you confident that God is your God? What comfort and/or peace of mind does knowing that bring to you?
2. Jesus says: *My sheep hear my voice, and I know them, and they follow me.* (Jn. 10:14:27). Do you know the voice of Jesus as your Good Shepherd? Do you follow Him? How does hearing His voice and following Him strengthen and comfort you when you are wrestling with fear and anxiety?
3. Review the many promises God makes in Ezekiel 34:22-31. Which of these are most important to you right now? Why? What will you do to keep yourself attached to these promises and draw peace from them?