
The Watchman #11
A Comfort in Troubled Times

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 33-34

Discussion Questions

1. What comforting thoughts come to your mind when you feel alone in your struggles?
2. Ezekiel was re-commissioned by God to be a watchman of His people (ch. 33:1-20). He was first commissioned to pronounce judgment upon Israel and the surrounding evil nations for their sins, then for seven years, Ezekiel was silent. But after the fall of Jerusalem (v. 21-22), God opened Ezekiel's mouth to speak of comfort, salvation and restoration. His message is now about God's comfort. God doesn't enjoy disciplining His children, but He does it because He loves them. His grace, compassion and mercy overflow, and He blesses those who are faithful to Him. As God's child, how should you pay attention to Ezekiel's message of warning and hope? How should a person who continues to rebel against God react to His warnings? How should a person who remains faithful to God find encouragement to God's promises?
3. Ezekiel's ministry is to comfort God's people during a troubled time. These people must have been looking for someone to lead them, but chapter 34 accounts that there was no good leader to lead God's people. Verses 1-10 describe how bad the leaders were who were just taking care of themselves instead of taking care of their people. As a result, the flock of sheep (people) were scattered because no one took care of them. Where would Israel find their comfort in this trouble time? It was revealed in verses 11- 31 that their future Messiah, the Lord Jesus Christ, would be their Shepherd and Comforter in troubled times. Here are four

characteristics of this Good Shepherd that bring us comfort in troubled times:

- a. ***Comfort that God cares enough to look for you (v. 34:11-16).*** God seeks and searches for His scattered sheep. In the millennium, God will gather the entire Israel nation. God, who doesn't change, looks for you just as He did His people in the Old and New Testament. He is actively seeking you out. The Holy Spirit intercedes for you. How does it encourage you that Jesus Himself is the Good Shepherd who cares for you in times of trouble? Share a testimony of how you knew that God had been there for you while you were going through something that made you felt lost, confused and alone.
- b. ***Comfort that God gives you the best when He gives you rest (v. 13-15).*** Peace is not in the absence of trouble or conflict. God promised that He would feed them with the best of everything—good pasture. In correlation with feeding the sheep, the sheep would also lie down to rest. Most animals won't relax until they have peace (they feel safe). How important is being restful for you? Discuss what are the things that make people restless? What promises in the Scripture could you claim that give assurances of peace in spite of a seeming lack of solution to your problem? What does Psalm 23:4 tell you about rest and comfort?
- c. ***Comfort that God judges to make things right (v. 16-22).*** Irresponsible shepherds will be judged and dealt with. God will separate the good sheep (the righteous) from the bad sheep (unrighteous). These bad sheep did not only share with others, nor leave something for them but destroyed the leftovers so that nothing would be left for others. But God promised that He would protect these unfairly treated sheep. How does this promise encourage you when you think of people who do not only take advantage of others but abuse them as well? With all the unfairness and evilness that abound in the society, what comfort do you have that God judges to make things right?

- d. ***Comfort that God gives everlasting peace (v. 23-29).*** In contrast to the evil shepherds, God would send a perfect Shepherd in the person of Jesus Christ, who would take care of every need of His people and would set up a kingdom of perfect peace and justice. There will not be any more war or any trouble because there would be peace. What kind of peace does this passage talk about? Why is peace beyond conflict possible? Discuss the results of how people base their peace on instead of focusing on the Lord? How does the Holy Spirit give you peace?

Walk

Why should I feel discouraged? Why should the shadows come?

Why should my heart be lonely And long for heaven, heaven and home?

When, when Jesus is my portion, My constant Friend is He;

His eye is on the sparrow, And I know He watches me.

Our comfort in troubled times is knowing that our God is there for us (v. 30-31). He cares enough to look for us. He gives His best when He gives us rest. He judges to make things right. And He gives everlasting peace. Is there anything that is troubling you right now? Instead of trying to solve your problem on your own, why not in humble spirit commit to Him what is troubling you. Allow Him comfort you.

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, I cannot thank You enough for Your comfort when I need it. Thank You that through the ministry of the Holy Spirit, I am never alone in handling the problems and troubles that I may go through in this life. Thank you that in spite of everything that's not going well in my life, I can still enjoy rest and peace because of You. Help me to always remember that I am not alone because You are always there to comfort me. In Jesus' name. Amen.