

Ezekiel 34:4

Authorized King James Version (KJV)

The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost; but with force and with cruelty have ye ruled them.

Analysis

"The diseased have ye not strengthened, neither have ye healed that which was sick, neither have ye bound up that which was broken, neither have ye brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost." This comprehensive indictment lists shepherds' failures: neglecting weak, ignoring sick, abandoning broken, not seeking lost. True pastoral ministry requires compassion, diligence, and sacrifice—strengthening the weak, healing the sick, restoring the fallen, seeking the lost. Christ perfectly fulfills this shepherd role, seeking and saving the lost (Luke 19:10). Reformed pastoral theology emphasizes shepherding as primary ministerial function, not just preaching but personal care, discipline, and restoration.

Historical Context

Judah's leaders (586 BC) failed every pastoral responsibility. Instead of strengthening faith, they promoted idolatry. Instead of healing spiritual sickness, they offered false assurances. Instead of restoring the fallen, they exploited them. Instead of seeking the lost, they drove them further away. This wholesale pastoral failure necessitated exile. The passage shaped Christian understanding of ministry—shepherds must actively care for individuals, not just manage institutions. Jesus's

parable of the lost sheep (Matthew 18:12-14) echoes this passage, emphasizing God's concern for each individual.

Related Passages

1 Corinthians 13:4 — Characteristics of love

1 John 4:8 — God is love

Matthew 25:31 — Final judgment

Romans 2:1 — Judging others

Study Questions

1. Which of these pastoral responsibilities do you most neglect in caring for others?
2. How does this comprehensive list challenge narrow views of ministry focused only on preaching or administration?

Interlinear Text

לֹא חִזְקָת מִצְחָלָה אַתָּה
H3808 have ye not strengthened
H2470 The diseased

לֹא חִזְקָת מִצְחָלָה וְאַתָּה
H853 The diseased
H2470 H3808

רִפְאָת מִלְּבָשָׁב רָת
H7495 neither have ye healed
H7665 that which was broken

לֹא סְבָשָׁת מִלְּבָשָׁב וְאַתָּה
H3808 H2280 neither have ye bound up
H853

בָּנָדָת מִלְּבָשָׁת
H5080 that which was driven away
H3808

לֹא בְּשִׁבְתָּת מִלְּבָשָׁת וְאַתָּה
H7725 neither have ye brought again
H853

בָּאָבֶד דָת
H6 that which was lost
H3808

לֹא בְּקִשָּׁת מִלְּבָשָׁת וְאַתָּה רְדִיבָת
H1245 H7287 neither have ye sought but with force have ye ruled
H2394

וְבִפְרָרָה: אַתָּה
H853 and with cruelty
H6531

Additional Cross-References

Matthew 9:36 (Parallel theme): But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.

Ezekiel 34:16 (Parallel theme): I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick: but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment.

Matthew 10:6 (Parallel theme): But go rather to the lost sheep of the house of Israel.

Hebrews 12:12 (Parallel theme): Wherefore lift up the hands which hang down, and the feeble knees;

Jeremiah 8:22 (Parallel theme): Is there no balm in Gilead; is there no physician there? why then is not the health of the daughter of my people recovered?

2 Corinthians 1:24 (Parallel theme): Not for that we have dominion over your faith, but are helpers of your joy: for by faith ye stand.

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