

"Justice in the Church"

September 10, 2021

Ezekiel 34:15-17a, 18-20, 23 - "I Myself will be the shepherd of My sheep, and I Myself will make them lie down," declares the Lord GOD. "I will seek the lost, and I will bring back the strayed, and I will bind up the injured, and I will strengthen the weak, and the fat and the strong I will destroy. I will feed them in justice. As for you, My flock ... Is it not enough for you to feed on the good pasture, that you must tread down with your feet the rest of your pasture; and to drink of clear water, that you must muddy the rest of the water with your feet? And must My sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?" Therefore, thus says the Lord GOD to them: "Behold, I, I Myself will judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep. ... And I will set up over them one shepherd, My servant David, and he shall feed them: he shall feed them and be their shepherd."

There is a special pain that comes from being hurt by people within God's church. We expect pain and conflict in the world around us, but we hope for better things from fellow Christian believers. And so, it hurts. It hurts when someone gossips about us, when someone spreads malicious lies, when we are ignored or left out or treated as anything less than a full brother or sister in Christ. It hurts so much that some people even leave because of the pain—leave that congregation, or (God forbid!) leave the Christian faith altogether.

God is not asleep. He is fully aware of our pain when these evil things happen. And He will put an end to it, as He has promised: "I will feed them in justice. As for you, My flock," thus says the Lord GOD: "Behold, I judge between the fat sheep and the lean sheep ...

Must my sheep eat what you have trodden with your feet, and drink what you have muddied with your feet?" God will not put up with this behavior in His church forever. Judgment is coming.

But more than that, comfort is coming. For God has also promised us that Jesus will be our Shepherd. He will watch over us, provide for us, and keep an eye on what is going on in the flock. He will not allow injustice to stand forever. How could He? He is the One who destroyed the power of evil on the cross, even as it cost Him His own life. He won that victory when He rose from the dead. And He will certainly cleanse His church both now and on that final day when He returns to bring us all into the new heavens and new earth.

THE PRAYER: Dear Lord, when evil happens in the church, please put a stop to it and help us. Amen.