

The Problem Of Leadership

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Are you aware that the term leadership does not appear even one time in Strong's Exhaustive Concordance of the Bible? Which means that it is not in the Bible, not even one time is the term leadership there. The term *leader* appears only three times and the term *leaders* only appears three times. As a way of contrast the terms follows, followed, followeth, followers, and following appear two hundred and fifty eight times. The total time words that define or are derived from the word *lead* only appears eighty-one times. The word *follow* is three times greater.

My subject is today leadership and we are going to take a look at a biblical leadership—leadership is as I am looking at it—authoritative control and guidance. That is the dictionary definition.

Genesis 3:16-18 To the woman He said: "I will greatly multiply your sorrow and your conception; in pain you shall bring forth children; your desire shall be for your husband, and he shall rule over you." Then to Adam He said, "Because you have heeded the voice of your wife, and have eaten from the tree of which I commanded you, saying, 'You shall not eat of it': "Cursed is the ground for your sake; in toil you shall eat of it, all the days of your life. Both thorns and thistles it shall bring forth for you, and you shall eat the herb of the field."

Genesis 3:15 "And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her Seed; He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel."

Everybody there was pretty well cursed, and there was not a great deal of leadership that was shown anywhere. Adam especially did not lead Eve as he should have, and we have all paid dearly for that lack of leadership, whether in the family, civil government, in corporate business, school systems, entertainment, or athletics, it has all been a failing from the very beginning. It is not merely a failing of the male gender, but female as well.

How many truly great presidential leaders has this nation had? There is not a unanimous agreement on this, but most historians tend to agree that two stand above all others. George Washington and Abraham Lincoln. Interestingly both are generally

regarded as being unusually humble, and at the same time possessors of strong steadfast and sound character.

Another interesting aspect is that both are considered rather pious men, but neither of them was consistent in any church attendance at any time in their life. Both, but especially Abraham Lincoln, gave evidence that he was very well aware of the Scriptures. His speeches, both in private correspondence and conversations, often contained references from scriptural examples. George Washington did not quote much from Scripture, but he showed clearly in his speeches that he was well aware of scriptural principles.

Another interesting parallel is that both led the nation in truly critical times, both did so with an unusually steady hand. Washington did so as the thirteen colonies with a new constitution took its first toddling steps as a united country.

Lincoln, seventy years later, as those United States were being torn apart primarily because of strong disagreement over internal economic issues. Slavery became the emotional issue because it impacted on the economic issue. Interestingly, both men strongly intervened in the economic issues, and in so doing, breaking economic policies. Both assumed dictatorial powers for short period of time that worked against the citizenry, but in both cases it led to saving the day.

In my opinion, considering the magnitude of the crisis each faced, they were unusually wise and courageous men. Seemingly they appeared to have been born and prepared to carry those burdens at that particular time in this nation's history.

Several elements coming together in thought at this particular time brought this leadership subject to mind. I cannot say that I am particularly well prepared to speak on it, so the sermon may appear somewhat disjointed and rambling at times.

The first element that actually ignited the series of thoughts leading to this sermon at this time, is what every one of us is well aware of—the state of civic leadership in the United States of America seems to be at an all-time low. Has this nation ever had a more discouraging President than the present one? He may indeed be a citizen, but in my opinion he does not seem to be like he is an American, he appears to me to be both acting and saying contrary to its best interest on an almost daily basis. Every news report, every day, is a litany of public horror, not just from the state of the federal government, but all up and down the governing line.

The English term 'civic' is derived from a Latin word that means 'citizen.' Thus my use of

the term civic is intended to convey to you leadership circumstances from the bottom to the top of the population of the United States of America. It is not merely a federal, state, or local governmental issue, but here is a vivid portrayal that you are probably familiar with from the book of Isaiah.

Please turn to Isaiah 1. Isaiah wrote this as Judah was collapsing into utter chaos before they actually went into captivity. They were at the point, about twenty years or so, of being sent there by our God in heaven.

Isaiah 1:4-15 Alas, sinful nation, a people laden with iniquity, a brood of evildoers, children who are corrupters! They have forsaken the Lord, they have provoked to anger the Holy One of Israel, they have turned away backward. Why should you be stricken again? You will revolt more and more. The whole head is sick, and the whole heart faints. From the sole of the foot even to the head, there is no soundness in it, but wounds and bruises and putrefying sores; they have not been closed or bound up, or soothed with ointment. Your country is desolate, your cities are burned with fire; strangers devour your land in your presence; and it is desolate, as overthrown by strangers. So the daughter of Zion is left as a booth in a vineyard, as a hut in a garden of cucumbers, as a besieged city. Unless the Lord of hosts had left to us a very small remnant, we would have become like Sodom; we would have been made like Gomorrah: "To what purpose is the multitude of your sacrifices to Me?" Says the Lord. "I have had enough of burnt offerings of rams and the fat of the fed cattle. I do not delight in the blood of bulls, or of lambs or goats. When you come to appear before Me, who has required this from your hand, to trample My courts? Bring no more futile sacrifices; incense is an abomination to Me. The New Moons, the Sabbaths, and the calling of assemblies—I cannot endure iniquity and the sacred meeting. Your New Moons and your appointed feasts My soul hates; they are a trouble to Me, I am weary of bearing them. When you spread out your hands, I will hide My eyes from you; even though you make many prayers, I will not hear. Your hands are full of blood."

Every one of those things does not apply to America, not yet, it does not apply fully to Washington D.C., not yet, but it is on its way, we still have a while that maybe we can appeal to God for change in the leadership of this nation.

Please turn to Isaiah 3 which contains a little bit different angle on the desolation that is taking place within Judah and is in the picture for this nation and for Britain as well—for

France, Germany, Norway, Sweden, Finland, and on and on. The Israelitish countries are going to get it. But we are making progress in this manner, if you want to call it progress, we are advancing to the rear.

Isaiah 3:1-7 For behold, the Lord, the Lord of hosts, takes away from Jerusalem and from Judah the stock and the store [that is a term that is being used to indicate every aspect of civic life is breaking down], the whole supply of bread and the whole supply of water; the mighty man and the man of war, the judge and the prophet, and the diviner and the elder; the captain of fifty and the honorable man, the counselor and the skillful artisan, and the expert enchanter. [He is giving this so that we will understand every aspect of civic life is rotting away.] "I will give children to be their princes [talking about people in office who do not have the maturity, wisdom to hold the office], and babes shall rule over them. The people will be oppressed, every one by another and every one by his neighbor [The cancer has spread out. It is not only in the leadership.]; the child will be insolent toward the elder, and the base toward the honorable." When a man takes hold of his brother in the house of his father saying, "You have clothing; you be our ruler, and let these ruins be under your power," in that day he will protest, saying "I cannot cure your ills, for in my house is neither food nor clothing; do not make me a ruler of the people."

Toward the end of the sermon we are going to take a look at Ezekiel 34 a bit more closely. In that chapter, God clearly lays the major blame for the state of the nation at the doorstep of its shepherds. Shepherds are responsible for leading and they must lead in righteousness for life to go well.

The apostle Paul teaches a principle that is easily overlooked that is contributing to this nation's leadership problems. We are going to go back in the New Testament to I Corinthians 12. We all know the basic subject of that chapter. It has to do with the organization of the church.

I Corinthians 12:17-21 If the whole body were an eye, where would be the hearing? If the whole body were hearing, where would be the smelling? But now God has set the members, each one of them, in the body just as He pleased. And if they were all one member, where would the body be? But now indeed there are many members, yet one body. And the eye cannot say to the hand, "I have no need of you," nor again the head to the feet, "I have no need of you."

Ephesians 4:11 And He [Christ] Himself gave some to be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, and some pastors and teachers.

You should already begin to see that he is talking on the same basic subject that he was in I Corinthians 12. He is talking about the make up, the organization, the construction of the church as a body.

Ephesians 4:12-16 For the equipping of the saints for the work of ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ, till we all come to the unity of the faith and the knowledge of the Son of God, to a perfect man, to the measure of the stature of the fullness of Christ; that we should no longer be children, tossed to and fro and carried about with every wind of doctrine, by the trickery of men, in the cunning craftiness by which they lie in wait to deceive, but speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ—from whom the whole body joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part of the body does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love.

Paul is teaching a principle very easily overlooked that is contributing to this nation's leadership problems. In an overall sense, people do not care about the whole of an effort because they are too focused on themselves. It is very easy for us to believe as those people in Corinth did, that our life, despite all of its activities means nothing and impacts little on others. It is very easy to convince ourselves that because we are one in millions of people that what we do has no impact on the whole. Paul is working to destroy that misunderstanding.

Every part of the body is needed. Have you ever heard of the butterfly effect? It is a theory that seemingly is insignificant and random, events are the cause of far more significant effects that appear later. You do not see what happened in the beginning when the butterfly flapped its wings, all you see is the effect that occurs at a later time.

This theory played a significant role in the Jurassic Park movie. They did not call it the butterfly effect, they called it the chaos theory, but it is the same principle. That theory proposes that the systems operating in the universe are more connected than they appear on the surface, thus it suggests that we need to be more careful about our actions because we are not operating in a vacuum. But we go on unhindered because we have no idea the possible effect that comes from what little old me does.

You know what happened in the movie Jurassic Park? T-Rex got loose and created chaos. In a sense that was the point of the whole movie, that the people developing the park did not understand what they were messing with, they did not see the possibilities of what could go wrong. Those people in Corinth did not grasp this in regard to the church. They thought what they did had no effect, no impact, on the quality of the righteousness that was in the church. Paul was saying, yes it does. They thought, it is just little old me, I am nothing, I am eighty-five years old, and a little lady. What impact does my life have on anybody else? God is calling us a liar because He says right in His book that every joint supplies.

Paul has written this to let us know that what I just went through is not profitable thinking, because what it is in reality is a dodge—a justification—in order to excuse ourselves. To reason, I do not matter, is in fact a misjudging of the power, the wisdom, perfection, the intelligence and the creative genius of our Great God. He knows exactly what He is doing, and to say that I am unnecessary is calling Him a liar.

We have an operation going on in this nation now, and it is not a very good one. It is, do black lives matter too? Of course they do! Those people who have organized that are using it in a wrong way, as a ploy for whatever it is that they are trying to put together to increase their political power.

One thing that we need to do here in order to have a good basis for thinking like this is to do what David did. He said in Psalms 139, “I am fearfully and wonderfully made.” He was looking at his own body, analyzing it, and understanding that his spiritual God created him, and every aspect that he looked at his body was awesome, and that every part that God put in the body is there for a reason. If any part of it does not work as it is supposed to it is going to effect the entire body. An illustration is a cavity in a tooth can hurt and we go limping around. One thing can go wrong in the body and the entire body is effected.

What I am proposing to you is this: even in the world where there are billions of people, we cannot afford to think that we have no impact or effect within a society as big as the 310 million people that are in the United States of America. That is not good citizenship, let alone being good righteousness before God.

We will build up to something that we need to think of very often and not just give ourselves excuses regarding our behavior and our conduct out in the public. Even in the midst of a population of that size we make a difference. If everybody did exactly as we do when we do something wrong, what is it going to mean?

Did you ever look at the side of the road and see how many cigarette butts there are? Every time somebody throws one out the window they do not give it a moment's thought that they are flicking that garbage out on the side of the road where everybody can witness it. Not only that, it might be lit and might start a forest fire. I am using this as a simple illustration that when everybody takes it upon themselves just to do whatever they feel like—because it is convenient to roll down the window and throw their garbage out on the side of the road—if nobody did that it would be a lot cleaner, greener, and look a lot better.

What you have to do to get the right kind of understanding from this is to apply this to every act in life. That is especially incumbent on us because we are in the church and the impact of each and every one of us means a great deal more than it does even when we are one of millions in the population of the United States of America.

What does it take for us to consider and not do these dumb things? It is the point of the sermon: everybody has to take it upon him-or-herself to be a leader in doing things right. If you want a good idea of how the sins of only two people effected multiple billions of people, just look at Adam and Eve. There was nobody else around except them at the time but the impact of what they did has passed on to every single person born between then and now. Do you think you do not mean anything? Think again.

Please turn to Romans 14:7-8 it applies to this principle that I am talking about.

Romans 14:7-8 For none of us lives to himself, and no one dies to himself. For if we live, we live to the Lord; and if we die, we die to the Lord. Therefore, whether we live or die, we are the Lord's.

That ought to be our mantra in life. Just as Paul was doing there in I Corinthians 12 and Ephesians 4, here in Romans 14 Paul is applying this principle to the church, but the same principle also applies to a much lesser degree to the much larger world. We impact on each other's lives in ways that we do not really realize. And so it matters, but it takes effort, expending our leadership for things to make positive change. Thinking we do not matter, and what we do does not matter, is carnal thinking, and that is why this world is overflowing with evil.

Some people are ignorant. We are not ignorant, so what are we doing with the knowledge we have of the beauty that God is creating in and through us and what the ultimate result is going to be? Are we in harmony with His thinking? Are we taking the efforts that are necessary to change so that we carefully stop doing the careless things

that we just do not think about? We do not live to ourselves, our lives effect others.

That was the first thing that impacted on my mind and got me started on this subject.

The second element that entered into these thoughts came while studying for sermons drawn from the book of Deuteronomy while getting ready for the Feast of Tabernacles, as well as Richard's previous sermon where he read and expounded a considerable amount on Deuteronomy 6. While I was doing research around that area I read a startling comment. The author said, "Newborn children have only one responsibility in life, that is, to learn to obey your parents." He was exaggerating, but he had a point that he was making.

The reason he said that is because, when we are called of God, when we are granted repentance by God, when God gives us His Spirit, we have only one responsibility in life—that is to learn to obey our Father in heaven. If we would require that of our children, why should it not be required of us on a much higher scale, by our Father in heaven? That is exactly what He wants. He wants it because our obedience to Him glorifies Him and prepares us to live for eternity with Him.

All that author did was tone it down to this present life for the children, but the principle is there and you know what I just told you is true. That is what God wants. Why? Because it is good for us and because it is good for His purpose.

A third element in starting this sermon is the combination of spiritual events laying just before us and putting in me a heightened sense of urgency. I am thinking about: the Shemitah ends tomorrow, the Feast of Trumpets is only two days away, the Day of Atonement is about eight days away, and then Feast of Tabernacles. All of this is coming together at the same time. That package of festival circumstances is right in me and hope with you as well, with anticipation of what each event portrays in God's awesome purpose.

We will go back to the leadership issue that this message began with. There is something that I want us to consider that took place with Adam and Eve's sin.

Ecclesiastes 7:29 "Truly, this only I have found: That God made man upright, but they have sought out many schemes."

Of all this that Solomon was going through he might as well have said this is the number one point that I have distilled from this, "This only have I found, that God made man

upright.” That means that when God created Adam and Eve it was not His intention that they sin. He created them to be *able* to sin, and in order to be able to sin they had to be way above an animal. They had a spirit that would motivate them to make choices in life, and they had free moral agency so they *could* sin but He did not *create* mankind to sin. That makes an awesome difference. God made man upright but, beginning with Adam and Eve, they have sought out many schemes.

We will go back into the New Testament so that we can be sure that God did not cheat on them a little bit. No, God is consistent in His character, we can always trust Him. The promises that He gives to you and me were also there for Adam and Eve.

I Corinthians 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you [This includes the temptation, the trial, the testing, that came upon Adam and Eve when God opened the door for Satan to give them this test.] except such as is common to man; but God is faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to bear it.

God was as fair with Adam and Eve as He could be. He educated them beforehand. I am sure that He gave them all kinds of background on what it was that they were going to face, just as we go to services here, we are taught, we see God's Word, we are not in the dark—we have no excuse. God is absolutely fair in His dealings with every single person, He never takes a person in over their head. He does not want to lose His children.

I am absolutely certain that He did not throw them to the serpent. He instructed them as well as they needed to be to pass this test. The test against the serpent was not beyond their ability, but even though adequately prepared, they did not pass. This is why I stated that as they failed in this circumstance it indicates there was a degree of deliberateness in the sin they committed.

Can we accuse God then of not showing enough leadership in preparing Adam and Eve for life in the world? No, God is fair, He is faithful. If we did that it would be a false accusation against Him.

It is right here that a vital pattern begins. I want you to recall what Richard said in a sermon here not long ago, that Genesis is a book of beginnings, and what happens the first time so often in history takes place in the book of Genesis. It sets a pattern that we can learn from, things that are vital to our life.

Genesis 3:14-15 So the Lord God said to the serpent: “Because you have done this, you are cursed more than all cattle, and more than every beast of the field; on your belly you shall go, and you shall eat dust all the days of your life. And I will put enmity between you and the woman, and between your seed and her seed: He shall bruise your head, and you shall bruise His heel.”

If there are any words in there that are important to this section of the sermon, it is the word ‘seed.’ The seed is Jesus Christ. He is the promised Savior who is going to bruise the head of the serpent. In other words He is going to put him completely out of commission.

Genesis 4:1 Now Adam knew Eve his wife, and she conceived and bore Cain, and said, “I have gotten a man from the Lord.”

Genesis 4:1 [NET Bible] “I have created a man just like the Lord did.”

She claimed that she created Cain according to the pattern that was set by God. Other translations change just a little, but some modern ones will say this, “I have acquired with the help of the Lord” rather than saying that she created, she says that the Lord helped her a little bit. This begins to become interesting in the light of what she then names her second son, Abel. Most of us know what Abel means. I will tell you again, Abel is the same word that is translated all the way through Ecclesiastes as vanity. Able was nothing, he was worthless, he was useless.

Genesis 4:25 And Adam knew his wife again, and she bore a son and named him Seth, “for God has appointed another seed for me instead of Abel, whom Cain killed.”

Seth means, substitute, it means an appointed one. It suggests that God gave her a gift to take the place of another. Interestingly if names mean anything it seems highly probable that God is unfolding a saga for our understanding by means of the names. When Cain was born and the promised seed of Genesis 3:15 is fresh in Eve's mind, Eve leaps to the conviction that Cain is the promised seed. She thought she hit the pot of gold right off the bat. God gave her, she gave birth to, or she created the promised seed. Then along came Abel, he was nothing, she had already hit the grand prize, the million dollar man, she had already given birth to.

By the time we get to chapter 4, verse 25 in this unfolding saga we begin to see that there is a possibility of a change in the mind of Eve in what she says in regard to the gift that she was given. It is interesting that Eve says, I have been given a substitute, not for Cain, but for Abel—this useless one. This ‘vanity’ who was killed is now beginning to be seen in her mind as far more important than what she thought in the beginning, when the one that she thought was everything is now no longer part of the family, he has been disfellowshipped, and as far as we know she never saw him again.

We can see here a beginning of a change in the mind of Eve in relation to the names of her children. I think that we are beginning to see at least some repentance from the attitude she had and how badly she misjudged both God and the value of Cain. He turned out to be the one who was useless, where as the one that she thought was useless we know now was one of the great paragons of faith. She makes the admission by the name that it was Abel who is being replaced, not Cain, which shows a shifting of her opinions.

There is one more thing here. You are going to have to think with me but I know that it is true. That is this: God actually made Eve able to give a prophecy. Seth, the substitute, became the type of Jesus Christ. Jesus Christ is the one who substituted for every one of us by taking the death that we deserved. She was able to understand and she will understand if she comes up in the first resurrection that the promised seed did come from her, but it was not Seth—it was Jesus Christ who came from the line of the one she called substitute.

I think that is very generous of God to do that, and it seems to indicate that this woman was beginning to grow. She perceived Seth a lot more accurately than she did either Cain or Abel.

The real reason I went through this detailed exposition is because I want you to rethink how differently the attitude of the parents, Adam and Eve, were toward their two sons. One without a doubt was highly favored, Cain, who could do no wrong. The other child was useless. What do you think was the difference in the way they approached child rearing? You can be virtually certain that Cain was a spoiled brat, who had such a high opinion of himself that he could not stand being turned down as unacceptable.

We begin to see what I am getting at in this true subject here and that is, Adam and Eve did not take care of passing on to their children the standards of the Kingdom of God, they did not rear them properly. Maybe they did a pretty good job with Abel, but they did not do a good job at all with Cain and he turned out to be a cause of a great deal of

wrong.

How did it effect their child rearing approach? It seems clear that Adam and Eve did not pass a righteous way of life onto the murderer Cain. After reading this and thinking upon it, it is becoming more and more impressive to me and it is no wonder that Herbert Armstrong stated in that lecture that I told you about in the past—that the greatest gift a newborn child can be given is two deeply converted parents. Adam and Eve were not converted. They passed on the carnality of the world that was in them, to their children.

We will go back to that original sin just in thought. That is, Adam and Eve did two things at the same time in that sin: first of all they broke God's law, not only directly sinning, but there is no indication whatever anywhere in the book that they made any real effort to reject the temptation the serpent set before them despite the fact that Adam was not deceived. He knew better and he still sinned.

Unrighteousness, or sin, comes in two flavors. We can directly break a commandment, or we can simply fail to do the righteous activity. There are sins of omission and there are sins of commission. In that one sin Adam and Eve did both, to establish that principle before us. This begins to become more and more important as we go along.

We will go back to the book of Luke. Jesus took the time in giving this Parable of the Good Samaritan to show that there is righteousness that is intended and there is unrighteousness that is unintended.

Luke 10:29-37 But, he, wanting to justify himself, said to Jesus, “And who is my neighbor?” Then Jesus answered and said; “A certain man went down from Jerusalem to Jericho, and fell among thieves, who stripped him of his clothing, wounded him, and departed, leaving him half dead. Now by chance a certain priest came down that road. And when he saw him, he passed by on the other side. Likewise a Levite, when he arrived at the place, came and looked, and passed by on the other side. But a certain Samaritan, as he journeyed, came where he was. And when he saw him, he had compassion. So he went to him and bandaged his wounds, pouring on oil and wine; and he set him on his own animal, brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, gave them to the innkeeper, and said to him, ‘Take care of him; and whatever more you spend, when I come again, I will repay you.’ So which of these three do you think was neighbor to him who fell among the thieves?” And he said, “He who showed mercy on him.” Then Jesus said to him, “Go and do likewise.”

One of the lessons within this parable is that sin also encompasses the failure to render mercy when it is within one's power to give it. You do not do anything, you have sinned. How many times have we failed to do the right thing even though we knew better, because we were too busy, we had other things to do, do not feel equipped to be able to do it, or whatever?

This becomes important in our child rearing plans. What is it that we pass on to our children by our example? Richard went through that pretty well the other day, and I may go through parts of it during the Feast that is coming up. It is so important, we fail so often by doing nothing when it is in our power to do something that would be helpful.

The amount of sin committed daily on a worldwide basis is beyond our ability to compute, or even begin to fathom. Sin is committed not only against other people, but is also committed against God—God's creation other than people. All sin is committed against God, because it is His creation and His laws being broken and some of that sin is directly against Him in a stubborn, rebellious fashion because the same reason for doing that found reason in their own mind. Some do this because they found reason in their own mind to hate Him.

The Gentile world might have somewhat of an excuse because they were not educated about God as those of us in Israelitish nations, but the citizenry of Israelitish nations have virtually no excuse whatever because of the availability of the knowledge of God. We read these verses every so often but I want us to see it in this kind of context.

Romans 1:18-20 For the wrath of God is revealed from heaven against all ungodliness and unrighteousness of men, who suppress the truth in unrighteousness, because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.

There is God's judgment. That is pretty strong All you have to do, brethren, is extrapolate on this. The Gentile world may not know a great deal about God, His purpose, and plan, but the Israelitish world has no excuse. Where does that leave those of us in the church? Are we exercising the leadership necessary to show God that we get it, we get how important we are to His purpose, we get how important each and every act might be? It is sobering and we need to think about this as we go into this last series of holy days.

Please turn to Ezekiel 34. This is the chapter where God lays it on the line regarding the people of Israel.

Ezekiel 34:1-4 And the word of the Lord came to me saying, "Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy and say to them, 'Thus says the Lord God to the shepherds: "Woe to the shepherds of Israel who feed themselves! Should not the shepherds feed the flocks? You eat the fat and clothe yourselves with the wool; you slaughter the fatlings, but you do not feed the flock. The weak you have not strengthened, nor have you healed those who were sick, nor bound up the broken, nor brought back what was driven away, nor sought what was lost; but with force and cruelty you have ruled them.

Who are the shepherds? You go through a commentary and most often they are going to say, the shepherds are the preachers. That is not wrong, it is just incomplete, because the shepherds include the President, the representatives, senators, justices, leaders in corporations, the leaders in education, and most especially in the universities, and in entertainment too. Then comes the most important category of all, you parents. We are the first shepherds our children ever meet and we are the ones who put the indelible mark on them.

Where do we fit in Ezekiel 34? Have we shown our leadership in the family, in raising our children in the nurture and admonition of the Lord? That is where the problem lies. This is what the book of Genesis is showing us, with the lives of Adam and Eve. God is showing us this is where the problem began, this is where the problem is continuing. It is right in the family, because parents are not paying attention to their responsibility. It is either that or they are totally ignorant of it, and they do not care.

There are people in this nation, they may not be Christian, but they see that this nation will never get straightened out until marriages are straightened out.