

"When Shepherds Fail."

November 22, 2026 | Text: Ezekiel 33:21-22; 34:1-31 | Pastor Bob Erbig
Sermon Series: "Ezekiel: Glory Departs and Glory Returns."

Small Group Discussion Guide

KEY QUESTION: *How does God respond when shepherds fail and sheep are wounded?*
BIG IDEA: *God comes himself, as the Shepherd-King, to seek the lost, heal the wounded, and give them peace.*

Read Ezekiel 34:1-31 (or selected sections) aloud together. Plan roughly 60 minutes.

Opening Icebreakers (10 minutes)

1. Share a time you got lost or separated from family. Who came to find you, and how did it feel?
2. Who is the best "shepherd" you have had (a coach, teacher, boss, or mentor)? What made them good?

Discussion Questions (40 minutes)

3. **Exegesis (34:1-2):** In the ancient Near East, "shepherd" was a title for kings. How does that shape the way you hear God's charge, and why does it still apply to pastors, elders, and other leaders?
4. **Exegesis (34:3-6):** Compare what the shepherds take (v. 3) with what they neglect (v. 4). What pattern do you see, and why does God say the sheep became prey "because there was no shepherd"?
5. **Reflection (34:7-10):** God says, "I am against the shepherds." What does this show about how he sees his people, and how do we balance real accountability for abuse with humility about ordinary disagreement?
6. **Application (Luke 15:3-6):** Bad shepherds produce empty chairs. Who is an "empty chair" in your life or in our church, someone who has drifted or left? What is one concrete step you can take this week to seek them out?
7. **Reflection (34:11-16):** God says, "I, I myself will search for my sheep." The verbs are seek, rescue, gather, feed, and rest. Which do you most need from the Good Shepherd right now, and what does it say about God that he comes himself?
8. **Exegesis (34:23-31):** God promises "one shepherd, my servant David" and a "covenant of peace." How do John 10:11 and Hebrews 13:20-21 show Jesus fulfilling both, and what does peace include here beyond the absence of conflict?
9. **Application (leadership):** Everyone leads someone (a home, a team, a small group). Where are you tempted to "feed yourself" instead of the flock, and how would the Good Shepherd lead instead?
10. **Application (wounded sheep):** If you have been hurt by a failed leader or a church, what do you most need to hear from Ezekiel 34? How can this group help you receive the care of the Good Shepherd?

Concluding Prayer Challenge (10 minutes)

Pray in pairs or as a group: "Good Shepherd, thank you for seeking me when I was lost. Show me who I should seek out, and heal what has been wounded in me." Close by reading Psalm 23:1-3 together.

- **This week:** Reach out to one "empty chair" with a call, a text, or an invitation.
- **Pray:** for MBC's pastors, elders, and leaders, and for any wounded sheep you know.