

UPLIFTING THE FALLEN

EZEKIEL 34:1-6

Text: Ezekiel 34:1-6

(Ezekiel 34:1-6) "And the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, {2} Son of man, prophesy against the shepherds of Israel, prophesy, and say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD unto the shepherds; Woe be to the shepherds of Israel that do feed themselves! should not the shepherds feed the flocks? {3} Ye eat the fat, and ye clothe you with the wool, ye kill them that are fed: but ye feed not the flock. {4} 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. {5} And they were scattered, because there is no shepherd: and they became meat to all the beasts of the field, when they were scattered. {6} My sheep wandered through all the mountains, and upon every high hill: yea, my flock was scattered upon all the face of the earth, and none did search or seek after them."

Introduction:

I want to ask you personally a question. Have you yourself, been used of God to go to any believer who is away from God, to bring him back?

Have you yourself when someone fell into sin, or chose to go, or maybe they jumped into it, have you yourself gone to them, and worked to reclaim them?

This inditement here would be to most of the people here in this room. You've not healed that which was sick, you've not bound up that which was broken, neither have you brought again that which was driven away, neither have ye sought that which was lost. I want to speak to you this evening on this subject, "Uplifting the Fallen."

I would like for a few minutes take you back a few years to 1987. It was about 9:30 a.m. on Wednesday, October 14. A little girl had gone to visit her aunt in Midland Texas. Not long after arriving, this little girl went outside to play. After a short while they realized that baby Jessica was missing.

After several minutes of searching Mrs. Moore, Jessica's aunt happen to look at a hole in her back yard, and old abandoned well, and heard little Jessica crying. She immediately went and called the police, in which they arrived within three minutes. As the police

officers arrived the paramedics arrived at the same time.

Jessica's mother met them at the front door, very upset, and directed them to where Jessica was. She yelled, "She's here in the back. She fell down right here." Then she said, "I can't let my baby die! I've got to get her out." As more and more crews arrived on the scene everything in Midland Texas revolved around one little girl. Not only did it get the attention of those in Midland, but it was reported on national news throughout all America.

They also flew in people from other states just to help rescue little Jessica. Prayer meetings were started. Hundreds of people were praying for little Jessica's rescue. Call of encouragement and offers for help came from all over America to Jessica's family.

One little girl not quite 2 years of age, had fallen, and put into gear a whole city, and nation

Numbers of doctors and paramedics, many nurses and Christians all across America

Everybody working, hoping and praying, calling, try to save that little girls life. Thousands upon thousands altered their schedules just for little Jessica.

I can't help but think, why can't we be that way when a Christian falls? I wonder how many Christians could

have been salvaged, if we would have got as concerned for fallen Christians, babes in Christ, as all those people were with little Jessica. So many people could be salvaged.

I can remember young ladies who have come to me and said, "Bro. Greg, I'm pregnant." My heart broke. I know what's ahead for young ladies. I know what it's like to see little babies taken from mothers laps and placed in the arms of someone else, never to see them again. I know what it is like to have a young lady come and ask, "Have you seen my baby? What color eyes or what color is their hair? Is she a good girl, or is he a good boy?" I know what that is like.

Let me tell you, some of you folks live in your life to make money, and you'd be shocked how much more fun you could have lifting the fallen, than you can making money. You give your life to have fun and luxury, let me tell you something, there is no joy like reaching down to the fallen.

I plead with you; let's get excited about the fallen people and rush to rescue them as we have about a little girl that fell down an abandoned well shaft.

1. MOST MEMBERS ATTITUDES

Now here is what has happened if Jessica was treated like most of us treat fallen Christians. Little Jessica wondered off, and her play mates came and told Jessica's mother, "We don't know where Jessica is." If Jessica's mother was like most Christians she might have said:

A. Forget it, she's big enough to know what she's doing.

B. Don't worry about it she probably was sincere when she was born.

Finally her mom gets tired of hearing about it, get up and says.

C. The sorry rascal, when I get my hands on her I tell her what I think about her. We might just vote her out of the family.

If churches would get more concerned about salvaging the backsliders instead of voting them out they would be more like the Church Christ started, and New Testament Christianity.

And then when she found the little girl in the hole her mother would say:

D. You sorry kid, you're a bad testimony to our family. You deserve what you got. This is the judgment of God. I had to change your diapers more than any kid I have. You threw up all over my shoulder every time I burped you.

God is concerned about the lost sheep, the sheep that wandered away. And God is concerned about every single person in his family who drifts away, and falls, and it is our job to rush to them, like all the rescuers did for little Jessica. In God's name let's get as concerned about the fallen spiritually as we are the fallen physically.

Illustration:

The body, and white blood cells, rushing to an infected scratch

When an infection occurs here at this church with one of its members, we're to rush just like those white blood cells to the rescue.

And there is Jessica in the well. Her mother goes back to the table and says:

E. I guess Jessica wasn't sincere.

And while she is the well here is what we would hear if we handled the physically fallen like we do the spiritually fallen:

F. We would pick up the phone and say, “Did you hear about Jessica? Did you know that Jessica fell?”

Why in the name of common sense don’t we pick up our spiritual phone and call the Great Physician and say, “Please help Jessica, help salvage her.”

G. Some would say, “Did you hear what Jessica did. She wandered off. She ought to be ashamed of herself. She didn’t appreciate us any way. We ought to just kick her out of the family. If I go by that well I sure won’t speak to her.”

2. WHAT EXAMPLE DID CHRIST GIVE US

A. Christ ministered to the fallen.

1. Matthew the tax collector.
2. The woman at the well.
3. Mary Magnaleen
4. Zaccaeus

5. Peter

(Matthew 18:12-13) "How think ye? if a man have an hundred sheep, and one of them be gone astray, doth he not leave the ninety and nine, and goeth into the mountains, and seeketh that which is gone astray? {13} And if so be that he find it, verily I say unto you, he rejoiceth more of that sheep, than of the ninety and nine which went not astray."

(Matthew 9:10-13) "And it came to pass, as Jesus sat at meat in the house, behold, many publicans and sinners came and sat down with him and his disciples. {11} And when the Pharisees saw it, they said unto his disciples, Why eateth your Master with publicans and sinners? {12} But when Jesus heard that, he said unto them, They that be whole need not a physician, but they that are sick. {13} But go ye and learn what that meaneth, I will have mercy, and not sacrifice: for I am not come to call the righteous, but sinners to repentance."

3. WHAT KIND OF CHRISTIANS ARE WE

A. Do we go after the fallen?

B. Do we go and visit the absentees?

(1 John 2:1) "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have

an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"

C. Do we try to bring restoration to the fallen?

D. Do we get as concerned about the spiritual fallen as we do about the physically fallen?

Close:

Can you see Jessica's mother as she looked around for little Jessica, thinking, "Where's my baby, where's my baby?" Can you see her finding her down in the abandoned well, and saw the little one that she had carried in her body for nine months, crying 22 feet below the surface of the ground? You know what she did. She ran where she was, and she screamed to her, and she said, "I'll do everything I can to bring you back alive.

And that is what Jesus does. When Jesus sees one of us away from the fold, away from the house, run away, chose to do something that was foolish, Jesus says, (1 John 2:1) "My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not. And if any man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:"

As the words of the song says, "From sinking sand He lifted me; With tender hand he lifted me; From shades

of night to plains of light, O praise His Name, He lifted me!

He loves those that have gone astray.

I'm sorry some of you have been treated wrongly. I'm sorry we haven't run to you like we should have. I'm sorry we don't treat the spiritually fallen people like we treat the physically fallen. I'm sorry, but I've got good news for you. There's a Saviour who loves you with all His heart. It matters not how deep you've fallen, or how far you've gone, He loves you. And He is right beside you saying, "Come now let us reason together, let's talk about this. You've sinned haven't you?" "Oh yes I have." And Christ says, "You come back to me, and though your sins be as scarlet, they'll be as white as snow. Though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool."

And when you come back to Him, Oh how happy He is.

Are you uplifting the fallen?