

## **Introduction**

This week is our fifth lesson from Ezekiel titled “Offers” focusing on the familiar prophecy of the dry bones (37:1-14). With chapter 33, Ezekiel’s prophetic message shifts from doom and judgment to messages of comfort, restoration and the ultimate hope centered on the coming Messiah, the Good Shepherd. Below are some noteworthy verses from chapters 33-36.

### **Ezekiel as Watchman (Ezekiel 33:7-11)**

*<sup>7</sup>So thou, O son of man, I have set (appointed) thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at (from) my mouth, and warn them from me. <sup>8</sup>When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, thou shalt surely die; if thou dost not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. <sup>9</sup>Nevertheless, if thou warn the wicked of his way to turn from it; if he do not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul. <sup>10</sup>Therefore, O thou son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; Thus ye speak, saying, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine (despair, waste) away in them, how should we then live? <sup>11</sup>Say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord GOD, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye (repent) from your evil ways; for why will ye die, O house of Israel?*

Back in 3:17-21, God called Ezekiel to be a watchman warning of coming judgment. Here He renews the assignment, but this time to preach messages to warn and exhort the exiles to lead righteous lives, and encourage them with the hope of future restoration and blessing. The exiles finally show guilt and remorse for their rebellious sins against God; and God assures them of forgiveness if they repent. God gives each of us this opportunity to ask for forgiveness and to turn to Him and find Him “*faithful and just to forgive us...and cleanse us from all unrighteousness*” (1 John 1:9).

### **Entertainment or Impactful Worship? (Ezekiel 33:32)**

*<sup>32</sup>And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not.*

Some people came to listen to Ezekiel for entertainment and did not take his messages to heart and act upon them. I’m afraid even today there may be those that enjoy music, eloquent and entertaining sermons, and the fellowship of friends while not feeling challenged to change their behavior or commit to serving God.

### **The Good Shepherd (Ezekiel 34:23-24, 26)**

*<sup>23</sup>And I (God) will set up one shepherd over them, and he shall feed (tend) them, even my servant David; he shall feed them, and he shall be their shepherd. <sup>24</sup>And I the LORD will be their God, and my servant David a prince among them; I the LORD have spoken it.*

*<sup>26</sup>And I will make them and the places round about my hill a blessing; and I will cause the shower to come down in his season; there shall be showers of blessing.*

While evil shepherds or leaders had contributed to Israel’s fall, God promised to send a Good and Perfect Shepherd, the Messiah, Jesus who will give “*his life for the sheep*” (John 10:11) and work “*in you that which is well pleasing in his sight*” (Hebrews 13:21) and bless “*us with all*

*spiritual blessings in heavenly places” (Ephesians 1:3).*

### **New Hearts, For God’s Holy Name Sake (Ezekiel 36:22-28)**

*<sup>22</sup>Therefore say unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; I do not this for your sakes, O house of Israel, but for mine holy name’s sake, which ye have profaned among the heathen, whither ye went. <sup>23</sup>And I will sanctify my great name, which was profaned among the heathen, which ye have profaned in the midst of them; and the heathen shall know that I am the LORD, saith the Lord GOD, when I shall be sanctified in you before their eyes. <sup>24</sup>For I will take you from among the heathen, and gather you out of all countries, and will bring you into your own land. <sup>25</sup>Then will I sprinkle clean water upon you, and ye shall be clean: from all your filthiness, and from all your idols, will I cleanse you. <sup>26</sup>A new heart also will I give you, and a new spirit will I put within you: and I will take away the stony heart out of your flesh, and I will give you an heart of flesh. <sup>27</sup>And I will put my spirit within you, and cause you to walk in my statutes, and ye shall keep my judgments, and do them. <sup>28</sup>And ye shall dwell in the land that I gave to your fathers; and ye shall be my people, and I will be your God.*

God was not just concerned about the salvation of Israel, but of the whole world; therefore, to prevent the heathen from thinking their gods were more powerful and to protect His holy name, He would return a faithful remnant to Israel who would have the responsibility to represent God properly to the rest of the world. We as believers share that same responsibility. Our success in this effort is only possible through the new heart and indwelling power of the Holy Spirit which comes when we fully accept Jesus as our Savior and Lord.

### **Sensitivity to Sin (Ezekiel 36:31-32)**

*<sup>31</sup>Then shall ye remember your own evil ways, and your doings that were not good, and shall loathe (hate) yourselves in your own sight for your iniquities and for your abominations. <sup>32</sup>Not for your sakes (not because you deserve it) do I this, saith the Lord GOD, be it known unto you: be ashamed and confounded for your own ways, O house of Israel.*

Today as then, people can become callous to sin and lose sensitivity to it. The first step to salvation is knowing you’re lost; recognizing sin as an affront to a Holy God and being ashamed of it, and realizing we’re saved not by our goodness and merit, but by His grace and mercy.

### **Conclusion**

Through the grace of Jesus, the atonement for our sins is available when we are remorseful for our sin, repent from it, and ask Jesus to forgive us.

*In whom we have redemption through his blood, the forgiveness of sins, according to the riches of his grace; **Ephesians 1:7***

*Now then we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God did beseech (urgently appeal to) you by us: we pray you in Christ’s stead, be ye reconciled to God. For he hath made him to be sin for us, who knew no sin; that we might be made the righteousness of God in him.*

**2 Corinthians 5:20-21**

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Please prayerfully consider meeting with us this week for 10:00 am Sunday School as we study God's word together from Ezekiel 37:1-14.

Last week's Sunday School attendance = 16

