

Ezekiel 36:26-27
Real Relational Hope
2023-07-16

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Prayer

Introduction

Hard to go far without evidence we're facing very difficult times

– worldwide pandemic

- 2022 2nd most mass killings in US history 2023 tragically on pace break the record

- U.S. 34th in life expectancy stopped increasing 2014 now declined to 1996 levels.

- Death rates U.S. alcohol, drugs, and suicide have risen dramatically since 2000.

- Educational test scores, church attendance, morality in general are declining.

- You all know how easily I could go on.

- So much bad news, temptation simply want withdraw from this declining world as much as possible, hunker down and wait for Jesus to return.

MP: But if you think that things in our world, the church of God or your life are too far gone, so messed up that there is no hope, you're wrong. **Ezekiel shows that our Holy God calls us to courage in horrendously difficult times because of His certain promise of real, relational hope.**

Israelites, despite many prophets, Isaiah and Jeremiah confirmed covenantal curses for disobedience foretold in Deuteronomy, under the impression God would never follow through on His threats.

They believed His link land, them, Jerusalem and house of David meant He would not even could not punish them.

Right about His covenantal faithfulness, completely misunderstood His Holiness, He not like a man. never goes along to get along. Pastor Dan preached so clearly last week Lamentations, to vindicate His Holiness, He will bring consequences for persisting sin. Ezekiel continued to proclaim same message to them most jarring terms, even exiled, Israel did not listen. But then after Davidic king deposed, Jerusalem destroyed Temple leveled by Babylonians Nebuchadnezzar 587, exiles must have thought all hope lost. Yet somehow amazingly, His incredible grace for the sake His Holy Name, He promised to restore them, restore their land bless them so abundantly that all the surrounding nations would know that He is the Lord.

Ezekiel's name. 'God strengthens or toughens' or 'May God strengthen or toughen'.

His name summarizes his ministry Ezekiel from priestly line, taken by the Babylonians about 25 during second deportation exiles 597 BC. First prophetic vision about 30, corresponds the age when priests began ministry Prophesied 22 years among exiles.

Book Ezekiel reputation hard to understand. In fact, complexities, Jewish rabbinic trainees not allowed to read temple visions beginning end. Ezekiel until 30. But in spite challenges to understanding, Ezekiel shines forth the glory of God amazing almost unique ways. Ian Duguid, commentator Ezekiel, of this book "It answers every question in the Bible." Clearly book to be wrestled with, like Jacob's wrestling with God wrestling God's revelation in Ezekiel more than worth any effort. going to see His glory grace more clearly.

Today focus Ezekiel 36:16-38, breaking verses three sections, reading each in turn. Ezekiel shows us that God calls His people to courage in very difficult times because of His certain promise of real, relational hope.

Section One – v16-21 Emphasize 17-21. Son of man, defiled, ways and deeds, uncleanness, blood, they had shed, profaned

Pt 1 – We can be encouraged because God is **Holy** and **Real**.

Natural. to think – "Did God really just say that?" "Is that a good way to talk in church?"

V16-17 – summarize graphic language awfulness Israel's sin, detailed in repeated oracles from Ezekiel chapters 1-24, particular chapters 16 23.

"Son of man" 93 times this book God's name for Ezekiel just once elsewhere entire OT. Emphasizes God's holiness mankind's frailty dependence.

Talking about His people > half OT use "the house or family of Israel", rather than commonly used "sons of Israel" in Ezekiel. God way affirms covenantal relationship with Israel calling family, while acknowledging rebellion withholding title "sons".

Description their sin extension two allegories God gave Ezekiel, first Chp 16 Jerusalem compared with faithless bride pagan origin God cleansed, cared for, clothed adorned (Ezek 16:15-22; 30-34).

Second Chp 23, allegory two sisters, elder Oholah representing Samaria, younger Oholibah representing Jerusalem God married in turns, they both became unfaithful as we read in: [Ezek 23:36-42]

Rather God's beautiful creation good gifts being stewarded faithfully for His glory and the good of others, they were spread abroad violently, with abandon most glaringly smearing the Name and glory God by their ingratitude myriad of sins.

Now returning to Ezek 36:18-19

V18-19 – Not surprised least God “poured out” His wrath, “scattered” Israel “judged” them indiscriminate bloodshed child sacrifice, evil deeds idolatry described having defiled land.

V20-21 – As they were exiled to the nations God says continued profane His Holy Name. Those days people associated deities nations and lands. As result people Babylon Judah exiled naturally believed their god stronger God of Israel. In this way Israel further profaned God’s character power by their exile.

What aspects God’s character displayed section? First, His Holiness. Secondly, in His Loving kindness He gives His people the Law tells them how when fall short of it. Speaks very plainly ways Israel transgressed the Law. In this way God being real with them. Not left to guess. Same way, His prophets display His loving realness His people, Ezekiel, especially so. They tell it like it is.

Third aspect character seen section and throughout Ezekiel “divine jealousy”. One commentator “Indeed, the word *qin’â*, [divine jealousy] ... appearing ... ten times in the book, expresses the underlying motif of his ministry¹” Because God alone worthy worship, divine jealousy is righteous, good, holy. God’s holy jealousy means He not look other way. He will not be OK something falling far short His Glory and Love for the people called by His Name.

God only righteous, omniscient, perfectly loving judge. Ps 56 He keeps every one of our tears in a bottle. Entire exile destruction He brought Judah exactly measured according their need [Is 27:6-9]. Though Bible does not record Israel repenting due to Ezekiel’s ministry, scholars believe after Jerusalem fell Temple destroyed as Ezekiel foretold, his prophecies used by God finally turn Israel away from idolatry. Evidence they note after return from exile, Israel did not have same appetite idolatry had previously.

APP#1:

- Are there any persisting sins you’ve just wanted to keep for yourself despite many warnings?
- Christian please know this – God not only knows all about these areas, in His perfectly, loving, divine jealousy, He will bring them to light. Beloved please don’t settle lies of the enemy.
- Do you want to know the truth about God and yourself?
- Are you pursuing knowing God and yourself setting aside time for prayerful meditation on His Word letting others speak into your life?
- The Divine Lover of our souls can never compromise with sin. He saved us wholly for Himself He will abide no other suitors our life.

¹ Daniel Isaac Block, [*The Book of Ezekiel, Chapters 1–24*](#), The New International Commentary on the Old Testament (Grand Rapids, MI: Wm. B. Eerdmans Publishing Co., 1997), 13.

Section Two— v22-32 Emphasize LORD God, “not for your sake”, “for the sake of my Holy Name”, “vindicate the holiness my Great Name”, “nations will know that I am the LORD”, “will take you”, “gather you”, “bring you”, “sprinkle clean water on you”, “you shall be clean”, “will cleanse you”, “give you a new heart a new spirit”, “put within you”, “remove”, “give”, “cause you to walk”, “I gave to your fathers”, “you be my people”, “will be your God”, “will deliver”

PT 2 – We can be courageous in difficulty because God is intensely and graciously **Relational**

V22 –God underscores Holiness separateness from us repeating not for the sake house of Israel He’s going to act, but “for the sake of my Holy Name which you have profaned among the nations.” discussed this already.

V23 – And v23 tells us He will act so “that nations will know that I am the Lord when I vindicate my holiness before their eyes.”

V24 – He will do by taking nation Judah, gathering them from the nations bringing again to own land.

V25-27 – Show us amazing picture redemption. Ezekiel doesn’t use any Hebrew words redemption, steadfast love, grace or salvation, and yet we see intensely relational act solely on His part of sprinkling clean water them. They “pronounced clean” “from all [their] unrighteousness and from all [their] idols”. He cleanses not only the outside, most beautiful pictures regeneration perhaps entire Bible, He promises give them new heart new spirit, take what has amounted heart stone regarding fidelity God’s covenant give them heart flesh – to take their stony hard heart give them soft, pliable heart, one His spirit can dwell in. then by His indwelling Spirit He will cause to walk His ways be careful obey all His rules.

God speaking doing something new His people. Maybe there was partial fulfillment after Ezekiel’s time exiles returned Judah, rebuilt temple turned away from idolatry, but We see most clearly pointing to Christ – Who restores us to relationship with the Father through repentance and faith in Him, Who indwells us His temple Who gives us His sanctifying Spirit.

V28-30 – Our Holy God after incredibly promising cleanse instill new spiritual life – promises they will dwell in the land He originally gave to them, so that they would be His People and He their God. For no reason beyond His unfathomable, covenantal love, He promises to act to restore their relationship to Him by delivering them from all of their uncleanness! And if any more could be imagined, He promises restore fertility land they’ve defiled by their abominations so that they “may never again suffer the disgrace of famine among the nations.”

V31-32 – God promises something even more incredible: genuine repentance. Not seen Israel frequently. God’s kindness lead Israel to repentance, something Paul reminds us of also in [Rom 2:4].

Sum, God promises vindicate His Holiness inwardly transforming Israel. showering blessing upon them that they will loathe their sin no longer suffer reproach from their neighbors. Something God wants for us also as it says in – (Phil 2:15; 1 Pe 2:12)

APP#2:

- Is God exposing your sin?
- Do you see that as His grace?
- Do you see God as the Divine lover of your soul whose kindness leads you to repentance?
- Do you believe that?
- If you're struggling feelings condemnation this morning, as a believer know God graciously working in you. He has cleansed you by the blood of Christ from all your iniquities. Christ stands in every moment in every circumstance to present you holy and blameless before the Father.
- If you have not trusted Christ Savior, hear the hope offered to you. Trust in the perfect sacrifice of His Son Jesus Christ to exchange your heart of stone for a heart of flesh and receive forgiveness of sins, eternal life freedom to follow Him with a whole heart.

This is the Holy, Real and Relational Love of God. He makes our sin plain as day, cleanses us from all our sins, transforms us to hate loath our sin and causes us to no longer be condemned by our sin. This is our God - Holy, Real and Relational.

Section Three – V33-38

Pt 3 – We can take courage in the certain **Hope** of God's promise which also provides the only **hope** for the world.

V33-6 – Instead profaning Name of God, nations will magnify His Name marveling how a waste remade into land like "the Garden of Eden".

This is God doing something new.

His glory and love are being poured out, in the thriving of his people and the land they inhabit So that "the nations that are left all around you shall know that I am the LORD" (v36c)

After revealing their sin, promising to graciously and relationally redeem and sanctify them, God gives them certain hope.

Darkest hour for Judah, God makes promises renewal portray almost re-creation provide them great hope. Because God's Steadfast Love, they knew and we know have certain hope. For New Testament believers certain hope personified Jesus Christ [1 Pe 1:3-7]

V37-38 – [Ezek 36:33-38] God further acts give them hope. Lets them ask one thing - to be increased flock of sheep, lambs set apart for service to the Lord. Here see echo of God's original call Abraham he would become great nation who would be blessing to all nations and to Israel through Moses that if they obeyed Him, they would be "kingdom of priests and a holy nation." (Gen 12:2-3; Ex 19:5-6a) This was the culmination of hope God gave exiled Israel – to be increased like flock set apart for service to Him.

Where do we find hope world today? Political, technological medical improvements? As beneficial can be, don't address root issue don't provide hope God promises.

- Real question: How can a holy God dwell with man? Paul gives answer Romans 1:16-17
- Of the people who have this hope, God says: (1 Pe 2:9)

It's easy for me to be tempted to lose hope when I see

- The fallenness of the world or
- Experience relational conflict
- See my critical selfish heart

Those times can lose heart God is working and has the power transform world, others even my own heart. Those times I need remember God's gracious invitation look up Him. Ask Him enlarge my heart increase His flock, that we would know that He is the LORD.

APP#3:

- What is seeking to steal your hope right now?
- Are God's certain promises providing you courage in your darkest hour?
- Are you encouraged that the true aim of your trials is to grow you in faith and glorify Christ?
- Do you see the Gospel as the only hope we as God's people hold out to the world?

Like Ezekiel's audience we too called exiles sojourners. We often have been unfaithful. Only God knows the reasons allowing evil we see come into our world right now. Several things know for sure: (a) Our God certain refuge will provide our every need. (Is 33:13-16 and Rev 12:7-17). (b) There is no hope the world apart from power the Gospel (Rom 1:16-17). (c) God has placed His people here in this time that all remaining nations shall know the LORD, His Power, Glory, Majestic Works that they might be saved from the coming destruction. (Ezek 36:33-38). Ezekiel shows us God calls His people to courage very difficult times because His certain promise of real, relational hope. For the sake of His Holy Name, God will do whatever is necessary to purify a Holy People for Himself. Our certain hope also only hope world. His jealousy for His own glory has caused Him to redeem a Holy People for Himself through faith in the work of Jesus Christ on the cross. This morning take heart His certain promise real, relational hope even when the world both without within seems darkest.

Let's Pray

