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## **SUNDAY SERMON**

**Hidden Hills Sovereign Grace Baptist Church**

**Willow, Alaska**

**Date: May 15, 2016**

**Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 02.01-03.27**

**Text: Ezekiel 02.01-03.27**

**Subject: EZEKIEL SERIES – Chapters 2 and 3 Call & filling of the Spirit**

***1 ¶ And he said unto me, Son of man, stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee. 2 And the spirit entered into me when he spake unto me, and set me upon my feet, that I heard him that spake unto me.***

We remember that when Ezekiel saw the LORD on the throne in chapter 1, verses 25-28, we are told *"I fell upon my face and I heard a voice of one that spake."* This is so much like the Prophet Isaiah, who was also permitted to see the LORD high and lifted up just before his commission to speak to those of unclean lips among whom he dwelt, also being a man of unclean lips. But the LORD touched his lips and purged his iniquity – and thus he was sent also to a people who would not hear him.

Notice the word of the LORD in Isaiah 6.9-10:

**Isaiah 6:9-10** *And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not. 10 Make the heart of this people fat, and make their ears heavy, and shut their eyes; lest they see with their eyes, and hear with their ears, and understand with their heart, and convert, and be healed.*

So, the Lord instructed Ezekiel to **“stand upon thy feet, and I will speak unto thee.”** At the Lord's command to this prophet and priest, the spirit entered into him when the LORD spoke to him, and set Ezekiel upon his feet. Then did he hear him who spoke to him. The LORD prepares his people by speaking to them and empowering them by his Spirit. Ezekiel was now ready to be commissioned or commanded to his work.

***3 And he said unto me, Son of man, I send thee to the children of Israel, to a rebellious nation that hath rebelled against me: they and their fathers have transgressed against me, even unto this very day. 4 For they are impudent children and stiffhearted. I do send thee unto them; and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD. 5 And they, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear, (for they are a rebellious house,) yet shall know that there hath been a prophet among them.***

The LORD sends this one he names “Son of man,” to the children of Israel – a rebellious nation that has rebelled against the LORD. These are impudent children and stiffhearted – These, God's covenant nation, were wanting in shame or modesty – they were shameless, unable to blush, immodest. Their hearts were stiff, inflexible, and not pliable. It is clear the LORD knew them every jot and tittle – but sent Ezekiel so the nation would positively know that there had been a prophet among them. Whether they would hear or forbear, Ezekiel's words would continue to resound in their ears.

***6 ¶ And thou, son of man, be not afraid of them, neither be afraid of their words, though briers and thorns be with thee,***

***and thou dost dwell among scorpions: be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house. 7 And thou shalt speak my words unto them, whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear: for they are most rebellious.***

In verses 6 and 7, the LORD calms and encourages his man. "Be not afraid of them!" What opposition would be Ezekiel's! He would be among briars and thorns and dwell among scorpions – metaphors to show the antagonism of Israel toward God and his prophet. Still, saith the LORD, "be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks..." Ezekiel, you speak my words unto them! What a charge to this man! They would not listen, but his duty was to speak God's words to them!

***8 But thou, son of man, hear what I say unto thee; Be not thou rebellious like that rebellious house: open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee.***

Here, in verse 8, we see a warning to this great prophet! To paraphrase, "Don't you dare to be rebellious like that rebellious house!" The LORD, then prepared him to be filled with His word by saying, "Open thy mouth, and eat that I give thee."

***9 And when I looked, behold, an hand was sent unto me; and, lo, a roll of a book was therein; 10 And he spread it before me; and it was written within and without: and there was written therein lamentations, and mourning, and woe. 3.1 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, eat that thou findest; eat this roll, and go speak unto the house of Israel. 2 So I opened my mouth, and he caused me to eat that roll. 3 And he said unto***

***me, Son of man, cause thy belly to eat, and fill thy bowels with this roll that I give thee. Then did I eat it; and it was in my mouth as honey for sweetness.***

The context of the closing verses, 9 and 10, continue on in the next chapter, so we shall continue as well. A hand with a roll of a book written within and without was sent to Ezekiel – and was spread out before him. The roll contained lamentations, mourning, and woe. This was a message of warning of very sorrowful things to come on the nation. The LORD commanded Ezekiel to eat the roll – so he did eat it and filled his bowels with the roll given him. Though the roll was written with lamentations, mourning, and woe, it was in Ezekiel's mouth as sweet as honey. This was God's words - which is always, in the mouth of his spokesmen as sweet as honey no matter the content.

***4 And he said unto me, Son of man, go, get thee unto the house of Israel, and speak with my words unto them. 5 For thou art not sent to a people of a strange speech and of an hard language, but to the house of Israel; 6 Not to many people of a strange speech and of an hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee. 7 But the house of Israel will not hearken unto thee; for they will not hearken unto me: for all the house of Israel are impudent and hardhearted.***

The LORD here reiterates that Ezekiel is being sent to the house of Israel – to speak God's words to them. They were a people of the same language and speech. They could understand him and he could understand them. God's words in verse 6 emphasizes

his sovereign grace toward His chosen people. Notice it once again in the 6<sup>th</sup> verse: "Not to many people of a strange speech and of a hard language, whose words thou canst not understand. Surely, had I sent thee to them, they would have hearkened unto thee." Do we really see this? Had the LORD sent the Prophet Ezekiel to a strange nation with His word, that strange nation would have hearkened unto his preaching. Why did not the LORD send him to them? There can be but one answer for this. They were not among His elect – those whom He had sovereignly chosen unto salvation before the foundation of the world. This is very much like some of the passages in the New Testament which tell us the same story.

**Matthew 11:20-24** *Then began he to upbraid the cities wherein most of his mighty works were done, because they repented not: 21 Woe unto thee, Chorazin! woe unto thee, Bethsaida! for if the mighty works, which were done in you, had been done in Tyre and Sidon, they would have repented long ago in sackcloth and ashes. 22 But I say unto you, It shall be more tolerable for Tyre and Sidon at the day of judgment, than for you. 23 And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. 24 But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee.*

This ought to make us rejoice that our God set his love upon us and chose us to salvation before the world was. Then sent to us the means - his church with the message of reconciliation so that

we might hear and be converted. But like these far off nations in that day who never heard the word of God, there remains many who both live and die without hearing it with their natural ears.

**8 Behold, I have made thy face strong against their faces, and thy forehead strong against their foreheads. 9 As an adamant harder than flint have I made thy forehead: fear them not, neither be dismayed at their looks, though they be a rebellious house.**

The LORD gave grace to Ezekiel to face those to whom he was sent. He prepared him so he could and would speak to them boldly without fear. The LORD did the same for the prophet Jeremiah who was raised up just a while before Ezekiel:

**Jeremiah 1:14-19** *Then the LORD said unto me, Out of the north an evil shall break forth upon all the inhabitants of the land. 15 For, lo, I will call all the families of the kingdoms of the north, saith the LORD; and they shall come, and they shall set every one his throne at the entering of the gates of Jerusalem, and against all the walls thereof round about, and against all the cities of Judah. 16 And I will utter my judgments against them touching all their wickedness, who have forsaken me, and have burned incense unto other gods, and worshipped the works of their own hands. 17 Thou therefore gird up thy loins, and arise, and speak unto them all that I command thee: be not dismayed at their faces, lest I confound thee before them. 18 For, behold, I have made thee this day a defenced city, and an iron pillar, and brasen walls against*

*the whole land, against the kings of Judah, against the princes thereof, against the priests thereof, and against the people of the land. 19 And they shall fight against thee; but they shall not prevail against thee; for I am with thee, saith the LORD, to deliver thee.*

It is clear from these words that the LORD has already purposed judgment on his covenant nation because of their rebellion against him – and in that they have refused to keep his Sabbaths, as we learn from other passages.

***10 Moreover he said unto me, Son of man, all my words that I shall speak unto thee receive in thine heart, and hear with thine ears. 11 And go, get thee to them of the captivity, unto the children of thy people, and speak unto them, and tell them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; whether they will hear, or whether they will forbear.***

The LORD commanded that all his words should be received in Ezekiel's heart and in his ears. He was to be totally filled with God's words, then to go and speak to those of the captivity. According to the LORD's words to him, Ezekiel was not to concern himself whether or not they would hear or whether they would forbear to hear. Whether or not they heard was not his business – he was sent to proclaim God's word whether or not they heard! So it is in our day, that the pastors of the Lord's churches are commanded of the LORD to "preach the word, to be instant in season and out of season; to reprove, rebuke, and exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine." (2Ti. 4.2) Whether or not the people hear is not the concern of them, though their hearts may be heavy toward the hearers – the hearing is God's

business for God only can give the hearers “ears to hear.”

**12 Then the spirit took me up, and I heard behind me a voice of a great rushing, saying, Blessed be the glory of the LORD from his place. 13 I heard also the noise of the wings of the living creatures that touched one another, and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a noise of a great rushing. 14 So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the LORD was strong upon me.**

**Then the spirit took me up, . . . So the spirit lifted me up, and took me away,** -- Please notice that the spirit took Ezekiel up. There are times in the Scriptures when the Spirit physically moved men who were employed in the service of the LORD. Let's notice a couple of instances. We shall see this with Ezekiel again in the 11<sup>th</sup> chapter:

**Ezekiel 11:1, 24** Moreover the spirit lifted me up, and brought me unto the east gate of the LORD'S house, which looketh eastward: and behold at the door of the gate five and twenty men; among whom I saw Jaazaniah the son of Azur, and Pelatiah the son of Benaiah, princes of the people. **24** Afterwards the spirit took me up, and brought me in a vision by the Spirit of God into Chaldea, to them of the captivity. So the vision that I had seen went up from me.

When the prophet Obadiah met Elijah after the 3 ½ years of drought, we find these words. Elijah told Obadiah to go and tell King Ahab, “Behold, Elijah is here.” For the Lord had commanded



Elijah to shew himself to Ahab.

**1 Kings 18:10-12 [Obadiah speaking]** As the LORD thy God liveth, there is no nation or kingdom, whither my lord hath not sent to seek thee: and when they said, *He is not there*; he took an oath of the kingdom and nation, that they found thee not. **11** And now thou sayest, Go, tell thy lord, Behold, *Elijah is here*. **12** And it shall come to pass, *as soon as I am gone from thee, that the Spirit of the LORD shall carry thee whither I know not;* and so when I come and tell Ahab, and he cannot find thee, he shall slay me: but I thy servant fear the LORD from my youth.

After Philip had baptized the Eunuch in the desert, we find these words: **Acts 8:39** *And when they were come up out of the water, the Spirit of the Lord caught away Philip, that the eunuch saw him no more: and he went on his way rejoicing.*

The great rushing that Ezekiel heard glorified the LORD for the voice said, "Blessed be the glory of the Lord from his place." (3.12) With the noise of the wings of the living creatures and the noise of the wheels over against them, and a great rushing – the Spirit lifted Ezekiel up, and took him away. Thus he went in bitterness, in the heat of his spirit. To say that he went in bitterness says that there was some sorrow in his heart because of the impudence and rebellious nature of his people Israel, unto whom he was sent. Since the Prophet Jeremiah had been raised up before Ezekiel, he had probably seen what a hard task Jeremiah had at Jerusalem when he appeared as a prophet,

what pains he took, what opposition he met with, how he was abused by hand and tongue, and what ill treatment he met with, and all to no purpose. "And" (thinks Ezekiel) "must I be set up for a mark like him?" The life of a captive was bad enough; but what would the life of a prophet in captivity be? Undoubtedly were it just him alone, apart from the commission and the spirit of the Lord, he would have been like Jeremiah who said in his sorrow and despair: "Then I said, I will not make mention of him, nor speak any more in his name. But *his word* was in mine heart as a burning fire shut up in my bones, and I was weary with forbearing, and I could not *stay*." (Jer. 20.9). Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel could not stay – but was moved in the heat of the spirit because the hand of the Lord was strong upon him. As I mentioned last time this expression "the hand of the LORD was upon him" is found exactly seven times in this great book. Eze 1:3; Eze 3:14,22; Eze 8:1; Eze 33:22; Eze 37:1; Eze 40:1. Yet, here in this verse, it is said that the hand of the Lord was strong upon me.

The Spirit of the Lord powerfully worked upon him, and obliged him to go; and the hand of the Lord strengthened him, and removed his frowardness and perverseness of spirit, in spite of his sorrow or hesitation. We do our service in the power of the Spirit.

***15 Then I came to them of the captivity at Telabib, that dwelt by the river of Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.***

So have been moved by the Spirit, and filled with the word of God, Ezekiel now has his commission to speak to them of the

captivity – and the spirit brings him to them at Telabib, by the river of Chebar.

***I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.*** – We cannot help but think he was full of grief and troubled at what he saw among those of his nation. Like the three “friends” of Job who came – then sat in silence for seven days because they saw his trouble and sorrow.

***16 And it came to pass at the end of seven days, that the word of the LORD came unto me, saying, 17 Son of man, I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel: therefore hear the word at my mouth, and give them warning from me.***

After the seven days, the word of the Lord came unto Ezekiel . . . I have made thee a watchman unto the house of Israel. The Lord said this to Ezekiel again in the 33<sup>rd</sup> chapter of this book.

**Ezekiel 33:2-9** *Son of man, speak to the children of thy people, and say unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: 3 If when he seeth the sword come upon the land, he blow the trumpet, and warn the people; 4 Then whosoever heareth the sound of the trumpet, and taketh not warning; if the sword come, and take him away, his blood shall be upon his own head. 5 He heard the sound of the trumpet, and took not warning; his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning shall deliver his soul. 6 But if the watchman see the sword come, and blow not the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword come, and take any person from*

*among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. 7 So thou, O son of man, I have set thee a watchman unto the house of Israel; therefore thou shalt hear the word at my mouth, and warn them from me. 8 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. 9 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.*

Ezekiel alone, among the prophets, is called a "watchman," not merely to sympathize, but to give timely warning of danger to his people where none was suspected.

***18 When I say unto the wicked, Thou shalt surely die; and thou givest him not warning, nor speakest to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life; the same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 19 Yet if thou warn the wicked, and he turn not from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but thou hast delivered thy soul.***

**but his blood will I require at thine hands;** -- thou shalt be answerable for him; his death shall be laid to thy charge, and thou shalt be chastised for thy negligence.

**But thou hast delivered thy soul.** – You have done your duty – the duty of your office; you are clear from the charge of negligence and sloth, and from being answerable for the death of

the sinner; and shalt save thyself, though the wicked person shall die in his sin.

**1 Timothy 4:16** *Take heed unto thyself, and unto the doctrine; continue in them: for in doing this thou shalt both save thyself, and them that hear thee.*

**20 Again, When a righteous man doth turn from his righteousness, and commit iniquity, and I lay a stumblingblock before him, he shall die: because thou hast not given him warning, he shall die in his sin, and his righteousness which he hath done shall not be remembered; but his blood will I require at thine hand. 21 Nevertheless if thou warn the righteous man, that the righteous sin not, and he doth not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned; also thou hast delivered thy soul.**

This speaks of a man who lives uprightly in the course of his life, then commits iniquity. It is not speaking of one who has the imputed righteousness of Christ, for he can never finally turn away to wickedness. So it is the duty of the watchman to warn him – and if he turns, well. If the watchman does not warn him, then the watchman is accountable to God who sent him and will receive for his works. It is the same as with the wicked man above, if after being warned he continues and dies – his blood is on him and the watchman has delivered his soul because he did his duty in warning him.

**Hebrews 13:17** *Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy,*

*and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.*

**22 ¶ And the hand of the LORD was there upon me; and he said unto me, Arise, go forth into the plain, and I will there talk with thee.**

The LORD moves strongly on Ezekiel in preparation for a new vision of God. This vision will put life into him and animate him for his work. In order for this, God calls him out *to the plain* and there he will speak to him. What blessing this, to see that God condescends to a sinful man to speak with him!

**23 Then I arose, and went forth into the plain: and, behold, the glory of the LORD stood there, as the glory which I saw by the river of Chebar: and I fell on my face.**

Ezekiel obeys – he went forth into the plain where he again sees the glory of the LORD – like the glory he saw in the very first chapter of this book. And as he sees it, he again falls on his face before God. Remember, Ezekiel is in the very same area where he was when he saw the first vision.

**24 Then the spirit entered into me, and set me upon my feet, and spake with me, and said unto me, Go, shut thyself within thine house.**

It may seem strange that the prophet should be bid to go into the plain, where the Lord promised to talk with him; and this is all that is said to him, to go home, and shut himself up in his house. But in the plain, Ezekiel had a fresh view of the glory of the Lord, and of the vision he had before, for the further

confirmation of him. Apparently, from what follows, the LORD was not yet ready to have Ezekiel prophesy to the people. There was still preparation on Ezekiel's part and on the part of the people. Sometimes, the LORD has us just to be still – alone to meditate and pray in preparation for our work.

**25 But thou, O son of man, behold, they shall put bands upon thee, and shall bind thee with them, and thou shalt not go out among them: 26 And I will make thy tongue cleave to the roof of thy mouth, that thou shalt be dumb, and shalt not be to them a reprover: for they are a rebellious house.**

Verse 25 shows that the LORD warns Ezekiel of what would happen should he now go out into the midst of them. There can be little doubt that the LORD providentially protects Ezekiel because otherwise they would bind him, under a pretence of his being mad, and therefore he must not *go out among them*.

In verse 26, it is clear that the LORD makes his tongue cleave to the roof of his mouth, so that he cannot speak. He should not, at this time, reprove them. Not yet. So the LORD leaves them to their sins – The LORD takes away his word from them, and commands his prophet to be silent, and let them alone, to go on in their sins without control; which was a sore judgment upon them.

**27 But when I speak with thee, I will open thy mouth, and thou shalt say unto them, Thus saith the Lord GOD; He that heareth, let him hear; and he that forbeareth, let him forbear: for they are a rebellious house.**

The LORD has closed Ezekiel's mouth while he was in the house, but this verse tells us that this condition shall not remain – the LORD would speak with him, and open his mouth, and cause him to speak the words of God to the captives. Again, Ezekiel was not to concern himself as to whether or not they heard – as much as he may have wanted them to hear. His charge was to speak God's words whether they heard or whether they did forbear to hear. And so it is with the LORD's prophets and preachers all through history to this present time. We cannot make people hear God's word! But, praise the LORD, He can – and he does when it is in His purpose to do so.