

## WORSHIPING ON THE LORD'S DAY

May 7, 2017

*Worship, as God intended, is a supernatural event. As we enter into this service of worship, we cross the threshold of the secular to the sacred, from the common to the uncommon, from the profane to the holy. Prepare yourself therefore for this most holy convocation!*

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Prelude

Worship Theme

God is our Father

Matthew 6:7-9: "And when you are praying, do not use meaningless repetition, as the Gentiles do, for they suppose that they will be heard for their many words. Therefore do not be like them; for your Father knows what you need, before you ask Him. Pray, then, in this way: 'Our Father who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name.'"

**God Calls us to Worship Before the Cross**

Ps. 34:9

+We Adore Him

Hymn #6, "O Come, My Soul"

*From Psalm 103*

We Confess Our Sin

Almighty God, whose glory, goodness, and grace abound on every hand, we confess that we have not rejoiced in You as we should, because our affections have been misguided and misplaced. We have set our love upon creatures, rather than upon You, the Creator. Instead of being grateful for the good things we have, we have grumbled and complained about what we lack. Instead of trusting Your providence in our lives, we have questioned Your wisdom and doubted Your love. We ought to have used our freedom and prosperity to serve Your kingdom and our neighbors, but we have squandered them on ourselves. We have delighted in newspapers and novels more than Your Word; the passing pleasures of sin rather than the lasting joys of Your will; the temporary trifles of time, more than the permanent things of eternity.

Forgive us, Father, for Jesus' sake. And by the Spirit, whose fruit is joy, give us eyes to see things as they are, and hearts to rejoice in things which are worthy of our joy, especially Yourself, Your Son, and Your salvation. Be glorified in our gladness, we pray through Christ, our Lord. Amen.

We Thank Him For His Forgiveness

Hymn #188, "Jesus, I Am Resting"

**God Calls us to Worship Thru Dedication**

Ps. 34:4-7

We Give Him Our Offering & Concerns

We Give Him Ourselves

Hymn #58, "O Splendor Of God's Glory Bright"

**God Calls us to Worship Thru Fellowship**

Ps. 119:65-72

We Read His Word

Sermon

\*We Partake Of The Lord's Supper

Hymn #699, "Like a River Glorious"

**God Blesses us in the Benediction**

Welcome and Announcements

Postlude

(Containers have been placed at the front for communion cups and small trash)

+You are invited to raise your hands during the prayer of adoration.

\*Visitors, please see note below on the Lord's Supper.

## The Forging of a Servant of God, Pt. 8

Ezekiel 1-4

Study Notes for May 7, 2017

**I. Introduction:** Our Loss of Autonomy (Jn. 21:18; Acts 9:16; Rom.1:1; Jam. 1:1; 2 Pet. 1:1; Jude 1; Is. 6:8-13; Jer. 1:10; Heb. 11:8b; Gen. 32:24-31; 1 Sam. 18ff).

### II. The Forging of a Servant of God, Ezk. 1-4.

#### I. His Autonomy, Ezk. 4:4-15.

##### Ezk. 4:4-6

We know that Ezekiel's initial calling to ministry meant that his message as a prophet would not primarily be proclaimed by his mouth, but by his actions! Right? Recall Ezk. 12:5-6a, 9, 11; 24:21-24a...

- A. His Audience, Ezk. 1:4-28; 2:6; 3:22-23.
- B. His Strength, Ezk. 2:1-2, 8-10; 3:10-11, 22-24.
- C. His Commission, Ezk. 2:3-4, 7; 3:16-21.
- D. His Ministerial Telos, Ezk. 2:5.
- E. His Expectation for Ministry, Ezk. 3:4-7, 24-27.
- F. His Preparation, Ezk. 3:8-9.
- G. His Passion, Ezk. 3:12-14.
- H. His Insanity, Ezk. 4:1-3.

In our passage this morning, just when you thought Ezekiel's play time had come to an end (vv. 1-3) now he was to lay in the open street/square every day on his side (most guess the better part of a day) facing the brick...

##### Ezk. 4:9-13

Ezekiel Bread... a Christian Lembas bread?

For Ezekiel to subsist on this food for 430 days meant that during this bizarre time in his life, his body would literally have wasted away before the eyes of his countrymen! What a graphic portrayal of the cost of sin in the life of the nation!

##### Ezk. 4:12-15

This is the first inkling that the initial sign that Ezekiel was to proclaim to God's people was as much for the prophet as it was for the nation!!...

There is much to learn from this in our service in God's Kingdom- which we'll talk about in a moment. Yet for now we understand that this First Sign that Ezekiel gave as a prophet was as much a test/tempering of Ezekiel as it was his countrymen!

##### Ezk. 4:7-8

The Binding of Ezekiel

The Significance of this Binding

As a servant of God, Ezekiel was bound by the Lord to do, be, and say whatever the Lord might require of him!

D. I. Block wrote, "By being tied up Ezekiel affirms nonverbally the unalterable quality of his prophecy. The prophet may not adjust his message by changing his position. What Yahweh's opening and closing of the prophet's mouth were to his oral declarations, the binding of his body was to his sign-acts. Ezekiel is not free to fabricate his own messages; Yahweh exercises absolute control over him." (*Ezekiel*, NICOT, pp. 180-181)

**\*Point:** From his eating to his drinking... from his laying down to his rising up... from what he said to where he went, Ezekiel was not free! Like Peter, David, Paul, Jacob and so many other Patriarchs, service in the Kingdom of God means serving the Lord according to His will, on His terms, and according to His standards! Cf. 1 Cor. 10:31; Col. 3:23-24; 1 Cor. 6:19-20.

Iain Duguid, "The nature of the prophet's isolation will be twofold: He is to be confined to his house and he will lose his power of free speech. He is God's prisoner, a situation vividly depicted by the ropes that bind him. Even his tongue is God's prisoner, bound to the roof of his mouth, except when God frees it to speak his oracles. His dumbness is not total; he is still able to warn of the danger to come, as he has been commissioned to do in 3:17-21. But his speech is totally restricted to the reproduction of God's words of judgment- the words of lament, warning, and woe inscribed on the scroll he has swallowed." (*Ezekiel*, NIVAC, p. 80)

## **\*Where We Live**

1. On what basis can we apply this text to our lives? Isn't this just speaking about Ezekiel?
2. Martin Luther is known for the statement, "In Christ we are free to do whatever we want!" Is this correct? How is this not a license to sin?
3. We Are Slaves of God! This may sound heavy, until you face up to Reality...
  - a. **The temptation that appealed to our first parents when they chose to reject God in the garden was the allure of Autonomy...**

...yet this was and is a myth (cf. Rom. 6:16; 2 Pet. 2:19; Jn. 8:34)!
  - b. **While autonomy is a myth, nevertheless to be bound by God is to be bound by a Being who has our best in mind... for God is Good (cf. Rom. 6:17-18)!**

## **J. His Burden, Ezk. 4:16-17.**

This speaks of the impending judgment that was coming to the people of God- the nation of Judah- in 586 BC. Ezekiel began this epistle with an announcement of this awful day (Ezk. 1:4).

Yet this was not specific only to Ezekiel. Servants of God go about their work ever mindful of the "storm wind coming from the north"!...

1. Abraham lived ever mindful of this coming judgment (Gen. 12:2-3).
2. Isaiah was given this message (Is. 29:2-4a).
3. We see it in Jeremiah (Jer. 4:19-20a).
4. Christ wept over Jerusalem on account of the judgment that was coming to it (Mt. 22:37-38).
5. The Disciples were ushered into ministry with this same threat of impending doom (Mt. 9:37-38).

**\*Point:** What a Burden this would have been to Ezekiel... knowing that in seven short years from his calling, total destruction was coming upon the people of God (cf. Hab. 3:16)!

## **\*Where We Live**

1. Such A Burden rests upon our shoulders today (cf. 2 Pet. 3:10-12)...
2. What ought we to do with this burden?
3. A Word of Encouragement: The Distinction between announcing news and commenting on the news...

Machen wrote, "We could not hope to be listened to if we had merely our own thoughts; there are so many others in the world wiser and more learned than we. But in a time of peril in a beleaguered city the humblest of day-laborers is more worth listening to than the greatest of orators, if he has news." (*God Transcendent*, emphasis added, p. 39)

John Piper wrote, "In times of peril, a bringer of news is better than great philosophers. Nor does it matter if his accent is good. Or his grammar. Or his looks. If he has good news for beleaguered people, he will be more treasured than ten thousand theologians. Plain people who have heard the news and been saved by it should take heart from this. People need news first. Hard questions can be answered later." (*Taste and See: Savoring the Supremacy of God in All of Life* [Kindle Locations 2395-2398]. The Crown Publishing Group. Kindle Edition.)