

THE MESSAGE BEHIND EZEKIELS OBJECT LESSONS

11-7-21

Ezekiel 24:15 Also the word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezekiel 24:16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

Ezekiel 24:17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not [thy] lips, and eat not the bread of men.

Ezekiel 24:18 So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

Ezekiel 24:19 And the people said unto me, Wilt thou not tell us what these [things are] to us, that thou doest [so]?

Ezekiel 24:20 Then I answered them, The word of the LORD came unto me, saying,

Ezekiel 24:21 Speak unto the house of Israel, Thus saith the Lord GOD; Behold, I will profane my sanctuary, the excellency of your strength, the desire of your eyes, and that which your soul pitieth; and your sons and your daughters whom ye have left shall fall by the sword.

Ezekiel 24:22 And ye shall do as I have done: ye shall not cover [your] lips, nor eat the bread of men.

Ezekiel 24:23 And your tires [shall be] upon your heads, and your shoes upon your feet: ye shall not mourn nor weep; but ye shall pine away for your iniquities, and mourn one toward another.

Ezekiel 24:24 Thus Ezekiel is unto you a sign: according to all that he hath done shall ye do: and when this cometh, ye shall know that I [am] the Lord GOD.

Ezekiel 24:25 Also, thou son of man, [shall it] not [be] in the day when I take from them their strength, the joy of their glory, the desire of their eyes, and that whereupon they set their minds, their sons and their daughters,

Here we have God asking an unusual thing of his prophet.. There are many unusual stories about men of God and their wives in the Bible..

Unusual Situations with Prophets Wives In the Bible:

- Abraham was a prophet (Genesis 20:7) who twice lied about his wife and got into trouble.
- Moses was a prophet and was criticized for the wife he chose (Numbers 12:1).
- Isaiah's wife was a prophetess (Isaiah 8:3). She bore him at least two sons whose names were signs to the people of Judah.
- The Prophet Jeremiah wasn't allowed to have a wife (Jeremiah 16:1-4), and this was a sign to the Jews that judgment was coming, and it was not time for marrying.

- Hosea's wife became a prostitute and he had to buy her out of the slave market (Hosea 1-3). This was a sign to the nation, how God viewed their spiritual whoredoms.

I think next to the story of Hosea, what God asked of Ezekiel was one of the hardest things that we ever read about a prophet and his wife.

Intro:

Probably there is no one on earth closer to you than your own wife. Ezekiel was a prophet of God, he was also of the children of Levi, and was a priest. There were certain laws for priests, concerning the dead and defiling themselves, but for a close relative there were exceptions and especially there is no closer relative to a person than his own wife.

YET HERE WE HAVE A STORY ABOUT A MAN OF GOD.. WHO LOVED HIS WIFE.. Ezekiel's wife was called "The desire of his eyes.." which probably meant there was no one closer to him in life than his wife. He no doubt loved her dearly. She was the closest thing to him on this earth.

Many believe she was a beautiful woman, a godly woman and Ezekiel loved her. But the nation was at war.. and the sins of the Nation had finally culminated in God's judgment. Like all wars, the guilty as well as the innocent suffer. Do you think on 9/11 everyone in those towers were unbelievers and wicked? No doubt there were some who knew the Lord and loved the Lord.. In war the sword devours both the lost and the saved.. Ezekiel was called not only to preach to the people but many times God asked him to act out his message in his personal life.

God asked Ezekiel to act out his message as well as preach it..

This was one of many great object lessons that were louder than his words..

His wife was the desire of his eyes....

He had a good wife.. a good marriage.. and now God asks a tough thing of him.

God said, I am going to take your wife tonight and I don't want you to weep or mourn or go through the traditional mourning ceremonies..

Ezekiel 24:16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

Ezekiel 24:17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not [thy] lips, and eat not the bread of men.

The Jews would have lots of mourning and weeping at funerals..

God told him not to shed tears..
No crying, mourning..

Normally the Jews would remove certain ornamental head dressings called "tires" at funerals. Just like we have certain attire that is customary at funerals so did they...

Put on thy shoes... Often as a sign of mourning Jews would go bare footed..

Cover not thy lips.. Mourners would wear a veil over their face and lips..

Eat not the bread of men.. The Jews had certain food that friends and family would bring when a person had a relative die. this is what is meant by the bread of men..

Now God told Ezekiel.. to put all these away!

Now what is the lesson the Lord wants us to learn from this..

THE LESSON IS THIS..

God expects us to put him first above everything and everyone.. even above our marriages.. our spouses.. our children those we love the most in this world. Aside from God.. a man's husband or wife.. ought to be the most important person in all the world. the desire of his eyes..

The death of Ezekiel's wife was an illustration of what or who is most important to us. God asked a hard thing of Ezekiel.

For some, the loss of a child could be more devastating than the loss of a husband or wife. I have seen some get very bitter at God when they lose a loved one.

God calls Ezekiel's wife.. the desire of his eyes..

WHAT IS THE DESIRE OF YOUR EYES? IS THE LORD MORE TO BE DESIRED THAN ANYTHING OR ANYONE ELSE?

I cannot emphasize this enough..

Imagine.. the Lord expected Ezekiel to comply with this command..
How many people would find it too hard a thing to ask..

LESSONS TO LEARN FROM EZEKIEL'S OBJECT LESSONS

I. EZEKIELS OBEDIENCE TO PERFORM HIS OBJECT LESSONS WERE A TRIBUTE TO HIS OBEDIENCE TO GOD

Some of the object lessons included

(1) Lying on his left side for 390 days during which he could eat only one eight-ounce meal a day cooked over manure (Ezekiel 4:4:-17); This was to illustrate what a burden Israel had been for 390 years.

(2) Lying on his right side for 40 days (Ezekiel 4:6); To illustrate the judgment and burden of Judah..

(3) Shaving his head and beard and burning the hair (Ezekiel 5:1-4); and To illustrate what a stench the Jews will be to the peoples of the world..

(4) Showing no sorrow when his beloved wife died (Ezekiel 24:15-18). Ezekiel chose to obey God, even through the most sorrowful time and experience in this life.

To illustrate how that nation would suffer and would not even have time to grieve the death of their loved ones in the holocausts they would experience..

God says this to him ..

Ezekiel 24:16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

I fear for our nation..

What brought the holocaust and the devastation of WW II?

Was it not the Great Depression that spread around the world?

And no one suffered more than Germany at that time, in their desperation people looked for political leaders that would bring some relief financially.

In the US we had FDR
In England they had Churchill
In Italy they had Mussolini
In Germany they had Hitler..

What is going on in our nation today.. as we decline economically who are we looking to?

Instead of turning to God we are looking to political leadership.
Government cannot bring us prosperity.

The power of government is the power to tax and bear the sword..

Romans 13:4 ... he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to [execute] wrath upon him that doeth evil.

GO TO THE POLICE AND ASK THEM TO HELP YOU PAY YOUR BILLS..

If you are having a tough time economically the police are the last ones you want to see.. Why?! they only come when there is a foreclosure.. to force you out of your house...

THE ONLY WAY A GOVERNMENT CAN BRING PROSPERITY TO A NATION IS THROUGH WINNING WARS... And sharing the bounty!

When there is a war and there is no bounty taken then we go into greater depression .. THIS IS WHAT HAS HAPPENED WITH THE UNITED STATES NOW FOR YEARS.. We have had war after war and won nothing.. Look at Afghanistan.

How did Hitler get Germany out of their depression?
By stealing from the Jews and the nations he destroyed!

In the midst of God's judgment on the nation Israel.. God called Ezekiel act out his message through objects lessons to the nation..

His great Obedience in performing these lessons stand out to us all as an example of his obedience to God.

Imagine .. Lying on your side for 390 days..
and then after that.. Lying on your side for another 40 days..

Being told to cook your food.. with Human dung..
When Ezekiel protested.. God gave him cow dung..

Then God told him to burn his hair in the midst of the people ..
Nothing more disgusting than the smell of burning hair!

BUT THE ULTIMATE OBJECT LESSON WAS WHEN GOD TOLD EZEKIEL HIS WIFE WOULD SUDDENLY DIE AND HE WAS TOLD NOT TO MOURN OR CRY OR GO TO THE FUNERAL.. BUT TO PREACH IN THE MORNING! COULD YOU IMAGINE?

How could a servant of God endure these heartaches..

When you see what the nation Israel endured in her holocausts you could understand it..

II. EZEKIEL'S OBJECT LESSONS WERE A MESSAGE OF WARNING TO THE NATION!

All these object lessons were messages of warning to the nation ..

God was saying repent, repent.. repent..

Israel really didn't get it.. the only answer to their problems was their LORD ... Yet they looked everywhere else but to the Lord!

Look at history and you will discover that we are prime for God's judgement!

We have not experienced war like the world has known on our soil for many years..

But on Sept 11th 2001 an enemy planned a strategic attack against our nation and struck a blow to us worse than Pearl Harbor! And how soon we have forgotten. After that we elected a president with a Muslim name, and indiscriminately let more Muslims in our country without discretion more than any other time in our history..

The difference between this attack and pearl harbor is that the enemy is picking away at us instead of hitting us with an army that we can see...

The message of Ezekiel was that When God's people reject his lordship God brings judgment!

The only way to avert that judgment is to give God that rightful place of preeminence in our lives..

WHAT IS THE WARNING...

- 1. When God does not have the preeminence we will suffer discomfort.. and hardships economically and in every area of our lives..***
- 2. When God does not have the preeminence we will suffer heartache with the loss of loved ones.. Domestically***
- 3. When God does not have the preeminence we become the off scourge of the world.. SALT LOOSES ITS SAVIOR!!!***

III. EZEKIELS OBJECT LESSONS WERE A MESSAGE CONCERNING PRIORITIES IN OUR LIVES

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

How could God ask Ezekiel to not mourn for the death of his wife?

To not go to the funeral..

To just preach in the morning without shedding a tear before the people?

Think of the Holocaust.. how the Jews were torn apart..

Mother and Children .. Husbands and Wives.. We could see movies.. and documentaries about this, but we could never imagine what it would be like to go through this ourselves.

Do you really think this was the first time this happened.. it happened other times and this destruction of the temple under Nebuchadnezzar's rule was just as bad for the nation. When Rome destroyed the temple in 70 AD it was just as bad... We just don't have a graphic account of these devastations.

The Bible is clear that all this happened because the nation rejected their Lord and went into Idolatry!

1. THE ARGUMENT OF MANY WOULD BE HOW COULD GOD DEMAND SUCH A PLACE OF PREEMINENCE IN OUR LIVES..

Answer is simple he made us.. we did not make ourselves..

Isaiah 64:8 But now, O LORD, thou [art] our father; we [are] the clay, and thou our potter; and we all [are] the work of thy hand.

Though we are a magnificent piece of pottery none the less we are still a product of the creation of God..

WHO GAVE YOU ALL THAT YOU HAVE?! NONE OTHER THAN GOD HIMSELF!

WHO GAVE YOU A WIFE? WHO GAVE YOU CHILDREN? WHO GAVE YOU A CAREER? WHO GAVE EVERYTHING? WAS IT NOT GOD?!

Is it too much to ask that you acknowledge Him who gave you all this?

2. THE ULTIMATE SLAP IN THE FACE TO GOD IS TO NOT BE GRATEFUL FOR WHAT HE HAS GIVEN YOU ...

Psalms 100:3 Know ye that the LORD he [is] God: [it is] he [that] hath made us, and not we ourselves; [we are] his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

If it were not for the Lord, you would not have a wife, or husband..

If it were not for the Lord, you would not have children..

If it were not for the Lord, you would not have anything in this world.

IV. THE APPLICATION TO THE MESSAGE OF EZEKIEL'S OBJECT LESSONS IS SIMPLE..

God wants us to put him first above all.. and everything.. and everyone..

When I used to have devotions with our children I had a little tradition I would go through.. I would say.. who comes first.. and they would have to shout.. JESUS

Who comes second.. MOM & DAD..

- 1. I have had people tell me that for the sake of their marriages they had to do things that they knew were against God's word, thinking they were justified because they had to keep their wife or husband.***

Think about what God asked Ezekiel to do? God said, he was going to take away his wife, and then God asked Ezekiel to preach to the people in the morning and skip the funeral.

Do you think that when you stand before God, that God is going to say I understand when you have done things in violation to his revealed will to please your spouse, or children?

Put God first..
Obey God first..

Now you would think Ezekiel did not love his wife, NO NO NO ..
Note.. what God says,

Ezekiel 24:16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

God called Ezekiel's wife, the desire of his eyes.

He said, "I take away from thee.. with a stroke.. this means suddenly without prolonged sickness... with a pestilence or sudden stroke ..."

But God said, I called you to preach.. Go preach.. in the morning and skip the funeral.

A person could say, how could God ask such a thing of Ezekiel.

HERE IS HOW.. HE IS GOD..

Let me say it again.. **HE IS GOD**. He made us.. all we have is from him. Obedience to him is our supreme duty.

Just slap your self in the face and wake up..

Every blessing of life comes from him..
You are fearfully and wonderfully made.. he did that...
Everything that you enjoy and love he brought into your life..
Every breath you take is because God gives it to you..

Ezekiel's people had abandoned their God, and he has chastened them.. and now God wants Ezekiel to get the message out, just how bad his judgment will be against them for their sin. NOTE: Here is a lesson.. note how important it is that God get's the message out!

This is why God has left us on this planet.. it is to fear and obey him. Our very life is to be a message!

Now notice just how twisted our minds become. The heart is desperately wicked above all things. ***The essence of Idolatry, is to put the blessings above the God who gives the blessings.. THIS IS IDOLATRY..***

If you have a spouse, a wife or a husband that is the love of your life, the desire of your eyes, one who gives you delight, and makes this life pleasant. This is a blessing from God. Will you put that blessing above the God who gave it to you? THIS IS IDOLATRY...

If you have been blessed with Children or Grandchildren, who you love, who are the delight of your heart and eye.. You would give your very life for these. Who gave you the blessing of such children. Do you make them? Did you create them? NO NO NO .. They are a blessing from God. Will you put these before the God who gave them to you? IF YOU DO THIS IS IDOLATRY..

If you have talents and abilities, and God gave you the ability to work and get gain in a trade or business. This business means more to you than anything else on earth. It is your delight and joy. Most of your waking hours are spent working and building that business. WHO GAVE YOU THESE GIFTS AND TALENTS? Who opened up the doors of opportunities to prosper and be blessed? Who gave you the mind and hands to work? Is it not God? Will you put this blessing above the God who gave you these things? THIS IS IDOLATRY. This is a great wickedness!

We can shake our heads at the subtle forms of Idolatry of primitive people..
We shake our heads when see them bow before a figurine or a piece of clay or metal engraved or carved into a image. We would think how primitive, how foolish. YET ARE WE NOT JUST AS FOOLISH TO PUT ANYTHING ABOVE OUR CREATOR!
Job, Family, Loved One, Family, Wife, Husband, Children, you name it ..

2. I have had people come to me, through the years and tell me point blank that because of the love they have for their wife or children they feel they have to

do things that they know God does not want them to do or know are against his revealed commandments in Scripture. In vain I tell people, what you are trying to do to save your family, by your actions against God you will destroy the very thing you are trying to save.

How can you expect God to bless your disobedience to Him?

God is looking for servants like Ezekiel. There was not a harder thing that God could ask of any man of God. Yet Ezekiel obeyed.. NOTE WHAT IT SAYS,

Ezekiel 24:18 So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

3. Fellow comes forward after a church service and handed me this Bible.. It says

Presented to _____	Saved	Oct 21st 1982
By _____	his wife	October 7th 1985

He said, Preacher, I am leaving town, I want you to have this Bible. Tell people not to do what I did. I was a deacon at such and such a church. I taught Sunday School, and my wife taught Sunday School.

We were happy, we all were in church serving the Lord together. We were there every time the doors were open. Then as the kids starting getting older, we got worried about how we were going to be able to put our kids through college. So we decided maybe my wife should start working. To do that she had to stop teaching Sunday School. She resigned her class. Then I had to resign being a deacon.

Then it got harder for us to make all the services, occasionally my wife had to work on Sundays. We thought it is for a good cause, after all God would have to understand, we have to take care of our children.

Preacher he said, "with a tear in his eye.." I did wrong. My wife and I drifted apart, and she found another man at work. She told me she's leaving me. It all started when we put our children above God. He handed me this Bible, and told me to tell people not to do as he did.

Many many times in the Bible, people have tried to warn others..

Did not the rich man in hell say go tell my brothers.. not to do as I did..
Can you not hear..Esau weeping because he put a bowl of soup before his birthright..
Can you not hear, Cain, saying my punishment is more than I can bear..

Can you not hear, the clanging of the 30 pieces of silver bouncing off the temple floor when Judas said, "I have betrayed innocent blood..."

Can you not hear the words of our Lord Jesus Christ when he said,

Matthew 10:39 He that findeth his life shall lose it: and he that loseth his life for my sake shall find it.

Is your life wrapped up in the blessings.. (this can lead to Idolatry)

Or

Is your life wrapped up in the God who gives us the blessings.

4. *I could tell you story after story of people who have faced tragedies in their marriages. Because they put their marriage before God!*

The Bible does not say, to love your husband your wife with all your heart soul and might..

Nor does it say to love your children with all your heart, soul and might.

IT ONLY SAYS THAT ABOUT GOD.

Whatever you love with all your heart, soul and might.. is your God!

I preached this same basic thought many years ago.. a fellow came up to me.. and said..

I don't know if I can do that.. I don't know if I can love God more than my wife or son.. Shortly after he said this to me he left our church.

NOW HIS WIFE IS GONE..	Died 2-27-2010
His Son Is Died..	Died 3-8-2015
Last of all he died..	Died 6-22-2016

Now I wonder what he said to his creator as he stood before Him?

DOES CHRIST HAVE THE PREMINENCE IN YOUR LIFE? THIS IS THE GREAT LESSON WE CAN LEARN FROM EZEKIELS OBEDIENCE TO GOD..

Ezekiel 24:16 Son of man, behold, I take away from thee the desire of thine eyes with a stroke: yet neither shalt thou mourn nor weep, neither shall thy tears run down.

Ezekiel 24:17 Forbear to cry, make no mourning for the dead, bind the tire of thine head upon thee, and put on thy shoes upon thy feet, and cover not [thy] lips, and eat not the bread of men.

Ezekiel 24:18 So I spake unto the people in the morning: and at even my wife died; and I did in the morning as I was commanded.

EVENING SERVICE
GIVING GOD A PLACE OF PRE-EMINENCE IN OUR LIVES

Consider by way of an addendum to this morning's message about lessons from Ezekiel's obedience in becoming an object lesson to the nation.

I. GOD WANTS US TO GIVE HIM THE PREEMINENCE IN OUR LIVES SO HE CAN BLESS US ..

Deuteronomy 5:29 O that there were such an heart in them, that they would fear me, and keep all my commandments always, that it might be well with them, and with their children for ever!

If we obey him he will bless us..

So many people.. think that God is this mean ogre that is looking out for his own self interest only. No, God wants us to obey him so he can bless us.

Jesus said, he came to give us life and life more abundant. Satan comes but to steal, rob, destroy and kill...

What if you if you had the cure for cancer, but people would not believe you or come to you for the cure.. You might say something similar to what the Lord says in Deut. 5:29... You might say, OH IF ONLY PEOPLE WOULD COME TO ME FOR HELP!!!

II. SATAN WANTS TO MAKE US THINK THAT GOD IS THREATENED BY US AND REFUSES TO SHARE HIS GLORY

Genesis 3:1 Now the serpent was more subtle than any beast of the field which the LORD God had made. And he said unto the woman, Yea, hath God said, Ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden?

Genesis 3:2 And the woman said unto the serpent, We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden:

Genesis 3:3 But of the fruit of the tree which [is] in the midst of the garden, God hath said, Ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die.

Genesis 3:4 And the serpent said unto the woman, Ye shall not surely die:

Genesis 3:5 For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil.

Accusation.. God fears you will become equal with him..

What nonsense.. Can we ever be equal with God?

The accusation was that God is trying to hold you back..

God is threatened by you and needs to keep you under lock and key.. Sin is what frees you and liberates you..

III. THERE ARE ONLY TWO SIDES IN THIS CONFLICT...

Matthew 12:30 He that is not with me is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth abroad.

There is no Neutrality .. in this conflict..

Satan makes you think you are doing your own thing.. but really you are following his rebellion against the Lord..

Revelation 3:14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans write; These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

Revelation 3:15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

Revelation 3:16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth.

God wants us to take sides.. and let it be known where we stand..

IV. CANNOT GOD WHO MADE US REQUIRE US TO HONOR HIMSELF?

Romans 9:20 Nay but, O man, who art thou that repliest against God? Shall the thing formed say to him that formed [it], Why hast thou made me thus?

Get this through your thick skull.. GOD MADE YOU..

Can you grasp what that means.

Psalms 100:3 Know ye that the LORD he [is] God: [it is] he [that] hath made us, and not we ourselves; [we are] his people, and the sheep of his pasture.

V. IT IS ONLY OUR REASONABLE SERVICE TO BE TOTALLY DEDICATED TO GOD

Romans 12:1 I beseech you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that ye present your bodies a living sacrifice, holy, acceptable unto God, [which is] your reasonable service.

Christ has manifested his love toward us...

In Christ we see God's love and compassion.. and sacrifice for our sin ..

He who died and sacrificed his life for us.. it is now only reasonable that we should live for him ..