

Third Sunday in Lent – 2022

Saturday, 3/19 at 4:00 & Sunday, 3/20 at 9:00

What Will God Decide About You?



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Text: Ezekiel 33:7-20 NAS-95

Lenten Wednesdays: Services 11 & 7; Meals 12 & 6

Introduction: Dear friends in Christ: God **made us** and **loves us**, so, in today's sermon text, He uses strong words to speak to Ezekiel, *His servant*, and to people like you and me.

- 1. Watchmen Are Called to Warn the Wicked:** *[God is speaking to Ezekiel:]* ⁷ **“Now as for you, son of man, I have appointed you a watchman for the house of Israel; so, you will hear a message from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.”** // As a watchman watched for approaching enemies, *and then sounded a warning*, so Ezekiel was called to warn those who were living without repentance (**without** sorrow for sin and faith in the Messiah). Ezekiel was to speak **exactly** what the Lord told him to speak – so his warning would be the Lord's warning!
 - a. Fail to warn:** ⁸ **“When I say to the wicked** *[the unrepentant], ‘O wicked man, you shall surely die,’ and you* *[Ezekiel]* **do not speak to warn the wicked from his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity** *[without*

forgiveness], **but his blood I will require from your hand.**" // So, Ezekiel would be responsible, because he failed to warn the wicked (**his job**: to warn, not to change)!

- b. **Speak to warn:** ⁹ **"But if you [Ezekiel] on your part warn a wicked man to turn from his way, and he does not turn from his way, he will die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your life."** // If Ezekiel warned but the man rejected, Ezekiel would NOT be blamed!

The info above applied to Ezekiel then and to pastors today; **it is critical for me and for you that I speak God's full truth** (see *Acts 20:26b-27; Heb. 13:17; James 3:1*)!

2. **Replace Despair with Repentance:**

- a. **Despair:** ¹⁰ **"Now as for you, son of man, say to the house of Israel, 'Thus you [the house of Israel] have spoken, saying, 'Surely our transgressions and our sins are upon us, and we are rotting away in them; how then can we survive?'''"** // When people are honest about their sins **in the light of God's requirement of perfect rightness**, they know they are **in grave trouble and totally helpless!**

- b. **Repentance:** ¹¹ **"Say to them, 'As I live!' declares the Lord God, 'I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked [that is, in the unrepentant dying in their sins], but rather that the wicked turn from his way and live. Turn back, turn back from your evil ways! Why then will you die, O house of Israel?'"** // No matter **how MUCH** or **how LONG** a person has been doing horrible things, **the Lord DOES NOT want that person to go to hell!** Instead, **the Lord wants EVERYONE to repent and live forever!**

3. The Condition at Judgement Is What Counts: Some

examples:

- a. **From faith to faithless:** 😞¹² “**And you, son of man, say to your fellow citizens** [*ones who are not my people*], ‘**The righteousness of a righteous man will not deliver him in the day of his transgression,**’ // When a **repentant man (w/ sorrow, faith, & godly living)** goes the way of unrepentance, *his former position will not help him!*
- b. **From faithless to faith:** 😊 “**and as for the wickedness of the wicked** [*his former unrepentance and wicked living*], **he will not stumble because of it in the day when he turns from his wickedness;**” // When a sinner repents, 😊he is **washed**, 😊he is **sanctified**, 😊he is **justified in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ** and *by the Spirit of our God* (1Co. 6:11) (see Psalm 103:12)!
- c. **From faith to faithless:** 😞 “**whereas a righteous man** [*a believer*] **will not be able to live** [*with God forever*] **by his righteousness on the day when he commits sin.**” // It is **God’s work** that makes a person a believer (1Co. 1:30a; Eph. 2:4-5), *but believers can ✦reject Jesus, ✦go the way of the world, and ✦eternally condemn themselves!*
- d. **From faith to faithless:** 😞¹³ “**When I say to the righteous** [*the believer*], **he will surely live, and he so trusts in his righteousness** [*that is, in his own goodness for heaven, rather than in Jesus*] ..., **none of his righteous deeds will be remembered; but in that same iniquity of his** [*that is, rejecting Jesus and now trusting in self*] ... **he will die.**” // By God’s grace, **NOW and FOREVER**, *let us trust ONLY in Jesus FOR HEAVEN!*
- e. **From faithless to faith:** 😊¹⁴ “**But when I say to the wicked, ‘You will surely die,’ and he turns from his sin and practices justice and righteousness,** [*for example:*]

¹⁵ *if a wicked man restores a pledge, pays back what he has taken by robbery, walks by the statutes which ensure life without committing iniquity, he will surely live; he shall not die.* ¹⁶ *None of his sins that he has committed will be remembered against him. He has practiced justice and righteousness; he will surely live.* // FROM sin → TO Jesus and fruits of rightness!

4. **The Lord Is Certainly Right:** ¹⁷ *“Yet your fellow citizens [those who are **not** My people] say, ‘The way of the Lord is not right,’ when it is their own way that is not right.”* // Let us always be convinced: *GOD IS ALWAYS RIGHT!*
- a. **Punishment for the unrepentant:** ¹⁸ *“When the righteous [the believer] turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity [rejecting the Messiah], then he shall die in it.”* // God saved him; then, later, He rejected God 😊.
- b. **Forgiveness for the repentant:** ¹⁹ *“But when the wicked turns from his wickedness and practices justice and righteousness, he will live by them.”* // From unbelief to saving faith and holy living 😊!
5. **The Lord Will Make Everything Known:** ²⁰ *“Yet you say, ‘The way of the Lord is not right.’ O house of Israel, I will judge each of you according to his ways.”* // The Lord, when He judges, will prove that His judging is right!

Let Us Pray: Dear Lord, we were all filthy in sin, *but You have washed us in Jesus’ precious blood*, so ♦make us thankful, ♦keep us trusting in Jesus, and ♦help us to live upright lives!

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