

Daily Bible Study

***“The Tragedy of Hearing Only”
Ezekiel 33:30-33***

February 27 – March 5, 2011

THE LORD’S DAY & MONDAY – This week we take a break from our study of the gospel of Mark as we look back into the old Testament to a passage I pray God would use to speak to you through His Word and by His Spirit and challenge you to evaluate your level of love and service to Him. We will be looking at the prophet Ezekiel with **Ezekiel 33:30-33** as our main text. Read this passage of Scripture and ask God to help you evaluate your own level of love and service to Him. The prophet Ezekiel, whose name means "strengthened by God", was a man that God called to speak for Him to His exiled people Israel. Ezekiel was himself a captive exiled from his homeland. There were many "false prophets" who were speaking a positive message to the people, assuring them of a speedy return to Judah. Meanwhile, Ezekiel prophesied the truth, which included the foretelling of the destruction of their beloved Jerusalem. Ezekiel also spoke at length to the future restoration of Israel and the final blessings of the Messianic Kingdom. In Ezekiel chapter 1 we are introduced to the prophet and we read of a vision Ezekiel had of God's glory (**Ezekiel 1:1-28**) and then God speaks to him in chapter 2 (**Ezekiel 1:28 - 2:9**). Read our text for the week in **Ezekiel 33:30-33**: *“As for you, son of man, the children of your people are talking about you beside the walls and in the doors of the houses; and they speak to one another, everyone saying to his brother, ‘Please come and hear what the word is that comes from the LORD.’ So they come to you as people do, they sit before you as My people, and they hear your words, but they do not do them; for with their mouth they show much love, but their hearts pursue their own gain. Indeed you are to them as a very lovely song of one who has a pleasant voice and can play well on an instrument; for they hear your words, but they do not do them. And when this comes to pass—surely it will come—then they will know that a prophet has been among them.”*

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today?

(Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father God, teach me and feed me from Your Word this week.

TUESDAY – Yesterday we learned about the beginning of the prophet Ezekiel's ministry as a spokesman for God. God told him that He was sending him to speak and that the people would not like what he had to say. He told him not to be afraid and just deliver God's message as instructed. Read **Ezekiel 3:1-15**. In this passage we find God continue to prepare Ezekiel for the rejection of

the people. We also see in **verses 1-3** that God told Ezekiel to "eat" the scroll. In order for Ezekiel to receive God's message, he needed to internalize the truth for himself and then preach it. We learn that although the message contained judgment against Israel it was sweet in his mouth because it was God's Word and it vindicated God in His holiness, righteousness, and glory. It also brought about a bitter taste (**verse 14**) as God's truth sometimes does. Read **Jeremiah 15:16** and **Revelation 10:9-10** to find out about some other men who "ate" God's message and had a bitter/sweet experience.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today?

(Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me internalize Your Word as illustrated by Ezekiel eating the scroll. May I live and work off the nourishment & strength provided me in Scripture.

WEDNESDAY – If you were to read the entire book of Ezekiel you would find that his message was anything but giddy and joyful. He faithfully gave the people God's message regardless of how it was taken. By no means do I place myself in Ezekiel's position, but as a preacher of God's Word of Truth, a pastor, one who feeds sheep, I want you to know that I am called to "eat" God's message as well. It reproves and rebukes the preacher as it does the listener and it gives all of God's people comfort and encouragement. Pastors do have a similar job as this prophet in that they must be responsible to preach God's message as He has instructed from His Word; regardless of how it is received or reacted to. Only as we listen, meditate and spend more time in God's Word do we see how much we need to improve, where our deficiencies and sins are and how much our love for God must grow.

We also become more aware of how serious and critical this matter is. Read **2 Timothy 4:1-5** and find a similar charge to that of the prophet Ezekiel's but this one was given to a young preacher.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today?

(Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, help me to pray for those who preach and teach Your Word and may I listen to it and obey it.

THURSDAY – In **Ezekiel 33:30-33** we find that the people were hearing the message from God but they had NO intentions of obeying it. In **verse 30** we see they were talking about Ezekiel. He

was the big "buzz" of the people. They were enamored and intrigued by listening to him for they knew his message was from God. The Bible says that everyone was saying to his brother, "*Please come and hear....*" If we didn't read the following verses we would be encouraged by that. But "hear" was all they did. Read about some other men who were intrigued with hearing God's message but never did anything more than that in **Luke 23:8**, **Acts 24:22-27**, and **Acts 26:24-29**.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today?

(Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: Father, please help me not to merely hear the Word and be entertained or amused by its proclamation. Give me ears to hear and a desire to obey it and be changed by it.

FRIDAY & SATURDAY – In **verse 31** God tells Ezekiel that the people sit before him and listen but they don't do what God says. They pursue their "*own gain*." In **verse 32** God says the people even "*enjoy*" the speaking of the prophet, but again, they hear and do not do. Finally, in **verse 33** God says there will come a day when they will know by bitter experience that Ezekiel (and those like him) had spoken God's truth and they should have listened and obeyed, not just heard. Read **James 1:22-25** and meditate on it. Are you really a "*doer of the Word*"? Take some time today to meditate on God and His Word. Think of the people in Ezekiel's day that liked to come and listen but never obeyed and applied God's Word to their hearts and lives. When they realized that the message was true and needed to be obeyed it was too late. I love each one of you very much and am concerned that we not be a people who are deceived because we hear the Word of God, enjoy it being proclaimed, even agree with what it says) but fail by not **DOING** what it says. We mentioned that the people in Ezekiel's day pursued their "*own gain*" (**verse 31**); our world today preaches to us that life is all about "Your Brains, Your Body, and Your Bank Account." We know that **Jeremiah 9:23-24** tells us that God sees and speaks about life and what it is all about quite differently. May we strive to be a people that pursue God above everything else, know and love Him more than anyone else, and obey Him in every opportunity that we are given.

(Meditate)What is God teaching me from His Word today?

(Apply)How can I put it into practice?

Suggestion for Prayer: God, may we hear You and obey You and not deceive ourselves.