

20:20 Vision Ministries – Devotions by Roger Browning Week 47 (November 16-22, 2014)

We will end our study of living under the Lordship of Jesus Christ by considering the consequences to those who are called by God but who refuse to preach or teach His Word because of “political correctness.” These passages motivate every sermon I preach and also these devotions that I write.

Sunday, November 16 (read Ezekiel 2:1-8)

You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. (Ezekiel 2:7)

The message of this text should be familiar to anyone who is called to preach or to minister in any way to the lost or wayward citizens of this world. God calls specific **individuals** for His tasks, sends them to specific **people**, and gives them specific **words** to say (v. 3-4). The Lord does not sugarcoat His calling in order to promise great success for the messenger. He commands us to be faithful to His Word and leave the results to Him! This task seems impossible unless we realize that God’s Spirit will do the work within any willing recipient (v. 2). Are you ready to be used by God? Are you willing to devour the Word of God (v. 8) so that you will not be teaching your own personal opinion? If so, let’s see what the Lord has in store for His faithful messengers.

Monday, November 17 (read Ezekiel 2:9-3:15)

And He said to me, “Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel.” (Ezekiel 3:1)

During the singing of the 3rd verse of “I’ll Go Where You Want Me to Go,” I finally accepted the call into fulltime ministry. Because He spoke so specifically to me through the words of this familiar song, I am well aware of the calling to go where He sends me, to say what He tells me and to be what He wants me to be. God immediately sent me to a small country church (Maple Grove Christian Church) and began to work miracles in the church while He was working miracles in me. I want you to read today’s entire text with **your** unique calling in mind. He wants you to go where He sends you, but you must speak only His Word (3:1). Don’t take rejection personally; it is not you they are rejecting, but God and His Word (see 1 Samuel 8:7). The Lord will make you tough enough to accomplish the task before you (v. 8-9), so go in confidence that He is with you always (see Matthew 28:20) and leave the results to Him (v. 10-11).

Tuesday, November 18 (read Ezekiel 3:16-19)

*But if you **do** warn the wicked man and he **does not** turn from his wickedness or from his evil ways, he will die for his sin; but you will have saved yourself. (Ezekiel 3:19, emphasis mine)*

Please read this passage several times so that you can understand why I have no option but to preach the Word of God with boldness. Those who give in to political correctness and change the word, “sin” to “a meaningful relationship” or “an alternate lifestyle” will pay a higher price than I am willing to pay. God has chosen His messengers to preach His Word and not to conform to the pressures of the government or the desires of their own congregation. “For the one whom God has sent speaks the words of God, for God gives the Spirit without limit” (John 3:34). Many people are entering the ministry today without a clear calling from the Lord. You can never save yourselves (v. 19); that is God’s job, but a person who is truly saved and truly called by God will prove his salvation and his calling by his faithful message.

Wednesday, November 19 (read Ezekiel 3:20-21)

Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and does evil, and I put a stumbling block before him, he will die. Since you did not warn him, he will die for his sins. (Ezekiel 3:20a)

In today's text, you will see why I have spent the last few weeks teaching you to live under the Lordship of Jesus Christ. A true born again person will repent of his known sins, begin to take on new nourishment through God's Word, and begin to walk daily with his Master. Today's text tells you that the warm, fuzzy feeling you may have experienced when you joined the church and were baptized will not suffice for a walking, talking relationship with the Lord (v. 20). My job is to feed and water the young believer until he can walk on his own and begin to teach others. This often requires pointing out sins in his life that he has never realized before. When I do my job and he accepts God's Word, both of us will benefit greatly and God will be glorified (v. 21).

Thursday, November 20 (read Ezekiel 3:22-27)

The hand of the Lord was upon me there, and He said to me, "Get up and go out to the plain, and there I will speak to you." (Ezekiel 3:22, emphasis mine)

Today's text contains several valuable lessons for the person who wants to grow closer to the Lord. I have discovered that God will reveal His next assignment to me only after I have obeyed His last command. In other words, if I am **not** willing to go where He sends me, I will not hear from Him until I obey (v. 22). After I submit to His will, I will see His glory and hear His voice as the Spirit comes to me (v. 23-24). The same is true for all believers. When we go where He sends us for the purpose of drawing close to Him, He will give us His words and tell us when to say them (v. 26-27). God does not promise that we will be successful in the eyes of men, nor does He promise that we will be treated well (v. 25). Judgment belongs to Him; faithfulness belongs to us!

Friday, November 21 (read Ezekiel 33:10-11)

"Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live? (Ezekiel 33:10b)

The 33rd chapter of Ezekiel repeats the information we have studied all this week. You should probably read the entire chapter to get the full effects, but I want to conclude the week with two passages that are unique to this chapter. In today's verses, we see that the Israelites have become aware of their sins and the resulting consequences, and so they ask (v.10), "How then can we live?" God's answer is always the same (v. 11): "Turn! Turn from your evil ways!" He is not willing that anyone should perish (see 2 Peter 3:9), but He cannot deny or change His Word. Do you want to walk closer to Him? The formula is stated in James 4:8: "Come near to God and He will come near to you. Wash your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded." Are you willing to **pray the price**?

Saturday, November 22 (read Ezekiel 33:30-33)

Indeed, to them you are nothing more than one who sings love songs with a beautiful voice and plays an instrument well, for they hear your words but do not put them into practice. (Ezekiel 33:32)

No passage is more applicable to today's church than the text I have given you to read. Music seems to define the American church in these days more than the declaration of God's Word. Many of the "seekers" demand that your message blends in with their beautiful love songs to God so that they will leave the service feeling upbeat and happy. Many have no desire to repent of their sins and live according to the Word of God, but they sure love that music! A message that does not bring conviction leading to a desire to live closer to God has few long-term benefits. Make sure you worship in a congregation where God's Word has the highest priority!