

Eat This • Ezekiel 2:8-3:3

INTRODUCTION • Read Eph. 5:25-27

- <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.
1. In light of all He's done and Who He is, Jesus deserves a **beautiful** bride.
  2. We know it's the Father's will & plane to give Him one.
  3. We are the bride of Christ, as Paul says in 2 Corinthians 11:2 -  
... I have betrothed you to one husband, that I may present *you as* a chaste virgin to Christ.
  4. This is our engagement time.
    - a. Jesus came and proposed. He paid the pride price at the cross.
    - b. And now He's returned to heaven where He's making a home for us.
    - c. Very soon He'll come again and carry us to the wedding ceremony & feast.
  5. Here's the deal: While **Jesus** is getting our home in heaven ready, **we're** to be getting ourselves ready as the bride.
    - a. This is Beauty School. This is the gym & salon.
    - b. Those who've read the Book of Esther know that before she was brought to the Persian king, she went through a couple weeks of preparation.
      - 1) She bathed in perfumed waters.
      - 2) Had her hair done, nails trimmed & painted.
      - 3) And while some of it felt luxurious, the rest was painful –
      - 4) As any woman who's gone thru extensive beauty treatments knows; they can be painful.
      - 5) But they're worth it because she comes out looking fine!
  6. So it is with us as the Spirit works in us and prepares for the day we're gathered to Christ.
  7. But, & here's where Ezekiel speaks to us today; nothing is so **unattractive** to God as **pride**.
    - a. Arrogance and an attitude of superiority is unappealing; a massive turn off.
    - b. This was something Jesus dealt with constantly during His ministry.
    - c. And the place he found it most often was among the **religious**.
      - 1) He was forever docking them for copping a superior attitude toward people they considered beneath them.
      - 2) **Religious arrogance** ought to be an oxymoron; but it turns out to be a perennial problem among God's people.
  8. It's **right & good** to be **angry** at **sin**. We **ought** to be incensed at **evil**.
  9. But we must be careful lest we adopt an attitude of superiority toward sinners.
    - a. Jesus told a story about this very thing.
    - b. 2 went to the temple to pray; one a Pharisee, the other a tax-collector.
    - c. The Pharisee boasted to God of all the good he'd done, comparing himself to the tax-collector who knelt nearby. He was confident God was blessed by his moral superiority to such a one as that!
    - d. The tax-collector knew he was a sinner at admitted it freely, beating his breast in sorrow for his sin, asking God to forgive him.
    - e. Jesus ended the story; the tax-collector went home right w/God rather than the Pharisee.
  10. As the followers of Jesus, we'd be well served to take this to heart.
    - a. How can we who are saved **solely** by the mercy of God & Work of Christ be superior to others?
    - b. There, **LITERALLY, but for the grace of God**, are we.
  11. Nothing is so **unbecoming** in the Christian as pride.
  12. It's also dangerous, for it opens a door to the devil to work great harm.
    - a. Pride shatters community. Blocks grace. Grieves the Spirit.
    - b. While "Humility," Jonathan Edwards said, "puts the Christian out of the devil's reach."
  13. What we find here in Ezekiel is an important word for us today. We NEED this.
  14. You see, Ezekiel was called by God to speak His message to a people God loved, but who weren't in the least interested in following Him.
    - a. Oh—they **said** they did; at least **officially**. After all, they were **Jews**, the covenant people of God.

- b. They assumed because He'd shown them favor for generations; He always would.
  - c. Things weren't going so well right then. They'd just seen a major set-back.
    - 1) They'd been defeated & carried away in **exile** to Babylon.
    - 2) But false prophets said not to worry. **Because** they were superior, God would soon turn everything around. It would all work out; & soon.
    - 3) They needn't worry about any more hardship; things were as bad as they would get.
    - 4) God's judgment would NOT come. How could it since they were **basically good people**?
15. God sent Ezekiel to tell them, "Uh, not quite. In fact, not even close."
- a. Things were going to get **a lot worse precisely because** they refused to admit how far they'd gone from the Lord.
  - b. Jerusalem & the temple were going to be destroyed & what was left of their people back home would be wiped out.
  - c. To give you an idea of how traumatic this news was, picture the scene some recent movies have shown of the national landmarks in Washington DC blowing up and falling down.
    - 1) The dome of the Capitol building caving in.
    - 2) Smoke pouring out of the White House.
    - 3) The Washington monument crumbling
    - 4) The statue of Lincoln being toppled from its seat.
    - 5) I other words Multiply 9/11 by a thousand because it's our great national symbols all being wiped out. Now you have get an idea what Ezekiel was called to warn his people about.
16. As we saw last Wed., God warned Ezekiel his message would not be welcomed.
- a. People don't like being told they're wrong & deserve judgment.
  - b. Especially when the society they live in has turned from God & the system constantly tells them they're great; they're awesome. They're all just so darn likeable, who in their right mind could ever do anything but give them hugs & kisses?
17. So God **warned** His prophet not to alter or edit his message when the people gave him stink eye and told him to shut it—because there'd be plenty of that reaction.
18. God wants you & I to follow in Ezekiel's path. This is what we are called to.
19. And in this passage, God **warns** Ezekiel about the **danger of growing arrogant**; thinking he's superior to the people because he had God's Word while they rejected it.

2:8-10

<sup>8</sup> But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Do not be rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you." <sup>9</sup> Now when I looked, there was a hand stretched out to me; and behold, a scroll of a book *was* in it. <sup>10</sup> Then He spread it before me; and *there was* writing on the inside and on the outside, and written on it *were* lamentations and mourning and woe.

- 1. The first 3 chs. of Ezekiel describe his call by God to be a prophet to the Jewish exiles in Babylon.
  - a. It begins with a really wild vision of the glory of God.
  - b. Then it moves into God's solemn urging that Ezekiel faithfully repeat God's message to the people.
- 2. These verses are the heart & core of that call.
- 3. God doesn't want Ezekiel to JUST repeat the WORDS; He tells the prophet to duplicate the TONE of God as well.
  - a. God warned them of judgment, **hoping they'd repent**.
  - b. His divine heart was broken over their rebellion & the pain it would cost them.
  - c. There was a tender urging in His voice; a loved-filled call to come back to Him.
  - d. Ezekiel needed to be sure to not only say **WHAT** God said, but also **HOW** He said it; using the same tone as the Lord.
- 4. That meant Ezekiel must first take God's word IN, before he could let it OUT.
- 5. Because it **was** a hard word—before the prophet could speak, he needed to weep.
- 6. And he wasn't to take just the parts of God's Word he liked or found interesting. He was to eat it all!

3:1-3

<sup>1</sup> Moreover He said to me, "Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel." <sup>2</sup> So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. <sup>3</sup> And He said to me, "Son of man, feed your belly,

and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.” So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.

1. God told Ezekiel to feast on His Word – all of it.
2. At first, when God told him to eat, the message appeared as sorrow & bitterness because it spoke of judgment.
3. And as Ezekiel considered what God was calling him to do, there was a moment of hesitation. That’s why God urges him to obey.
4. And when he does he’s surprised to find God’s Word is sweet, like honey which was a delicacy.
5. This is precisely the way it is for us & these words to Ezekiel apply equally to you & I as we follow Jesus.
6. Just like Ezekiel’s day, our age isn’t interested in God and cares nothing for His word.
  - a. Yet we must faithfully live and share it.
  - b. When we’re opposed for being loyal to God, we must stay faithful.
  - c. But we must not/ cannot be arrogant & superior like modern Pharisees.
  - d. Such religious arrogance grieves God. We must instead be humble.
  - e. And nothing will promote that humility more than being diligent students of God’s Word.
  - f. Like Ezekiel, we must eat it, take it in to our innermost being.
  - g. Let it search out the broken and dark places within.
  - h. See it renewing our minds, redeeming our souls, washing out our stains, ironing the wrinkles.
7. Listen to it again – Eph. 5
  - <sup>25</sup> Husbands, love your wives, just as Christ also loved the church and gave Himself for her, <sup>26</sup> that He might sanctify and cleanse her with the washing of water by the word, <sup>27</sup> that He might present her to Himself a glorious church, not having spot or wrinkle or any such thing, but that she should be holy and without blemish.
8. It’s the Spirit, working thru the Word that adorns us with the beauty fit for the King.
9. I know this seems a huge scroll written inside & out & filled with hard things.
10. Eat it and find the sweetness you long for.
11. And remember, the TRUE student of the Word is humble, not arrogant.
12. He/she is more concerned to win a soul than an argument.