

SERMON:

Ezekiel 15-17

Three Parables of Idolatry

SUMMARY STATEMENT

Ezekiel calls us to remember we are exiles and as exiles to remember that God is near and is infinitely concerned for His own glory.

Therefore Ezekiel calls us to refuse the temptation to place our hope in an imagined past or an alluring present but instead to repent and to wait for God's future salvation.

Outline:

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|-------------|--|----------------------|
| I. | God is Present in Exile | Ezekiel 1-3 |
| II. | God is Present to Judge in Judah | Ezekiel 4-24 |
| III. | God is Present to Judge the Nations | Ezekiel 25-32 |
| IV. | God is Present to Save His People | Ezekiel 33-48 |

Outline:

- I. God is Present in Exile
- II. God is Present to Judge in Judah
 - A. God's Message: I am present Ezekiel 4-5
 - B. God hates idolatry Ezekiel 6-7
 - C. God will not dwell with idolaters Ezekiel 8-11
 - D. How did we get here? Ezekiel 12-14
 - E. Three Parables of Idolatry Ezekiel 15-17

Proposition: God doesn't only want us to know the danger of idolatry. He wants us to feel the evil of idolatry so that we will run from idolatry.

- A. The Futility of Idolatry
- B. The Horror of Idolatry
- C. The Foolishness of Idolatry
- D. A Hope Past Idolatry
- E. Ezekiel and Us

THE FUTILITY OF IDOLATRY

A Useless Vine

THE FUTILITY OF IDOLATRY

1. Idolatry had made them useless

EZEKIEL 15:1-6

¹ And the word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, how does the wood of the vine surpass any wood, the vine branch that is among the trees of the forest? ³ Is wood taken from it to make anything? Do people take a peg from it to hang any vessel on it? ⁴ Behold, it is given to the fire for fuel. When the fire has consumed both ends of it, and the middle of it is charred, is it useful for anything? ⁵ Behold, when it was whole, it was used for nothing. How much less, when the fire has consumed it and it is charred, can it ever be used for anything!

THE FUTILITY OF IDOLATRY

- 1. Idolatry had made them useless**
- 2. They were useless to God and the nations**
- 3. So God is going to discard them**

EZEKIEL 15:6-8

⁶ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: Like the wood of the vine among the trees of the forest, which I have given to the fire for fuel, so have I given up the inhabitants of Jerusalem.⁷ And I will set my face against them. Though they escape from the fire, the fire shall yet consume them, and you will know that I am the LORD, when I set my face against them.⁸ And I will make the land desolate, because they have acted faithlessly, declares the Lord GOD."

THE HORROR OF IDOLATRY

A Faithless Wife

THE HORROR OF IDOLATRY

1. They had been blessed by God in a special way

EZEKIEL 16:1-7

¹ Again the word of the LORD came to me: ² "Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations, ³ and say, Thus says the Lord GOD to Jerusalem: Your origin and your birth are of the land of the Canaanites; your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite. ⁴ And as for your birth, on the day you were born your cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water to cleanse you, nor rubbed with salt, nor wrapped in swaddling cloths. ⁵ No eye pitied you, to do any of these things to you out of compassion for you, but you were cast out on the open field, for you were abhorred, on the day that you were born. ⁶ "And when I passed by you and saw you wallowing in your blood, I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' I said to you in your blood, 'Live!' ⁷ I made you flourish like a plant of the field. And you grew up and became tall and arrived at full adornment. Your breasts were formed, and your hair had grown; yet you were naked and bare.

EZEKIEL 16:8-14

⁸ "When I passed by you again and saw you, behold, you were at the age for love, and I spread the corner of my garment over you and covered your nakedness; I made my vow to you and entered into a covenant with you, declares the Lord GOD, and you became mine.⁹ Then I bathed you with water and washed off your blood from you and anointed you with oil.¹⁰ I clothed you also with embroidered cloth and shod you with fine leather. I wrapped you in fine linen and covered you with silk.¹¹ And I adorned you with ornaments and put bracelets on your wrists and a chain on your neck.¹² And I put a ring on your nose and earrings in your ears and a beautiful crown on your head.¹³ Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your clothing was of fine linen and silk and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour and honey and oil. You grew exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty.¹⁴ And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor that I had bestowed on you, declares the Lord GOD.

THE HORROR OF IDOLATRY

1. They had been blessed by God in a special way
2. But in their blessing, they pursued the world instead of God

EZEKIEL 16:14-29

¹⁴ And your renown went forth among the nations because of your beauty, for it was perfect through the splendor that I had bestowed on you, declares the Lord GOD. ¹⁵ "But you trusted in your beauty and played the whore because of your renown and lavished your whorings on any passerby; your beauty became his. ¹⁶ You took some of your garments and made for yourself colorful shrines, and on them played the whore. The like has never been, nor ever shall be. ¹⁷ You also took your beautiful jewels of my gold and of my silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself images of men, and with them played the whore. ¹⁸ And you took your embroidered garments to cover them, and set my oil and my incense before them. ¹⁹ Also my bread that I gave you---I fed you with fine flour and oil and honey---you set before them for a pleasing aroma; and so it was, declares the Lord GOD.

THE HORROR OF IDOLATRY

1. They had been blessed by God in a special way
2. But in their blessing, they pursued the world instead of God
3. So they had rightly become an object of horror and revulsion

EZEKIEL 16:30-34

³⁰ "How sick is your heart, declares the Lord GOD, because you did all these things, the deeds of a brazen prostitute,³¹ building your vaulted chamber at the head of every street, and making your lofty place in every square. Yet you were not like a prostitute, because you scorned payment.³² Adulterous wife, who receives strangers instead of her husband!³³ Men give gifts to all prostitutes, but you gave your gifts to all your lovers, bribing them to come to you from every side with your whorings.³⁴ So you were different from other women in your whorings. No one solicited you to play the whore, and you gave payment, while no payment was given to you; therefore you were different.

EZEKIEL 16:35-38

³⁵ "Therefore, O prostitute, hear the word of the LORD: ³⁶ Thus says the Lord GOD, Because your lust was poured out and your nakedness uncovered in your whorings with your lovers, and with all your abominable idols, and because of the blood of your children that you gave to them, ³⁷ therefore, behold, I will gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, all those you loved and all those you hated. I will gather them against you from every side and will uncover your nakedness to them, that they may see all your nakedness. ³⁸ And I will judge you as women who commit adultery and shed blood are judged, and bring upon you the blood of wrath and jealousy.

EZEKIEL 16:39-43

³⁹ And I will give you into their hands, and they shall throw down your vaulted chamber and break down your lofty places. They shall strip you of your clothes and take your beautiful jewels and leave you naked and bare.⁴⁰ They shall bring up a crowd against you, and they shall stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords.⁴¹ And they shall burn your houses and execute judgments upon you in the sight of many women. I will make you stop playing the whore, and you shall also give payment no more.⁴² So will I satisfy my wrath on you, and my jealousy shall depart from you. I will be calm and will no more be angry.⁴³ Because you have not remembered the days of your youth, but have enraged me with all these things, therefore, behold, I have returned your deeds upon your head, declares the Lord GOD. Have you not committed lewdness in addition to all your abominations?

THE FOOLISHNESS OF IDOLATRY

A Tale of Two Eagles

THE FOOLISHNESS OF IDOLATRY

1. An Eagle and a Vine

EZEKIEL 17:3-6

³ say, Thus says the Lord GOD: A great eagle with great wings and long pinions, rich in plumage of many colors, came to Lebanon and took the top of the cedar.⁴ He broke off the topmost of its young twigs and carried it to a land of trade and set it in a city of merchants.⁵ Then he took of the seed of the land and planted it in fertile soil. He placed it beside abundant waters. He set it like a willow twig,⁶ and it sprouted and became a low spreading vine, and its branches turned toward him, and its roots remained where it stood. So it became a vine and produced branches and put out boughs.

EZEKIEL 17:7-9

⁷ "And there was another great eagle with great wings and much plumage, and behold, this vine bent its roots toward him and shot forth its branches toward him from the bed where it was planted, that he might water it.⁸ It had been planted on good soil by abundant waters, that it might produce branches and bear fruit and become a noble vine.⁹ "Say, Thus says the Lord GOD: Will it thrive? Will he not pull up its roots and cut off its fruit, so that it withers, so that all its fresh sprouting leaves wither? It will not take a strong arm or many people to pull it from its roots.¹⁰ Behold, it is planted; will it thrive? Will it not utterly wither when the east wind strikes it---wither away on the bed where it sprouted?"

THE FOOLISHNESS OF IDOLATRY

1. An Eagle and a Vine
2. An Earthly Application

EZEKIEL 17:11-15

¹¹ Then the word of the LORD came to me:¹² "Say now to the rebellious house, Do you not know what these things mean? Tell them, behold, the king of Babylon came to Jerusalem, and took her king and her princes and brought them to him to Babylon.¹³ And he took one of the royal offspring and made a covenant with him, putting him under oath (the chief men of the land he had taken away),¹⁴ that the kingdom might be humble and not lift itself up, and keep his covenant that it might stand.¹⁵ But he rebelled against him by sending his ambassadors to Egypt, that they might give him horses and a large army. Will he thrive? Can one escape who does such things? Can he break the covenant and yet escape?

THE FOOLISHNESS OF IDOLATRY

1. An Eagle and a Vine
2. An Earthly Application
3. An Eternal Application

EZEKIEL 17:19-21

¹⁹ Therefore thus says the Lord GOD: As I live, surely it is my oath that he despised, and my covenant that he broke. I will return it upon his head.²⁰ I will spread my net over him, and he shall be taken in my snare, and I will bring him to Babylon and enter into judgment with him there for the treachery he has committed against me.²¹ And all the pick of his troops shall fall by the sword, and the survivors shall be scattered to every wind, and you shall know that I am the LORD; I have spoken."

A HOPE PAST IDOLATRY

A New Covenant

A HOPE PAST IDOLATRY

1. God would consign all to disobedience so that He could have mercy on all

EZEKIEL 16:46-51

⁴⁶ And your elder sister is Samaria, who lived with her daughters to the north of you; and your younger sister, who lived to the south of you, is Sodom with her daughters. ⁴⁷ Not only did you walk in their ways and do according to their abominations; within a very little time you were more corrupt than they in all your ways. ⁴⁸ As I live, declares the Lord GOD, your sister Sodom and her daughters have not done as you and your daughters have done. ⁴⁹ Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had pride, excess of food, and prosperous ease, but did not aid the poor and needy. ⁵⁰ They were haughty and did an abomination before me. So I removed them, when I saw it. ⁵¹ Samaria has not committed half your sins. You have committed more abominations than they, and have made your sisters appear righteous by all the abominations that you have committed.

EZEKIEL 16:53-58

⁵³ "I will restore their fortunes, both the fortunes of Sodom and her daughters, and the fortunes of Samaria and her daughters, and I will restore your own fortunes in their midst,⁵⁴ that you may bear your disgrace and be ashamed of all that you have done, becoming a consolation to them.⁵⁵ As for your sisters, Sodom and her daughters shall return to their former state, and Samaria and her daughters shall return to their former state, and you and your daughters shall return to your former state.⁵⁶ Was not your sister Sodom a byword in your mouth in the day of your pride,⁵⁷ before your wickedness was uncovered? Now you have become an object of reproach for the daughters of Syria and all those around her, and for the daughters of the Philistines, those all around who despise you.⁵⁸ You bear the penalty of your lewdness and your abominations, declares the LORD.

A HOPE PAST IDOLATRY

- 1. God would consign all to disobedience and would have mercy on all**
- 2. God would be faithful when they were faithless**

EZEKIEL 16:59-63

⁵⁹ "For thus says the Lord GOD: I will deal with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath in breaking the covenant,⁶⁰ yet I will remember my covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish for you an everlasting covenant.⁶¹ Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you take your sisters, both your elder and your younger, and I give them to you as daughters, but not on account of the covenant with you.⁶² I will establish my covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD,⁶³ that you may remember and be confounded, and never open your mouth again because of your shame, when I atone for you for all that you have done, declares the Lord GOD."

A HOPE PAST IDOLATRY

- 1. God would consign all to disobedience and would have mercy on all**
- 2. God would be faithful when they were faithless**
- 3. God would unite what they had divided**

EZEKIEL 16:59-63

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- 1. God would consign all to disobedience and would have mercy on all**
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- 4. God would ransom when they had rejected**

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A HOPE PAST IDOLATRY

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- 5. God would renew when they had forgotten**

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- 2. God would be faithful when they were faithless**
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- 4. God would ransom when they had rejected**
- 5. God would renew when they had forgotten**
- 6. All these things belong to Christ**

ROMANS 11:28-36

²⁸ As regards the gospel, they are enemies of God for your sake. But as regards election, they are beloved for the sake of their forefathers.²⁹ For the gifts and the calling of God are irrevocable.³⁰ For just as you were at one time disobedient to God but now have received mercy because of their disobedience,³¹ so they too have now been disobedient in order that by the mercy shown to you they also may now receive mercy.³² For God has consigned all to disobedience, that he may have mercy on all. ³³ Oh, the depth of the riches and wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments and how inscrutable his ways! ³⁴ "For who has known the mind of the Lord, or who has been his counselor?" ³⁵ "Or who has given a gift to him that he might be repaid?" ³⁶ For from him and through him and to him are all things. To him be glory forever. Amen.

II CORINTHIANS 1:18-20

¹⁸ As surely as God is faithful, our word to you has not been Yes and No.¹⁹ For the Son of God, Jesus Christ, whom we proclaimed among you, Silvanus and Timothy and I, was not Yes and No, but in him it is always Yes.²⁰ For all the promises of God find their Yes in him.

EPHESIANS 2:13-16

¹³ But now in Christ Jesus you who once were far off have been brought near by the blood of Christ.¹⁴ For he himself is our peace, who has made us both one and has broken down in his flesh the dividing wall of hostility¹⁵ by abolishing the law of commandments expressed in ordinances, that he might create in himself one new man in place of the two, so making peace,¹⁶ and might reconcile us both to God in one body through the cross, thereby killing the hostility.

I PETER 1:17-19

¹⁷ And if you call on him as Father who judges impartially according to each one's deeds, conduct yourselves with fear throughout the time of your exile,¹⁸ knowing that you were ransomed from the futile ways inherited from your forefathers, not with perishable things such as silver or gold,¹⁹ but with the precious blood of Christ, like that of a lamb without blemish or spot.

II CORINTHIANS 5:16-19

¹⁶ From now on, therefore, we regard no one according to the flesh. Even though we once regarded Christ according to the flesh, we regard him thus no longer.¹⁷ Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation. The old has passed away; behold, the new has come.¹⁸ All this is from God, who through Christ reconciled us to himself and gave us the ministry of reconciliation;¹⁹ that is, in Christ God was reconciling the world to himself, not counting their trespasses against them, and entrusting to us the message of reconciliation.

EZEKIEL AND US

Feeling Correctly about Idolatry

EZEKIEL AND US

1. Our heart should be sensitive to idolatry

I CORINTHIANS 5:2, JAMES 4:8-10, MATTHEW 5:4

¹ It is actually reported that there is sexual immorality among you, and of a kind that is not tolerated even among pagans, for a man has his father's wife.² And you are arrogant! Ought you not rather to mourn? Let him who has done this be removed from among you.

Cleanse your hands, you sinners, and purify your hearts, you double-minded.⁹ Be wretched and mourn and weep. Let your laughter be turned to mourning and your joy to gloom.¹⁰ Humble yourselves before the Lord, and he will exalt you.

⁴ "Blessed are those who mourn, for they shall be comforted.

EZEKIEL AND US

- 1. Our heart should be sensitive to idolatry**
- 2. Our heart should be ready to repent of idolatry**

I CORINTHIANS 7:8-11

⁸ For even if I made you grieve with my letter, I do not regret it--- though I did regret it, for I see that that letter grieved you, though only for a while.⁹ As it is, I rejoice, not because you were grieved, but because you were grieved into repenting. For you felt a godly grief, so that you suffered no loss through us.¹⁰ For godly grief produces a repentance that leads to salvation without regret, whereas worldly grief produces death.¹¹ For see what earnestness this godly grief has produced in you, but also what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what longing, what zeal, what punishment! At every point you have proved yourselves innocent in the matter.

EZEKIEL AND US

1. Our heart should be sensitive to idolatry
2. Our heart should be ready to repent of idolatry
3. Our heart must be changed by God to hate
idolatry

ROMANS 12:1-2, 9

¹ I appeal to you therefore, brothers, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and acceptable to God, which is your spiritual worship.² Do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewal of your mind, that by testing you may discern what is the will of God, what is good and acceptable and perfect. Abhor what is evil; hold fast to what is good.

Proposition: God doesn't only want us to know the danger of idolatry. He wants us to feel the evil of idolatry so that we will run from idolatry.

- A. The Futility of Idolatry
- B. The Horror of Idolatry
- C. The Foolishness of Idolatry
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