

SERMON:

# Ezekiel 18

Justice and Mercy:

A Call to Repent

## **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:**

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

# 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
  - F. Justice and Mercy: A Call to Repent Ezekiel 18

**Proposition:** God hates excuses for our sin because: 1) His justice is absolute; 2) we cannot truly accept His gracious offer of repentance until we recognize the reality of our sin; and 3) God wants us to repent and live.

- A. The Justice of God
- B. The Mercy of God
- C. A Call to Repentance
- D. Applications

# **THE JUSTICE OF GOD**

The Soul That Sins Shall Die

# **THE JUSTICE OF GOD**

## **1. A Foolish Proverb**

## **EZEKIEL 18:1-4**

It's not our fault!!



<sup>1</sup> The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? <sup>3</sup> As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.



## PROVERBS 26:9

<sup>9</sup> Like a thorn that goes up into the hand of a drunkard  
is a proverb in the mouth of fools.

# EZEKIEL 18:1-4

It's not our fault!!



<sup>1</sup> The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? <sup>3</sup> As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

God is not powerless

God is not unjust

# **THE JUSTICE OF GOD**

1. A Foolish Proverb
2. God's Justice

## EZEKIEL 18:5-9

God does not destroy the righteous

<sup>5</sup> *"If a man is righteous and does what is just and right---* <sup>6</sup> *if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity, <sup>7</sup> does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment, <sup>8</sup> does not lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man, <sup>9</sup> walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully---he is righteous; he shall surely live, declares the Lord GOD.*

## EZEKIEL 18:10-13

God does not absolve the wicked

<sup>10</sup> "If he fathers a son who is violent, a shedder of blood, who does any of these things <sup>11</sup> (though he himself did none of these things), who even eats upon the mountains, defiles his neighbor's wife, <sup>12</sup> oppresses the poor and needy, commits robbery, does not restore the pledge, lifts up his eyes to the idols, commits abomination, <sup>13</sup> lends at interest, and takes profit; shall he then live? **He shall not live.** He has done all these abominations; **he shall surely die; his blood shall be upon himself.**

## **EZEKIEL 18:14-17**

**We are not condemned  
for someone else's sin**



*<sup>14</sup> "Now suppose this man fathers a son who sees all the sins that his father has done; **he sees, and does not do likewise:**<sup>15</sup> he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife,<sup>16</sup> does not oppress anyone, exacts no pledge, commits no robbery, but gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment,<sup>17</sup> withholds his hand from iniquity, takes no interest or profit, obeys my rules, and walks in my statutes; **he shall not die for his father's iniquity; he shall surely live.***

## EZEKIEL 18:1-4

It's not our fault!!

⇒ No, you will be destroyed  
for your own sin

<sup>1</sup> The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'? <sup>3</sup> As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.

# **THE JUSTICE OF GOD**

- 1. A Foolish Proverb**
- 2. God's Justice**
- 3. Federal Headship or Personal Responsibility  
(or both?)**



## **EZEKIEL 18:19-20**

*<sup>19</sup> "Yet you say, 'Why should not the son suffer for the iniquity of the father?' When the son has done what is just and right, and has been careful to observe all my statutes, he shall surely live. <sup>20</sup> **The soul who sins shall die.** The son shall not suffer for the iniquity of the father, nor the father suffer for the iniquity of the son. **The righteousness of the righteous shall be upon himself, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be upon himself.***

## ROMANS 5:18-19

<sup>18</sup> Therefore, as one trespass led to condemnation for all men, so one act of righteousness leads to justification and life for all men.<sup>19</sup> For as by the one man's disobedience the many were made sinners, so by the one man's obedience the many will be made righteous.

## ROMANS 6:1-4

*<sup>1</sup> What shall we say then? Are we to continue in sin that grace may abound? <sup>2</sup> By no means! **How can we who died to sin still live in it?** <sup>3</sup> Do you not know that all of us who have been baptized into Christ Jesus were baptized into his death? <sup>4</sup> We were buried therefore with him by baptism into death, in order that, just as Christ was raised from the dead by the glory of the Father, we too might walk in newness of life.*

## JAMES 2:18-26

*<sup>18</sup> But someone will say, "You have faith and I have works." Show me your faith apart from your works, and I will show you my faith by my works. <sup>19</sup> You believe that God is one; you do well. Even the demons believe---and shudder!<sup>20</sup> Do you want to be shown, you foolish person, that faith apart from works is useless? <sup>21</sup> Was not Abraham our father justified by works when he offered up his son Isaac on the altar? <sup>22</sup> You see that faith was active along with his works, and faith was completed by his works; <sup>23</sup> and the Scripture was fulfilled that says, "Abraham believed God, and it was counted to him as righteousness"---and he was called a friend of God. <sup>24</sup> You see that a person is justified by works and not by faith alone. <sup>25</sup> And in the same way was not also Rahab the prostitute justified by works when she received the messengers and sent them out by another way? <sup>26</sup> For as the body apart from the spirit is dead, so also faith apart from works is dead.*

# THE JUSTICE OF GOD

1. A Foolish Proverb

2. God's Justice

3. Federal Headship or Personal Responsibility  
(or both?)

Two red curved arrows are drawn on the page. One arrow starts from the underlined word 'Justice' in item 2 and points to the underlined word 'Headship' in item 3. The other arrow starts from the underlined word 'Personal Responsibility' in item 3 and points back to the underlined word 'Justice' in item 2.

# **THE MERCY OF GOD**

The Soul Who Turns Shall Live

# **THE MERCY OF GOD**

1. Repentance is offered to sinners

## **EZEKIEL 18:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> "But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

<sup>22</sup> None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. <sup>23</sup> Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?



# **THE MERCY OF GOD**

1. Repentance is offered to sinners
2. Persevering repentance is required of sinners

## **EZEKIEL 18:24**

*24 But when a righteous person turns away from his righteousness and does injustice and does the same abominations that the wicked person does, shall he live?  
None of the righteous deeds that he has done shall be remembered; for the treachery of which he is guilty and the sin he has committed, for them he shall die.*

# **THE MERCY OF GOD**

1. Repentance is offered to sinners
2. Persevering repentance is required of sinners
3. God's mercy compliments His justice

## EZEKIEL 18:25-29

<sup>25</sup> "Yet you say, *'The way of the Lord is not just.'* Hear now, O house of Israel: *Is my way not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?* <sup>26</sup> When a righteous person turns away from his righteousness *and does injustice, he shall die for it; for the injustice that he has done he shall die.* <sup>27</sup> Again, when a wicked person turns away from the wickedness he has committed and does what is just and right, he shall ~~save~~ **??** his life. <sup>28</sup> Because he considered and turned away from all the transgressions that he had committed, he shall surely live; he shall not die. <sup>29</sup> Yet the house of Israel says, *'The way of the Lord is not just.'* O house of Israel, *are my ways not just? Is it not your ways that are not just?*

# **THE MERCY OF GOD**

1. Repentance is offered to sinners
2. Persevering repentance is required of sinners
3. God's mercy compliments His justice
4. God's mercy points us to Christ

## ROMANS 3:21-26

<sup>21</sup> *But now the righteousness of God has been manifested apart from the law, although the Law and the Prophets bear witness to it--<sup>22</sup> the righteousness of God through faith in Jesus Christ for all who believe. For there is no distinction:<sup>23</sup> *for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God,<sup>24</sup> and are justified by his grace as a gift, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus,<sup>25</sup> whom God put forward as a propitiation by his blood, to be received by faith. This was to show God's righteousness, because in his divine forbearance he had passed over former sins.<sup>26</sup> It was to show his righteousness at the present time, so that he might be just and the justifier of the one who has faith in Jesus.**

**A CALL TO REPENTANCE**

So Turn and Live

# **A CALL TO REPENTANCE**

## **1. God Will Judge Sinners**



## **EZEKIEL 18:30-32**

<sup>30</sup> *"Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin.*

<sup>31</sup> *Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup> For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."*

# **A CALL TO REPENTANCE**

1. God Will Judge Sinners
2. God Rejoices in Mercy

## **EZEKIEL 18:30-32**

*<sup>30</sup> "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin.*

*<sup>31</sup> Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup> For **I have no pleasure in the death of anyone,** declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."*

God's joy in His justice is pure, not sadistic  
Or: God rejoices in repentance

# **A CALL TO REPENTANCE**

- 1. God Will Judge Sinners**
- 2. God Rejoices in Mercy**
- 3. So, God Calls Us to Repent**

## **EZEKIEL 18:30-32**

*<sup>30</sup> "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin.*

*<sup>31</sup> Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup> For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."*

# **APPLICATIONS**

Hearing the Call to Repent

# **APPLICATIONS**

## **1. None Are Righteous**

## EZEKIEL 18:1-4

It's not our fault!!

⇒ No, you will be destroyed for your own sin

<sup>1</sup> The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "What do you mean by repeating this proverb concerning the land of Israel, 'The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge'?" <sup>3</sup> As I live, declares the Lord GOD, this proverb shall no more be used by you in Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Behold, all souls are mine; the soul of the father as well as the soul of the son is mine: the soul who sins shall die.



## **ROMANS 3:9-18**

*<sup>9</sup> What then? Are we Jews any better off? No, not at all. For we have already charged that all, both Jews and Greeks, are under sin,<sup>10</sup> as it is written: **'None is righteous, no, not one;**<sup>11</sup> no one understands; no one seeks for God.<sup>12</sup> All have turned aside; together they have become worthless; no one does good, not even one.'<sup>13</sup> "Their throat is an open grave; they use their tongues to deceive." "The venom of asps is under their lips."<sup>14</sup> "Their mouth is full of curses and bitterness."<sup>15</sup> "Their feet are swift to shed blood;<sup>16</sup> in their paths are ruin and misery,<sup>17</sup> and the way of peace they have not known."<sup>18</sup> "There is no fear of God before their eyes."*

# **APPLICATIONS**

1. None Are Righteous
2. None Are Beyond Repentance

## **EZEKIEL 18:21-23**

<sup>21</sup> "But if a wicked person turns away from all his sins that he has committed and keeps all my statutes and does what is just and right, he shall surely live; he shall not die.

<sup>22</sup> None of the transgressions that he has committed shall be remembered against him; for the righteousness that he has done he shall live. <sup>23</sup> Have I any pleasure in the death of the wicked, declares the Lord GOD, and not rather that he should turn from his way and live?

## **HEBREWS 3:12-15**

*<sup>12</sup> Take care, brothers, lest there be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart, leading you to fall away from the living God. <sup>13</sup> But exhort one another every day, as long as it is called "today," that none of you may be hardened by the deceitfulness of sin. <sup>14</sup> For we have come to share in Christ, if indeed we hold our original confidence firm to the end. <sup>15</sup> As it is said, "Today, if you hear his voice, do not harden your hearts as in the rebellion."*

# **APPLICATIONS**

1. None Are Righteous
2. None Are Beyond Repentance
3. So We Must Repent

## **EZEKIEL 18:30-32**

*<sup>30</sup> "Therefore I will judge you, O house of Israel, every one according to his ways, declares the Lord GOD. Repent and turn from all your transgressions, lest iniquity be your ruin.*

*<sup>31</sup> Cast away from you all the transgressions that you have committed, and make yourselves a new heart and a new spirit! Why will you die, O house of Israel? <sup>32</sup> For I have no pleasure in the death of anyone, declares the Lord GOD; so turn, and live."*

## **MATTHEW 4:17**

*<sup>17</sup> From that time Jesus began to preach, saying, "Repent,  
for the kingdom of heaven is at hand."*

# **APPLICATIONS**

- 1. None Are Righteous**
- 2. None Are Beyond Repentance**
- 3. So We Must Repent**
- 4. And We Must Bear the Fruit of Repentance**



## EZEKIEL 18:5-9

<sup>5</sup> *"If a man is righteous and does what is just and right---* <sup>6</sup> *if he does not eat upon the mountains or lift up his eyes to the idols of the house of Israel, does not defile his neighbor's wife or approach a woman in her time of menstrual impurity,* <sup>7</sup> *does not oppress anyone, but restores to the debtor his pledge, commits no robbery, gives his bread to the hungry and covers the naked with a garment,* <sup>8</sup> *does not lend at interest or take any profit, withholds his hand from injustice, executes true justice between man and man,* <sup>9</sup> *walks in my statutes, and keeps my rules by acting faithfully---he is righteous; he shall surely live,* declares the Lord GOD.

## **MATTHEW 3:7-10**

*<sup>7</sup> But when he saw many of the Pharisees and Sadducees coming to his baptism, he said to them, "You brood of vipers! Who warned you to flee from the wrath to come?"<sup>8</sup>*

***Bear fruit in keeping with repentance.**<sup>9</sup> And do not presume to say to yourselves, 'We have Abraham as our father,' for I tell you, God is able from these stones to raise up children for Abraham.<sup>10</sup> Even now the axe is laid to the root of the trees. **Every tree therefore that does not bear good fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire.***

# **APPLICAITONS**

- 1. None Are Righteous (Not One)**
- 2. None Are Beyond Repentance**
- 3. So We Must Repent**
- 4. And we must bear fruit in keeping with  
repentance**

**Proposition:** God hates excuses for our sin because: 1) His justice is absolute; 2) we cannot truly accept His gracious offer of repentance until we recognize the reality of our sin; and 3) God wants us to repent and live.

- A. The Justice of God
- B. The Mercy of God
- C. A Call to Repentance
- D. Applications