

LESSONS FROM EZEKIEL

Int.

1. Aim: To learn some lessons from the book of Ezekiel that we all need.
2. The book of Ezekiel is highly symbolic.
 - a. Proverb in Ezk.18:2 "What mean ye, that ye use this proverb concerning the land of I srael, saying, The fathers have eaten sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge?" Jer. 31:29-30
 - b. Jews: common interpretation: Fathers sinned, we are innocent, yet counted guilty -- Ezekiel says, "DON'T SAY THAT ANYMORE" Ezek.18:3 "As I live, saith the Lord God, ye shall not have occasion any more to use this proverb in I srael."
3. That proverb can be interpreted in an accurate manner -
 - a. Fathers eating sour grapes = the sins which they commit
 - b. Setting children's teeth on edge = the consequences or suffering the children have to endure because of their father's sins
 - c. Ezekiel quotes this proverb and quarrels with them "You are saying: your fathers sinned, you are innocent, but God accounts you as guilty." "You are wrong!"
4. Makes his point by tracing three generations:
 - a. Verses 5-9a - = Father
 - b. Verses 10-13a = Son
 - c. Verses 14-17a = Grandson
5. The soul that sins will be responsible!! EZEK 18:19-20
 - a. If wicked turn away = v. 21-23 --- he shall live
 - b. If the righteous turn to sin he shall die - v. 24
 - c. Point: Every individual must choose his/her own relationship with the Lord.

6. We are not guilty or righteous collectively before God.
 - a. You are not righteous before God because of parents or spouse
 - b. You are not righteous or guilty before God on any collective basis
 - c. God does not punish one person for the sins of another.
 - d. Ezekiel says accountability to God is individual in its nature
7. FIVE SIMPLE LESSONS FROM EZEKIEL EL (3 positive, 2 negative)

Discussion

I. YOU CAN'T TRUST ANYBODY ELSE'S GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD TO SAVE YOU

- A. Old problem: Jews to Jesus, "We have Abraham as our Father, we don't need you"

Matt 3:9 Lk. 3:8

 1. Like us trusting in righteous moms and dads to save us
 2. ILL. Conversations with ones who tell family history ----
 - a. "My wife has enough religion for me and her too."
 - b. "My parents were so good that I do not have to worry about my soul."
 - c. Problem with that is faith is in Righteousness of mom & dad or husband or wife not in our righteousness.
 3. Imagine these standing before the Lord on the day of Judgment
 - a. "you know my mom....you know my dad... husband, wife"
 - b. What about you?
- B. Ezek. 18 says righteousness and rebellion are matters we choose
 1. The fact that mom & dad are children of God will not save you
 2. The fact that you sit in a building like this next to a family member who is a Christian & you are not will not save you!

3. The fact that you grew up in the Bible belt of America where virtually everyone claims to be some kind of Child of God will not save you !
- C. Eze. 18 says: YOU CAN'T TRUST ANYBODY ELSE'S GOOD RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD TO SAVE YOU. No one can be saved by another's righteousness. We cannot be saved by proxy !

II. YOU CAN'T ASSUME YOUR FAITH WILL NATURALLY BE PASSED TO YOUR CHILDREN

- A. It's easy to assume our kids will naturally pick up on and become a part of what we believe and hold dear. They do not inherit our beliefs.
- B. Eze. 18 says if we JUST assume that, we assume too much.
1. This is not to minimize the joy we feel when we see children indicating by words and actions that our message through influence is getting through to them.
 2. Deut. 6:4-7 "Hear, O Israel: The Lord our God is one Lord: 5. And thou shalt love the Lord thy God with all thine heart, and with all thy soul, and with all thy might. 6. And these words, which I command thee this day, shall be in thine heart: 7. And thou shalt teach them diligently unto thy children, and shalt talk of them when thou sittest in thine house, and when thou walkest by the way, and when thou liest down, and when thou risest up."
 3. Do you talk to your kids about God? If not - who will?
 4. Eph. 6:4. "And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord."
- C. Eze. 18 says: YOU CAN'T ASSUME YOUR FAITH WILL NATURALLY BE PASSED TO YOUR CHILDREN.

III. YOU CAN'T ALWAYS JUDGE THE FAITH OF PARENTS BY THE DEEDS OF CHILDREN

- A. Sometimes we see bad kids from a bad home and we put 2 & 2 together and say "no wonder" That is not what I'm talking about.
- B. Talking about the other end of the spectrum - sometimes we see bad kids come from a good home.
 - 1. Ezekiel 18 says very clearly that a good man can have a bad son.
 - 2. Sometimes brethren in the church say THAT CAN'T HAPPEN.
- C. God says through Ezekiel 18 a good man CAN HAVE A BAD SON
 - 1. Sometimes we want to pass some very harsh judgements on moms and dads whose hearts are broken and bleeding
 - 2. Sometimes we hear conversations - "I thought his parents were such good people, but from what we see in their child, & how he turned out bad - you know the Bible says 'train up a child...' - what we deduce is that his mom & dad must not be the good mom & dad we've always thought them to be.
 - 3. How dare we pass those kind of Judgments & impugn the integrity and godliness of moms & dads who often times have done their very best, and their children, of their OWN WILL have chosen to violate what mom & dad tried to teach them
- D. Somebody says, doesn't Prov 22:6 say, "Train up a child in the way he should go: and when he is old, he will not depart from it."
 - 1. Yes, it does, and just like any other proverb, it is just that, A PROVERB, it is an adage, a maxim, a rule of thumb.
 - 2. The proverbs were never meant to be hard and fast rules.

3. If they are supposed to be hard and fast rules, I'd like to have explained to me:
 - a. Prov. 10:4 This proverb says that a man is poor because he is lazy. "He becometh poor that dealeth with a slack hand: but the hand of the diligent maketh rich."
 - b. I'd like to have this explained to me in light of Jesus - Matt. 8:20. "And Jesus saith unto him, The foxes have holes, and the birds of the air [have] nests; but the Son of man hath not where to lay [his] head."
 - c. Was Jesus lazy?
 - d. Proverbs ARE JUST THAT!
4. And Prov 22:6 - "train up a child..." is not intended to be a hard & fast rule,.
 - a. If it was, it would destroy our free agency --
 - b. It would make us robots --- and our salvation would depend on how our parents programmed us
 - c. It would make our salvation NOT dependent on our personal will - but rather on Mom & dad doing their job right.
 - d. And it would teach the impossibility of apostasy because if Mom & dad did their job right the children HAVE to do right before God
5. Eze 18:10 says if he (who - the good man) has a son (robber\bad) .. God said a GOOD MAN could have a BAD son.

E. That doesn't minimize the importance of parental influence...

1. Our children are going to make a choice which is not predestined genetically or environmentally.

2. I know there are some good, godly moms and dads here this morning whose hearts are broken because of deeds of children - children for whom you did your very best and gave your very best spiritually, - but they have made a choice to leave the Lord.
3. I will pray for you and your children - I will do anything I can for you and your children - but I WILL NOT say to you, that you probably didn't do your job right.
4. Ezekiel 18 says: YOU CAN'T ALWAYS JUDGE THE FAITH OF PARENTS BY THE DEEDS OF CHILDREN

IV. NOBODY CAN BE SHACKLED WITH THE SINS OF SOMEONE ELSE.

- A. Ought to be thankful -
 1. Very positive You may bear the consequences of other's sins - ILL. Drunk driver
 2. v.3 - "as I live" - Stake eternal existence on this truth
 3. No more emphatic denial of the Calvinistic doctrine of inherited sin than this.
- B. God says in Ezek. 18:2,3,4 - DON'T SAY THIS ANYMORE!!!
 1. Don't ever say "I am a sinner because of somebody else's actions -
 2. You know what's happening all over this country this morning? - People in pulpits - in denominations - looking out over the people & saying - You know why you have trouble doing right?
 3. Not your fault - Your ancestor Adam sinned - & you have inherited his sinful nature & through no fault of your own have inherited the guilt of that sin - and that's why you don't do right

4. God said a millennium before the birth of Jesus Christ - DON'T SAY THAT ANYMORE!
 5. The soul that sins IT shall die, PERIOD!
- C. DON'T ever blame anyone else for your sins ---- but we do...
1. Husbands blame wives --- wives blame husbands ----- if they had been what they should have been then I would have lived better.
 2. Children blame parents -- my parents made me go to church when I was younger - not the real reason they do not attend when grown.
 3. Brethren often blame one another - said something to offend, hurt my feelings - slighted - I t's his fault. So & So is a hypocrite.
 4. God says DON'T SAY THAT! Don't blame your wife, husband, parents, brethren; if you're not doing what you should!
- D. This passage says you look in the mirror & deal with the person you see right there.
1. Only 2 ways to know what you look like: picture, mirror
 2. Vast difference between the two - Mirror shows you what you look like RIGHT NOW!
 3. I doubt that when the alarm went off this morning you went to the dresser and looked at your wedding picture or a nice picture of yourself all dressed up & said, "I look pretty good, let's go to church!"
 4. Most of us stumbled in, looked at the mirror and said - I've got some major work to do before 9 o'clock!
 5. That mirror tells you exactly what you look like right now
 6. Eze. 18 says you look in the mirror...

V. EVERYBODY IS FREE TO STRUGGLE WITH LIFE AND CHOOSE YOUR OWN DESTINY.

- A. You may come from a background where your parents were:
1. Christians, but hypocritical
 2. Not Christians
 3. Abusive, alcoholic
- B. You don't have to repeat the bad - or be dominated by the bad
1. I realize there is such a thing as environmental influences -
 2. I realize tendencies are there to repeat those patterns
 3. But Ezek. 18 says nobody is in a rut so deep that they can't get out EZEK 18:14.
"Now, lo, if he beget a son, that seeth all his father's sins which he hath done, and considereth, and doeth not such like,"
- C. V.14 - If he (who - bad man) has a son and he sees... - determines NOT to do those things... This means - "free to make own choice"
- D. One other thing in v.14: I want to remember: "seeth all his father's sins which he hath done .."
1. Nobody else on God's green earth may know what I am - but my children will & your children will know what you are
 2. And it will help them tremendously to make the right choice if we are as parents what we ought to be
 3. But, EVERYBODY IS FREE TO STRUGGLE WITH LIFE AND CHOOSE YOUR

OWN DESTINY

CONCLUSION

1. Must be reminded that the soul who sins will die.
2. Parents have a responsibility to train their children
3. Children have a responsibility to make the right decisions
4. Every individual must choose his/her own relationship with the Lord.
5. We will stand before God individually to give an account for our own soul.
6. Are you prepared?
7. Lessons we have learned from Ezekiel 18
 - (1) You cannot trust anybody else's good relationship with God to save you.
 - (2) You cannot assume your faith will naturally be passed to your children
 - (3) You cannot always judge the faith of parents by the deeds of children
 - (4) Nobody can be shackled with the sins of someone else
 - (5) Everybody is free to struggle with life and choose your own destiny

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