

Ezekiel 14-15 • When Idolatry becomes entrenched in the heart

Teacher: Pastor Paul LeBoutillier
Calvary Chapel Ontario

Ezekiel Chapter 14. We're going to talk tonight about when a heart is not completely given over to the Lord but there's an outward show of devotion. And that's a condition that the Lord takes note of in this chapter.

Here in chapter 14, it begins by saying, *“Then certain of the elders of Israel came to me and sat before me.” (ESV)* Now remember, Ezekiel is in the Persian kingdom already, he's been taken captive, he's part of the exiles who are already in the land even before Jerusalem was destroyed. And the rest of the exiles were brought over to the Persian kingdom there in Babylon.

So these elders are elders who are already in exile with him and they come to him. And they..., and so you have to ask yourself the question, you have to read into this thing a little bit. Why would these elders come to Ezekiel? Well, he's known already as a prophet, he's been prophesying to them for quite some time. He's been living out certain aspects of prophecy even, literally portraying them as someone would like a drama so he is well known now as a prophet.

So why are these elders coming to him? Well, we can assume, and we don't have to assume as we read on in the passage, we'll find out, but they're coming for a word from the Lord. Now, what does that tell you? If somebody were to come up to you, if you were a prophet, or if you were someone who even just knew the Bible, and they came to you and they said, “I'd like to know what God thinks on a particular subject, or I want to know what God says about such and such, I want to hear from God on a particular subject.” Well, immediately you'd kind of think, wow, that's cool, they're seeking the Lord, that's a good thing, right? Well, maybe not.

And that's what we're going to see here, because you'll notice in verse 3, well, 2 actually, it begins by saying, *“And the word of the Lord came to me: ³ “Son of man, these men have taken their idols into their hearts, and set the stumbling block of their iniquity before their faces. ...”*

And then He asked this question of Ezekiel, *“³ ...Should I indeed let myself be consulted by them?”* Now, this is really a fascinating passage and I want us to

be careful not to skim by it too quickly because this is good stuff you guys, this is important.

The Lord is revealing to Ezekiel that the men, the elders who had gathered before him to inquire of the Lord had so embraced, so deeply embraced idolatry, that God literally defines it as, “they have taken their idols into their hearts.” In other words, their hearts are consumed with idolatry. Idolatry was not just a pastime for them, God had become a pastime for them. Idols had become their all-consuming everything, but that's something that only God can see and God is revealing to Ezekiel the spiritual condition of these men.

He says, “they've lost it,” they have so become idolaters that it now consumes them and so He asked that question, “should I let these guys, should I let myself be inquired of by these particular men?” Now you might, I'm sure you're not surprised to know, this is not a condition that is unique to the exiles, or at least some of the exiles.

Through Isaiah, God confronted Israel with a similar sort of a situation. Let me show you a passage on the screen from Isaiah chapter 29, it goes like this,

Isaiah 29:13-14 (ESV)

And the Lord said: “Because this people draw near with their mouth and honor me with their lips, while their hearts are far from me, and their fear of me is a commandment taught by men, therefore...the wisdom of their wise men shall perish, and the discernment of their discerning men shall be hidden.”

So you see, this is a condition of the heart among the Jews which God had confronted them about earlier and He's still talking to them about it now that they're even in exile. And it's a condition of the heart that can easily make its way into the Christian life as well.

And it has, where people's hearts, we dabble with God, we come to church or we open up our Bibles to say, “God, what do you have for me?” But our hearts are filled with idolatry. And if you think that we can't be idolaters today, think again. So what exactly happens when outwardly we're showing devotion for the Lord, but inwardly our hearts are far away from the Lord?

And by the way, let me just clear up something. We're not talking about the sin that we all deal with because we all deal with sin all the time. Yeah, we all deal with sin every day but we're dealing with sin. When we sin, what do we do? We confess it, we go to the Lord, so that's not what we're talking about here.

We're not talking about people who fall and then go to the Lord and say, "oh God, I hate this sin, please deliver me, I confess it, I ask you to forgive me." That's not an idolater, that's someone who struggles with sin just like all human beings.

What God is confronting in the hearts of the nation of Israel is an idolatry, a condition of the heart for which they are not repenting. There is no turning, there is no confessing, it has so consumed their hearts that all that's left on the outside is just a façade; a show of religiosity, a show of devotion that really isn't there. These people come and say, "I want to inquire of the Lord," but they really don't care, they really don't care and that's the point.

That's separates kind of the men from the boys in our description here or our understanding of who we're talking about. We're not talking about people who care. If you sin, if you're like me and you sin occasionally, you care. And you take it to the Lord, you confess it and you say, "please forgive me and let me walk in the freedom and the power of your Spirit to overcome this area of sin in my life.

But if we're talking about the kind of idolatry that is so overtaken these men, it is all consuming. So what happens? What happens when somebody begins to have that show of devotion on the outside, but there's something going on in their heart that has just consumed them? Well, the psalmist, I think, said it best. Let me show you from Psalm chapter 66, I think the psalmist beautifully said,

Psalm 66:18 (ESV)

If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened.

Now, that's an important verse you guys. I don't want you to feel condemned by reading that verse. I do want you to understand though what it says and what it means. Because the psalmist is correctly identifying the fact that when we allow sin to so envelop our hearts that we live for it, we cherish it, we long for it, but then we show an outward facade of devotion to the Lord in petitioning him in prayer. The Bible says that God would not have, would not listen in such a case. So what do we do? We repent. When we, listen, the psalmist said, "if I had cherished sin in my heart," True confession time, okay? "I have cherished sin in my heart," I'm willing to bet you have too.

That's the reason I'm bold enough to make that confession in front of you. I don't think I'm alone. I think we have all cherished sin in our hearts at some time or another in our lives, right? But here's the point, when we finally realize it, when we see, oh, oh, this has kind of taken over, it has dominated my thoughts, it's dominated my desires, suddenly we are, we're kind of just, we're

taken aback by the whole thing. “Lord, forgive me, forgive me, forgive me for allowing sin to so become rooted in my heart that I have begun to cherish it even more than you.” And that is a serious thing.

He goes on, look at verse 4 with me in your text. *“⁴ Therefore speak to them and say to them, Thus says the Lord God: Any one of the house of Israel who takes his idols into his heart (that's key right there) and sets the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to the prophet, I the Lord will answer him as he comes with the multitude of his idols, ⁵ that I may lay hold of the hearts of the house of Israel, who are all estranged from me through their idols.”*

Wow, stop there for a second. So God is saying, “any such man who comes to me on the pretense of wanting to hear my voice, while at the same time cherishing his idols in his heart,” God says, “He comes to the prophet for a word from the Lord, ha, ha, ha, I'll talk to him directly.” And that, by the way, is meant to express judgment.

What God is saying is, “I will deal with that situation personally, I will, if that person comes with that sort of an attitude,” and God even tells us here why He's going to confront those people personally, did you notice it? He says, “that I may lay hold of the hearts of the people.”

In other words, what God is saying is, “when the rest of the people see and understand the example I've made of those who have come to me on the pretense of wanting to hear from me, but really didn't want to hear from me because their idols had so taken hold of their hearts. They will see and understand that judgment has fallen because of this, and they will begin to fear the Lord and they will turn from their idolatry,” and that was what God wanted to see happen.

Do you guys understand that the Lord doesn't change the way He deals with people? A very similar thing happened in the early days of the church. Do you guys remember reading about it in the Book of Acts? Bible says, the church was living in a communal kind of a society at the time because of hardship and that sort of thing. People were, as they came to Christ, they were losing their livelihood. They couldn't, they literally couldn't carry on business among the Jews there in Jerusalem because, as soon as they would confess Christ, they're done, people would cut them off. So they began to start to share their belongings, one with another in order to just take care of one another.

And the Bible says that some of the men, like Barnabas was one of them, sold the piece of property and came and brought the money and laid it at the feet of the disciples and it was distributed among the people. And the rest of the body of Christ kind of saw that happening and they were like impressed.

Well, you'll remember in, I think it's Acts chapter 5, that there was a couple named Ananias and Sapphira who decided to do the same thing, but they decided to hold back some of the money for themselves but tell everybody that was the price they got.

What they gave to the church, they said that's how much we sold it for. They actually sold it for much more but they kept back some of the money. Now, honestly, there was, and so there was idolatry in their hearts, there was a cherishing of something in their hearts. I don't know to this day if it was money or if it was recognition, or maybe both. It could have been both; we want to keep some of the money and we want all the recognition. Because, there was a certain amount of appreciation shall we say among the body of Christ for those who were generous enough and had the resources to share their wealth with the rest of the body.

They were probably looked up to among other people in the body, don't you suppose? Don't you suppose, if you're living communally and somebody has a big piece of property and they sell it and just give the money, wouldn't you kind of look at that person and go “wow, wow, you're amazing.” And that's pretty intoxicating.

I think Ananias and Sapphira became intoxicated with that whole idea of having that kind of recognition from the body and at the same time, they wanted to keep some of the money. They really didn't want to be that generous, they just wanted the recognition.

You guys remember what happened? They dropped dead, both of them. Why? God made an example of them. Why? So that there would not be idolatry in the hearts of the people, the fear of the Lord. In fact, the Bible even goes on to say, “and a great fear swept over the church,” that's exactly what God intended. (Acts 5:11)

Aren't you glad you weren't Ananias and Sapphira and had an example made of you? So, we all can deal with this. We all have, and maybe even do, have idols in our heart because, you can make an idol of anything, anything. It can be another human being that you idolize, good grief where do you think we got the title “American Idol.”

I mean, you can idolize money, you can idolize fame, you can idolize popularity and pleasure. The key is that when the Lord causes us to recognize those areas of our life, we bring them to the Lord, we bring them to the cross. That's what we always... and so don't, if the Lord's been showing you an area of your life that you've been idolizing, don't get condemned.

Don't let the enemy condemn you, God didn't show it to you in order to condemn you. Do you understand that? When the Bible says, “there is therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus.” (Romans 8:1) He meant it, and that means His Holy Spirit isn't the one condemning you, Satan is the one condemning you.

You are good at condemning you, God is not condemning you. He's bringing it to your understanding so that you will bring it to the cross and lay it down there and say, “God, this is an idol and I need to surrender it and I need your help because there's an obvious weakness in my life. There's a love for this thing in my life that is so consuming and overwhelming that I am willing to set you on the back burner in order to run after that thing.”

Jesus confronted another young man who was dealing with idolatry, you guys remember? I'm talking about the rich young ruler, remember him? Oh, and didn't he have a facade of devotion on the outside? “Lord, tell me what I must do to enter the kingdom of heaven.” Jesus, seeing into his heart as only God can with His perfect vision, knew that there was idolatry in his heart.

He said, “yeah, take everything you have, sell it, give it to the poor.” That was not a word to every single human being who became a Christian. I've had people do that, read that passage, and then come to me and say, “is that what we're all supposed to do?” No, that was his issue, that was what was keeping that man from making his way to the Lord. There was idolatry going on in his heart, so Jesus challenged him with that idolatry.

“Bring it to the cross, I'm going to the cross, you come with me, you bring that with you,” right. What happened? The man went away, He said, very sad because the love in his heart for that thing was so great, he couldn't part with it, he couldn't part with it. Now I hope that one day he did, I hope one day that man came to his senses and realized, “you know what, all the money in the world is not worth my soul.”

So, anyway, here's God's Word as He goes on in verse 6 to those who come to Him for a word when they're cherishing idols. Verse 6, “*Therefore say to the house of Israel, Thus says the Lord God: Repent and turn away from your idols,*

and turn away your faces from all your abominations. ⁷ For any one of the house of Israel, or of the strangers (and that would mean, non-Jews) who sojourn in Israel, (and that means those who have come to a faith in YAHWEH, God) who separates himself from me, taking his idols into his heart and putting the stumbling block of his iniquity before his face, and yet comes to a prophet to consult me through him, I the Lord will answer him myself. ⁸ And I will set my face against that man; I will make him a sign and a byword and cut him off from the midst of my people, and you shall know that I am the Lord.”

By the way, to cut him off from the midst of my people means, he'd die. He is talking about a physical thing, He would physically, ... same thing that happened to Ananias and Sapphira, okay. So, it's kind of serious. God considers it a serious thing and that's one of the reasons why David prayed and said, “Lord, seek me, search me and know me, turn on the search light of your Holy presence and search my heart and see if there be any wicked way in me.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

Oh, that is such a bold prayer, have you ever thought about how bold that is? Do you know what God's going to find when He does that? When you invite Him to do that, He's going to find exactly what you've asked Him to find. It's not like He's going to look in there and go, “yeah, it looks good.” You look in the human heart and you're going to find junk, rotten, gunky, junky stuff that you really probably don't want to deal with.

But David so cared about not having anything between him and his relationship with the Lord, that he was willing to let God come in and clean house. Isn't cleaning house a bummer? Sue's been doing some deep cleaning in our house lately and it's great because, you go into a room after she's deep cleaning and it smells wonderful. I can't find anything afterwards, it is like nothing. I have to ask every time I go into that room, “now where did you put...?” Sue: “Oh, I found a new home for that.” But that's just kind of goes along with it, but it's a lot of work when you deep clean.

I mean, you can, anybody can go into a room and you do a little quick dusting and pick up things and make sure the garbage is empty and then the room looks tidy, but it's not deep cleaned. And sometimes we're okay with just doing some tidying up, so it looks okay, looks okay. I mean, don't look under the bed, whatever you do and don't pull back the dresser, Lord, help you what you might find back there. You might just scare you. I remember one time we pulled the couch out when Nelly our oldest daughter was just a little girl and we found a juice bottle back there.

Have no idea how long it was there, but she picked that baby up and started drinking it, and she went, “Ooh” and I opened it up, it had fermented, that's a lot. So anyway, you got to do deep cleaning once in a while at home. This is your little homemaker lesson for the day but we also have to do it in our hearts, don't we?

We got to bring our hearts to the Lord and say, “God, I've been confessing my sin, but I've only been tidying up, search me and know me, see if there be any wicked way in those dark, hidden spots of my heart, and then lead me Lord in the way that's everlasting,” right?

And now He goes on in verse 9 and He says, “*And if the prophet is deceived and speaks a word, ...*” In other words, the prophet goes on to speak a word when these people come to him and ask for a word from the Lord, but they really don't have it in their hearts to do so. He says, “⁹ *...I, the Lord, have deceived that prophet, and I will stretch out my hand against him and will destroy him from the midst of my people Israel.* ¹⁰ *And they shall bear their punishment—the punishment of the prophet and the punishment of the inquirer shall be alike—* ¹¹ *that the house of Israel may no more go astray from me, nor defile themselves anymore with all their transgressions, but that they may be my people and I may be their God, declares the Lord God.*”

“¹² *And the word of the Lord came to me: (verse 12)* ¹³ “*Son of man, when a land sins against me by acting faithlessly, and I stretch out my hand against it and break its supply of bread and send famine upon it, and cut off from it man and beast,* ¹⁴ *even if these three men, Noah, Daniel, and Job, were in it, they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness, declares the Lord God.*”” Stop there for a moment, this is very interesting language. I want you to take notice of what God is saying here through Ezekiel. He begins by saying, talking about a land that sins against Him or acts faithless against him.

Now you got to understand what's going on here, okay? We know that it's people who do the sinning not land, your property didn't commit a sin. However, you got to understand that particularly in the Old Testament, God speaks of a connection between the land and the people who dwell on that land and the people can actually defile that land by their actions. You'll remember that in the very first murder that takes place in the Bible when Cain murdered Abel, God said to Cain that, “the ground, the blood from the ground literally cries out to me.” (Genesis 4:10) So there is a connection between the people and their actions of sin and the land that gets defiled by those people.

So in that sense, a land can actually fall under God's judgment because of the people living in it and the lives that they live, okay? So understand that. It's not that land sins, but the land absorbs the sin, if you will. It's connected to the people, all right, so this is an important thing to understand.

Now, God makes the point that the sin of Israel here in these verses is so grave that even if, and He names 3 righteous men. He names Noah, He names Daniel, which is interesting because Daniel was alive at that time and He names Job. He says, “even if they were living in whatever land I'm about to bring judgment upon, that judgment would still come.”

Now, Daniel was not in the land of Israel, he was already in Persia too, he was living in the Persian kingdom. He had been taken into exile along with Ezekiel. But God said, “even if those 3 men,” and those men are known for some pretty incredible praying, some pretty incredible intercession, right?

I mean, Noah interceded and went and preached it to the Ninevites and they repented. And Daniel, of course, what an incredible, what an incredible man. The prayers that he laid before God related to, I mean, what a faithful man, what a faithful prayer. And of course, Job, Job had to pray for his friends because they were such boneheads, he had to pray to get them out of trouble after they spoke such horrific things to him when he was suffering.

So, and yet God says, “even if those 3 men were living in that land where I had determined to bring my judgment, I would still bring my judgment.” And He's going to repeat that point, He's going to repeat it several times in the following verses. Verse 15, *“If I cause wild beasts to pass through the land, and they ravage it, and it be made desolate, so that no one may pass through because of the beasts, (there’s too many wild animals) ¹⁶ even if these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord God, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters. They alone would be delivered, but the land would be desolate.*

¹⁷ *“Or if I bring a sword upon that land and say, Let a sword pass through the land, (so now we're talking about an enemy coming against it) and I cut off from it man and beast, ¹⁸ though these three men were in it, as I live, declares the Lord God, they would deliver neither sons nor daughters, but they alone would be delivered.*

¹⁹ *“Or (He says) if I send a pestilence into that land and pour out my wrath upon it with blood, to cut off from it man and beast, ²⁰ even if Noah, Daniel, and Job were in it, as I live, declares the Lord God, they would deliver neither son nor daughter. They would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness.*

²¹ *“For thus says the Lord God: How much more when I send upon Jerusalem my four disastrous acts of judgment, sword, famine, wild beasts, and pestilence, to cut off from it man and beast!”*”

And what God is making clear by these repetitious statements, is that judgment is coming and nothing is going to hold it back and that's the simple reality. Judgment is coming and nothing, no matter the intercession, no matter the righteousness of these particular men. And yet, did you notice in each of these sections that God said that those righteous men would spare themselves, they themselves would be spared, did you hear that? Did you see that 4 times?

In verse 14, He says, *“they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness,”* in verse 16, He said, *“they alone would be delivered,”* same thing in verse 17, *“they alone would be delivered,”* and then in verse 20, *“they would deliver but their own lives by their righteousness.”*

I find that very fascinating because see, that's God's heart. Oh, hear the thunder? I knew that was coming, looks like it might be raining too. I just find it very fascinating that in the midst of judgment, God says, “yes, I am going to bring my wrath, but because of their lives I will spare them, I will spare them.”

So what does that tell you about how God deals with that whole issue of judgment related to those who are righteous in his sight? And the Bible says that we are righteous in God's sight through Jesus Christ, our Savior, right? Our righteousness, or I should say, His righteousness has been imputed to us so that we are righteous now in the sight of God.

What does that tell you about God's judgment? Christians are constantly worried about God's judgment and I keep telling them, “don't you understand that you've already been judged in the person of Jesus Christ?” Now, that doesn't mean you won't be disciplined, God still disciplines those whom He loves. That's not judgment, that's discipline, there's a huge difference.

“I'm just afraid God's going to judge me,” or they'll go through something and say, “I believe this is God's judgment of my past sins” and I'm like, “really, so you really don't believe that Jesus died for you then, you really don't believe that He bore your sin and your judgment on the cross.” That's what you're telling me when you say that this whatever is happening, this sickness or this job loss, or this relationship that broke up or whatever, you think that's God's judgment in your life, that's what you really think.

How shallow we are to quickly abandon our belief in the work of Jesus on the cross when we're going through a difficult season of our life. How quick we are to simply say, "oh, this is God's judgment, this is God's judgment." Jesus said, and I've told you so many times, the last thing on the cross, "it is finished, it is completed." (John 19:30) He bore our judgment and He finished it.

And when it's finished, guys, it's finished. I mean, we got to start taking Him at His Word, we got to start believing what God says. "It is finished, paid in full," so no more talk about you having to pay for your sins. Yes, there are consequences and yes, God disciplines those whom He loves, but it's not judgment. Jesus was judged for you and that judgment has been finished.

God goes on to say, and this is fascinating, ²² *But behold, some survivors will be left in it, ...* Now He's already said judgment is coming to Jerusalem and nothing's going to hold it back but He says, ²² *...some survivors will be left in it, sons and daughters...*, and look what it says, ²² *...who will be brought out; ...* Now, what that means is, some of the people in Jerusalem will not die, but they will be brought out and that means they'll go into exile, okay? So you people, remember Ezekiel is talking to the people in exile. So He's telling, God is telling them, some of the people in Jerusalem are actually going to survive the onslaught and the sword and the pestilence and the famine, they're going to survive it and they're going to be brought into exile.

But I want you to notice what He says about those people. ²² *...when they come out to you, and you see their ways and their deeds, you will be consoled for the disaster that I have brought upon Jerusalem, for all that I have brought upon it.* ²³ *They will console you, when you see their ways and their deeds, and you shall know that I have not done without cause all that I have done in it, declares the Lord God.*"

Now this is a fascinating passage. God is literally telling Ezekiel and the people who are listening that there's going to be the small remnant of people who will survive the judgment when the Babylonians come against the city; they're in Jerusalem, and they would make their way into exile, they would be brought into exile. And God says, "Ezekiel, when you see these people and the way they live and the way they act, you are going to be consoled concerning my judgment upon Israel."

Now, the question we ask, because He doesn't say, is, "what are their deeds and actions, are they good? Are these people going to be so humble that Ezekiel is going to be consoled to say, 'oh, there's a righteous remnant.'" No, that's not

what's going on, the language of this passage almost certainly shows that this small remnant that comes into exile is going to be very wicked.

And God's going to let them survive even though they're very wicked and what that tells us is, their survival is not going to be based upon their righteousness at all. Instead, God was going to let them survive so that they might serve as an object lesson to the rest of the people in exile. And when those people, Ezekiel and some of those others see how wicked these people are who came out of Jerusalem, they are going to be consoled.

They're going to actually feel better about what God had done in destroying Jerusalem the way that He did and the exiles are going to know for a certainty that God had not acted without just cause, you see, and that every bit of His judgment was deserved. Isn't that fascinating? When you see, He says, "when you see these people come from Jerusalem and you see their depravity, you are going to see their lives and you're going to say, 'oh yeah, we deserved this big time,' and you're going to be consoled."

Because one of the worst things that can happen to us as Christians is we see judgment happening elsewhere, maybe even here in our country, and we're grieved for it. But you see, we don't know the things God knows, we don't see the things that God sees. If we were able to see the depth of depravity that even goes on in our country, we would be consoled for the judgments that have happened and probably will still happen because we would kind of say, "okay, well I, yeah, okay, I get it, that needed to happen, that was really bad."

And that is basically what He is saying to Ezekiel here. Now, chapter 15 is very short, and we're going to just finish chapter 15. It's, it doesn't take long at all. It says, "*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?'*" So God is asking Ezekiel a question, He simply says, "go out to a vineyard and look at the vines that the grapes grow on and look at the wood." You don't even want to call it wood, but they did, they called it wood and He says, "is it good for anything?"

Verse 3, He goes on to say, "*Is wood taken from it to make anything? Do people take a peg from it to hang any vessel on it? (no, it wouldn't do that, it's not strong enough, He says,) 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!*" In fact, when you put a vine in the, when a dried-up vine in the fire,

it was consumed quickly just and it was gone. It wasn't even really good to burn. Of course the wood of the of the trees of the forest, now there's a useful, chunk of wood. You can make something out of it, you make a chair or a table or a bed or something like that.

Verse 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.”* And that Christians is a devastating statement. God is saying that they've become useless, they've become useless to Him, and as He sends a fire through Jerusalem, it will be useless.

Verse 7 and 8 ends the chapter, He says, *“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, (Why) because they have acted faithlessly, declares the Lord God.”* That's where we're going to stop for tonight. Chapter 16 is actually quite lengthy, it's like 63 verses, and it's an interesting chapter because it's a parable. It, well, it's given in parable form, but anyway it'll take us some time to get through it, so anyway, let's pray.

Father, thank you so much for the lessons that we have seen tonight from these 2 chapters in Ezekiel. Thank you, Lord, for the insight that we gained from them. Thank you, Lord, for the blessing of knowledge and Lord, thank you for loving us so much that you already judged our sin in the person of Jesus Christ and now there is no condemnation for those who are in Christ. Thank you for that, Lord.

Meanwhile, we invite you, Lord, to expose our hearts, we invite you to expose any areas of idolatry that we might bring it to the cross. Lord, help us to remember that you don't expose areas of sin and idolatry in our lives so that we can fix it ourselves, that's not why. Lord, help us to remember that you expose those things so that we'll bring them quickly to you, confess them, ask for your help, trust in you for your strength. Thank you, Father, be with us in strengthen us we pray. In Jesus' precious name we ask, amen.