

Ezekiel 26:22-37

We His People

The number one selling book in the world and the number one read book in the world is the Bible. Based on that statistic and your presence here I am guessing that the Bible plays some part of your life. How many of you have your Bible here today? How many of you have more than one Bible, more than 2, more than 5? How many of you have Scripture somewhere printed, either on a t-shirt, a wall decoration, etc.? I want you to think of this question with me: Why do you have these things? Why is Scripture important to you?

I want us to turn to Ezekiel 36 today and one of the things we will learn talk is why we value Scripture. I love what you and I get to do each week. We get to take the Bible, the book that we hold so dear, and determine, or be reminded, of why we value this book. If I am doing my part in praying for and preaching to you then you will learn that the more you see Scripture as God intends, the more you rightly understand Scripture, the sweeter Scripture becomes to you, and the richer your understanding of Scripture will be. I do what I do so that we together will fall more in love with Jesus as we learn to hear his voice and follow him.

I wanted you to turn to Ezekiel because Ezekiel shows us in a dramatic way just how relentless God is to make himself known to us, how amazing his grace is to come and find us, to come and take us away from death and bring us to life. Let's read the Bible together.

READ TEXT

This is why we value Scripture. What we just read and what we get to look at today is one of the most significant passages in all the Bible. What do we mean when we say such things? Isn't all the Bible significant? Yes and this passage is here to remind us of just how significant the Bible is. All through the Bible there are passages like this that God gives us to make sure that we are reading the story with his overarching plan in mind. When we say the Bible is important to us we mean just that - the Bible is important to us, it shapes us, we don't shape it.

We love the Bible more than we love our ideas about the Bible.

The Bible is a glorious book, a book that tells a story of a God of love who benevolently created mankind to worship and obey God. Mankind chose to worship and obey their own thoughts and as a result experienced death. But the good news about this God is that despite

the sinfulness of his creation, he still loves us and has a plan for us if we turn to him. God created us to have fellowship with him and he is set on doing what it takes to fulfill his purpose of fellowship.

The Bible is a story of salvation, a story of people who need saving, and a God who miraculously saves. This is why you have books like Ezekiel, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. These prophets were sent from God to remind us that we were meant for more. To remind us that God created us to worship and unless we are worshipping our hearts will forever be restless. God is set to save a people who are in desperate need of saving so that he can be our God and we his people.

Today from this passage that details the salvation that the Lord will bring, I want to give you two truths about this God who moves heaven and earth so that we will be his.

## **1. God Is a Jealous God**

The fact that there is a God is an awesome thought. The fact that this God loves us is amazing. God created us so that we would know him. What does that mean? It means that life entails a relationship. What it truly means to live is summed up in this way - knowing God. Not knowing him is death.

God is a jealous God, for our sake. We first hear this phrase in Exodus when God is giving the 10 Commandments. The commandments if you look closely at them deal in two dimensions: vertically with our relationship to God, and then horizontally with our relationship with others. The Commandments start with a declaration that sets the tone for all the rest: I AM the LORD thy God. Then the first, No other Gods before me. Second. Don't make a graven image. Third. Don't take the name of the Lord in vain. Fourth, remember to keep the Sabbath day holy. In the midst of all this God says that he is a jealous God.

Sometimes when we hear that God is a jealous God we think outside the realms of what this passage means. God is jealous and pursues his people so that they will have life because outside of God there is no life. His jealous love is a good thing. If he was not jealous and loving then it would mean that he could care less if we know him. But because he loves us he jealously desires us to live and will go to great lengths to show us what life is.

Think about this for just a moment. If God exists then the only way that we can know him is through his own self revelation to us. In other words, if God does not make himself known to us we will not know him. God makes himself known through giving us his Word and his Son. HE makes himself know to us for one reason - he loves us with a jealous love and will not let us give our love to another. Look at the passage:

Verse 22 says that he will save his people for one reason - for his own concern for his holy name. Look at verse 16-21. We did not deserve his love but because of his great love for us he saved us. And why did he do so? Not because of what we had done but because of who he is. Why does he save us? He chooses to, he desires to. Listen to that: HE saves us because HE wants to. He goes to great lengths to save us and we receive his love.

## **2. God Miraculously Makes Us His Very Own**

The way that God gives us life is by causing us to know him in an intimate way. Remember how he created us in the beginning. With even more intimacy and care than that he will remake us, he will redeem us, and he will restore us. Look at the text beginning in verse 24. What does all this mean? It means we must be born again. Jesus directly alludes to this passage in John 3 when he is talking to Nicodemus.

Salvation is nothing more than a miracle. Where God takes us where we are, far from him, pursuing our own death; and takes us and makes us his very own. The way that he does it is not from a distance, but he comes to us and makes us his very own. Why? All so we can be his people and we can be his God. He renews us, gives us a heart of obedience, and then look at the next chapter of Ezekiel - chapter 37 the valley of Dry Bones - resurrection.

Who else can create something from nothing? Who else can shape all time and events to bring about what he desires? Who else can raise the dead? Who are his people? All those who trust in him. Do you trust in him, are you his?