

Ezekiel 3:1-27 – Eating God’s Word and Becoming a Watchman

1. Eating the Scroll – Letting God’s Word Become Part of You

“Moreover He said to me, ‘Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.’ So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.’ So I ate, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness.” (Ezekiel 3:1-3, NKJV)

God tells Ezekiel to *eat* the scroll before he *speaks* to the people. The scroll contains God’s message—words of warning, lamentation, and woe (see Ezekiel 2:10). Ezekiel must take it in deeply until it becomes part of his inner life. Only then is he ready to speak.

God’s pattern is the same today:

- First, receive His Word. (read it, memorize it, you don’t need to literally eat it)
- Then, speak His Word.

We are not called to share opinions, theories, or personal philosophies. We are called to let Scripture shape us from the inside out, so that when we speak, we are passing on what God has already worked into our hearts.

Even though this scroll contains heavy messages of judgment, it is still “like honey” in his mouth. God’s Word can be both sweet and serious at the same time—sweet because it comes from God, serious because it confronts sin and calls people back to Him.

2. Sent to a Familiar People Who Will Not Listen

“And He said to me: ‘Son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with My words to them. For you are not sent to a people of unfamiliar speech and of hard language, but to the house of Israel... But the house of Israel will not listen to you, because they will not listen to Me; for all the house of Israel are impudent and hard-hearted.’” (Ezekiel 3:4-7, NKJV)

Ezekiel is not being sent to a foreign nation with a strange language. He is sent to **his own people**—people who know the language, know the history, know the stories of God’s faithfulness. The problem is not ignorance but hardness of heart.

God even tells Ezekiel ahead of time that most of them will not listen. That sounds discouraging, but it is also freeing. Ezekiel’s responsibility is not to guarantee their response; his responsibility is to **faithfully deliver God’s message**.

3. Strength for a Hard Assignment

“Behold, I have made your face strong against their faces, and your forehead strong against their foreheads. Like adamant stone, harder than flint, I have made your forehead; do not be afraid of them, nor be dismayed at their looks, though they are a rebellious house.” (Ezekiel 3:8-9, NKJV)

God does not just tell Ezekiel to be brave; He *equips* him to be brave. The Lord makes his face and forehead “harder than flint.” In other words, God gives him the inner toughness he will need when he faces hostility, rejection, and cold stares.

God never calls us to stand for Him without also giving us the courage and strength to do it. He knows the pressures we face in our homes, workplaces, schools, and communities. He knows when people roll their eyes, mock, or ignore the truth. And He promises strength for those who are willing to stand.

4. Receive in Your Heart, Then Speak with Your Mouth

“Moreover He said to me: ‘Son of man, receive into your heart all My words that I speak to you, and hear with your ears. And go, get to the captives, to the children of your people, and speak to them and tell them, ‘Thus says the Lord God,’ whether they hear, or whether they refuse.’”
(Ezekiel 3:10-11, NKJV)

God repeats the same pattern:

1. Receive into your heart
2. Hear with your ears
3. Then go and speak

Ezekiel is sent to the captives by the River Chebar. They are his own people, in exile, living the consequences of their national sin. Still, God desires to speak to them in their exile. Judgment has fallen, but God has not abandoned them. His Word is still reaching out.

5. A Heavy Call and a Silent Seven Days

“Then the Spirit lifted me up, and I heard behind me a great thunderous voice: ‘Blessed is the glory of the Lord from His place!’... So the Spirit lifted me up and took me away, and I went in bitterness, in the heat of my spirit; but the hand of the Lord was strong upon me. Then I came to the captives at Tel Abib, who dwelt by the River Chebar, and I sat where they sat, and remained there astonished among them seven days.” (Ezekiel 3:12-15, NKJV)

The Spirit lifts Ezekiel and brings him to the captives. He hears the sound of cherubim, the wheels, the rushing noise of God’s glory—yet emotionally, he feels “bitterness” and inner turmoil. The calling is heavy. The reality of the people’s condition weighs on him.

When he arrives, he simply sits among them for seven days, astonished and silent. Sometimes the burden God places on our hearts for people is so deep that the only appropriate first response is silence, observation, and prayer. Before he speaks to them, Ezekiel *sits where they sit*—he identifies with their condition and feels the weight of their situation.

6. The Watchman – Responsibility to Warn

“Now it came to pass at the end of seven days that the word of the Lord came to me, saying, ‘Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the house of Israel; therefore hear a word from My mouth, and give them warning from Me.’” (Ezekiel 3:16-17, NKJV)

God now clearly defines Ezekiel’s role: watchman. In ancient cities, a watchman stood on the wall, scanning the horizon. When danger approached, his duty was to blow the trumpet and warn the people. He was not responsible for their response, but he was responsible to sound the alarm.

For Ezekiel, being a watchman means two things:

1. Hear a word from God’s mouth.
2. Give them warning from God.

He is called to listen carefully and speak faithfully.

Warning the Wicked

“When I say to the wicked, ‘You shall surely die,’ and you give him no warning... that same wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood I will require at your hand. Yet, if you warn the wicked, and he does not turn... he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul.”
(Ezekiel 3:18-19, NKJV)

If God declares judgment on a wicked person and the watchman fails to warn, God says, “his blood I will require at your hand.” The wicked person is still responsible for his own sin, but the watchman is responsible for his silence.

If the watchman warns, and the person ignores the warning, the person will still face judgment, but the watchman’s conscience is clear—he has been faithful.

This is not about earning salvation by works; it is about faithfulness in service. It is about responsibility before God to speak the truth when He tells us to speak.

Warning the One Who Turns to Sin

“Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, and I lay a stumbling block before him, he shall die... because you did not give him warning... his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless if you warn the righteous man... and he does not sin, he shall surely live because he took warning; also you will have delivered your soul.”
(Ezekiel 3:20-21, NKJV)

God also speaks of a person who had been living in what was considered righteousness under the covenant, but then turns aside into sin. Ezekiel must warn him too. Again, the watchman is responsible to speak; the hearer is responsible to respond.

In our day, we recognize that righteousness before God comes through faith in Jesus Christ and His finished work, not through our own works. But the principle here still applies:

- We are not saved *by* good works,
- But when we truly belong to Jesus, our lives are called to reflect that relationship.

When someone who claims to know God begins to live in open rebellion against Him, love does not stay silent. Love warns. Love reaches out.

7. Meeting God Again – And a Season of Being Silent

“Then the hand of the Lord was upon me there, and He said to me, ‘Arise, go out into the plain, and there I shall talk with you.’ So I arose and went out into the plain, and behold, the glory of the Lord stood there, like the glory which I saw by the River Chebar; and I fell on my face. Then the Spirit entered me and set me on my feet...” (Ezekiel 3:22-24, NKJV)

Ezekiel sees the glory of the Lord again and falls on his face again. Once more, the Spirit lifts him to his feet. This repeated pattern shows us something very important:

- God’s glory humbles us.
- God’s Spirit raises us up and enables us.

Then God does something surprising:

“Go, shut yourself inside your house. And you, O son of man, surely they will put ropes on you and bind you with them, so that you cannot go out among them. I will make your tongue cling to the roof of your mouth, so that you shall be mute, and not be one to rebuke them, for they are a rebellious house.” (Ezekiel 3:24-26, NKJV)

Ezekiel is commissioned to speak, but for a period of time God makes him **silent**. He will only speak when God opens his mouth.

“But when I speak with you, I will open your mouth, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’ He who hears, let him hear; and he who refuses, let him refuse; for they are a rebellious house.” (Ezekiel 3:27, NKJV)

This emphasizes that Ezekiel must not speak from himself; he must speak from God’s direction. His words are not to be driven by emotion, reaction, or frustration, but by revelation.

Practical Application

1. **Let God’s Word live in you, not just pass by your eyes.**

Ezekiel had to eat the scroll. We must move beyond casual reading and allow Scripture to work into our hearts, shaping how we think, feel, and live.

2. **Be willing to stand, even when people resist truth.**

Ezekiel’s audience was hard-hearted. Many of the people in our lives are resistant, indifferent, or hostile. Our calling is still to live and speak truth with love, even when the response is cold.

3. Take your watchman role seriously.

As followers of Jesus, we are not spectators. We are called to point people to the truth—about sin, judgment, grace, and salvation in Christ. Silence when God is calling us to speak is not neutral; it is disobedience.

4. Wait on God before you speak.

Just as Ezekiel had seasons of silence, there are times when we need to pause, pray, and listen before we speak. Our goal is not to win arguments but to share God's heart.

A Loving Challenge for Believers

- Are you devouring God's Word or just occasionally tasting it?
- Are you willing to be a watchman in your family, workplace, and community—someone who lovingly warns and points people to Jesus?
- Is there someone in your life who is clearly walking away from God, and you know you need to say something, but fear has kept you silent?

Ask the Lord to give you the courage of Ezekiel, the tenderness of Christ, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit. Pray, *"Lord, make me faithful to hear Your Word and faithful to share it."*

An Invitation to Those Who Do Not Yet Know Jesus

In Ezekiel's day, God warned of judgment because the people had turned their backs on Him. Yet even in judgment, His heart was to call them back. Today, God is still calling people back to Himself—not just through prophets, but through the message of the cross and the resurrection of Jesus Christ.

The Bible tells us that all of us have sinned and turned away from God. But God did not leave us there. Jesus, the Son of God, came into this world, lived a sinless life, and willingly went to the cross. He shed His blood to save us, taking upon Himself the punishment our sins deserved.

When Jesus rose from the dead, His resurrection declared that He is God, Savior, and Lord. He conquered sin and death. He now offers forgiveness, new life, and a restored relationship with God to all who turn to Him.

If you have never given your life to Jesus, you are not reading this by accident. God may be speaking to your heart, warning you about the seriousness of sin—but also inviting you into His grace.

You can respond to Him today by turning from your sin and trusting in Jesus and what He accomplished for you on the cross. You can talk to Him in your own words, but it might sound something like this:

"Lord Jesus, I know that I have sinned and gone my own way. I believe that You shed Your blood on the cross to save me, and that You rose again, proving that You are God, my Savior, and my Lord. I ask You to forgive me, cleanse me, and make me new. I surrender my life to You. Help me to follow You from this day forward. Amen."

If you truly turn to Him, He will not turn you away. He will forgive you, receive you, and begin a new work in your life. And for those who already know Him, may we be faithful watchmen—people who hear His Word, live His Word, and lovingly share His Word in a world that desperately needs Him.