

Theme: **Speak the Words of God**

Text: Ezekiel 1:26 – 2:10

Date: July 8, 2018

Occasion: 7th Sunday after Pentecost

Place: Shepherd of the Rockies LCMS, Bailey, CO

Grace and peace to you as you learn from the Lord's past about your future, from God, our Father, our Lord and Savior, Jesus Christ and the Holy Spirit. Amen.

Over the past six weeks we have been learning from God's past, recorded in the Old Testament, about our future. Today I want to start with a little quiz to see how much you know about how God calls His people to do special things for Him in the past.

(1) Abraham, how did God call Abraham to be the father of His special people? (a) In a dream; (b) Through a vision; (c) He just spoke to him. (d) None of the above. The answer is (c) **'The Lord had said to Abram "leave your country, your people and your father's household and go to the land I will show you."**' (Gen. 12:1)

(2) Moses, how did God call Moses to go to Egypt and bring His people out of slavery? (a) In a dream; (b) Through a vision; (c) He just spoke to him. (d) None of the above. The answer is (d) **'When the Lord saw, that Moses had gone over to look at the burning bush, God called to him from within the bush, "Moses! Moses!"'** (Exod. 3:4)

(3) King David, how did God call him to be the King of Israel? (a) In a dream; (b) Through a vision; (c) He just spoke to him. (d) None of the above. The answer is (d) God called David to be the King through the Prophet Samuel. God had told Samuel that he had selected a new king for Israel from the sons of Jesse. So, Samuel went to Bethlehem and had Jesse present each of his sons to see which one God had selected, when David was presented to Samuel. **'Then the Lord said, "Rise and anoint David; he is the one" So Samuel took the horn of oil and anointed David in the presence of his brothers, and from that day on the spirit of the Lord came upon David in power.'** (1 Sam. 16:12 – 13) God never spoke to King David, one on one but always through a prophet and by His Word.

(4) Isaiah, how was he called to be a prophet of God? (a) In a dream; (b) Through a vision; (c) He just spoke to him. (d) None of the above. The answer is (b) **In the year that King Uzziah died Isaiah saw the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up; and the train of His robe filled the temple. (Isa. 6:1) ⁸ And Isaiah heard the voice of the Lord saying, "Whom shall I send, and who will go for us?" Then Isaiah said, "Here I am! Send me."** (Isa. 6:8-9)

(5) Ezekiel, how was he called to be a prophet of God to the people in exile? (a) In a dream; (b) Through a vision; (c) He just spoke to him; (d) None of the above. The answer is (b) **‘In the thirtieth year, in the fourth month, on the fifth day of the month, as I was among the exiles by the Chebar canal, the heavens were opened, and I saw visions of God.’** (Ezek. 1:1)

Ezekiel in his vision saw a windstorm, lightening, fire in the sky. Unearthly, angelic creatures flying swiftly beside wheels covered with eyes. Above them was an expanse sparkling like ice and a rumbling, rushing roar. Above all this was something like a sapphire throne and on that throne, someone like a man, aglow, ablaze, in a rainbow-like radiance. When Ezekiel saw God, he fell to his face in front of Him. This is what Ezekiel saw before the voice of the Lord called to him and said, **“Son of man, stand on your feet, and I will speak with you.”** ² **And as God spoke to Ezekiel, the Spirit entered into Ezekiel and set Ezekiel on his feet, and he heard Him speaking to him.** (Ezek. 2:1 – 2)

We have many different examples of God calling people to do something for Him in this world. Each of these people of God were given God’s Word and by God’s Word the Holy Spirit when to work in their lives. These people were no different than any of us here today, so how has God called you to be His Child? For most of us, God didn’t come to us in a dream or through a vision and He didn’t just speak to us, but He has called us through His Word and Sacraments.

In your baptism, you were washed of all your sins so that the Holy Spirit could reside in you and go to work in your life to make you an obedient child of God even before you could read His Word or understand it. Oh, you have had those times when your rebellious nature has caused you to stop listening to God’s Word or to receive the blessings of God’s Sacraments, but the Holy Spirit was still there in you, working in your life through God’s Word and Sacraments to sanctify you so that you can stand before Him and do what He is calling you for. God’s Word was spoken to each of these men of the Old Testament and as God’s Word became a part of their lives it enabled them to stand before God and to receive His calling and act upon it. So, how has the Holy Spirit enabled you to stand up before God?

The Holy Spirit has gone to work in your life to give you the ability to believe in the life saving work that Jesus Christ did for you, and for all of us, as the Apostle Paul proclaims, **‘But God said to me, “My grace is sufficient for you, for My power is made perfect in weakness.”** (2 Cor. 12:9) It is by the grace of God that you are righteous and able to stand before God just like Ezekiel

did and this is what God said to him, **“Son of man, I send you to the people of Israel, to nations of rebels, who have rebelled against me. They and their fathers have transgressed against me to this very day. ⁴The descendants also are impudent and stubborn: I send you to them, and you shall say to them, ‘Thus says the Lord God.’ ⁵ And whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house) they will know that a prophet has been among them. ⁶ And you, son of man, be not afraid of them, nor be afraid of their words, though briars and thorns are with you and you sit on scorpions. Be not afraid of their words, nor be dismayed at their looks, for they are a rebellious house. ⁷ And you shall speak my words to them, whether they hear or refuse to hear, for they are a rebellious house.’** (Ezek. 2:3- 7)

Ezekiel was living in Babylon at the time when God called him to go out and speak to the people of Israel who had rebelled against Him and He had allowed them to be conquered and to be taken into exile in Babylon for 70 years. Though today is some 3,000 years later, the people who wrestle with God’s Word are no different, we are still rebellious and would much rather let the words of the world and the devil be their guide than to put our trust in God’s Word, love and grace. So, we to are called to proclaim God’s Words with our words and actions just like Ezekiel did. We are called not to just read God’s Word and worship in God’s Word but to make God’s Word a part of our lives, to eat it. God says to us as He said to Ezekiel, **“But you, son of man, hear what I say to you. Be not rebellious like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you.”** (Ezek. 2:8) Are you eating God’s Word? Are you making God’s Word a part of your life in any way that you can to show the world around you God Law and His love for all of us?

As a part of Ezekiel’s calling to proclaim God’s Word to the people of his time, Ezekiel was asked to do some strange actions to help the people realize the severity of their sins and their need to repent and come back to God’s Word, love and grace. Ezekiel was not only a speaking prophet of God but he was a prophet of God who showed the people what was going to happen to them. God asked Ezekiel to show the people what was going to happen to Jerusalem. So Ezekiel built a model of Jerusalem with a siege around it and then he laid down on his left side for 390 day for the sins of Israel and then he laid down on his right side 40 days for the sins of Judah. This was to show the people that God is willing to lay down life for the sins of the people of Israel,

Judah and all the world, even though they had rebelled against Him and He had let them be conquered by their enemies.

God asked Ezekiel to show the people what was going to happen to them if they continued on the path that they were taking by cutting off all his hair with a sword and dividing it into three bundles and destroy all the hair but a few strands he put into his pocket, by fire, sword and scattering them in the wind. This is what was happening to the people of Israel because of their rebellion but God would keep a few faithful Israelites to keep His promise to them and the world.

God ask Jesus Christ, His Only Son, to come into our world of sin and rebellion to not only speak God's Word but to live it out perfectly so that He could be the perfect sacrifice for all our sins, so that God could put all His wrath upon Him instead of us. Yes, God abandoned His Only Son to hell on the Cross of Calvary so that we would not have to go there to pay for our sins. Jesus made the full and final payment for all our sins and then three days later rose from the grave to proclaim the victor that He had won for us.

Ezekiel's words and actions showed the people of his time the greatness of their sins and the even greater love that God has for them. Even at the valley of the dead dry bones through God's Word, Ezekiel was able to bring life back from the dead dry bones. Jesus' words and actions showed the people of his time and ours, the greatness of our sins and the even greater love that God has for each of us. For God send His Only Son into this world not to condemn the world but to bring us to salvation, back from the dead dry bone we are without Him. Jesus sends each of us as He send the disciples of His time to proclaim God's Word to all the people that we meet and let the Holy Spirit go to work in their lives. For today as in the past those who do not reject God's Word, but let God' Word and Sacrament, through the Holy Spirit, go to work in their lives will come to faith, so that they can be with us in the heavenly home that God has prepared for us for eternity. Yes, God is waiting for us with open arms and is calling us to share the Good News of our eternal home with others. So, follow the calling God has given to you and share the words of God and for His loving hugs are waiting for us all. Amen