



Ezekiel 33

Tape #7329
Ezekiel 33
By Chuck Smith

Let's turn in our Bibles to Ezekiel, chapter thirty three. Now to give you just a little background for chapter thirty three, you need to take a quick little look back at chapter twenty four.

Here in the latter portion of chapter twenty four, the Lord told Ezekiel that his wife was going to die, but he was not to mourn for her death. He was to forbear crying, he was to go on as, as though he wasn't going through grief or sorrow. That was a sign to the people that the joy of their lives, the city of Jerusalem, was going to be taken by the Babylonians. When the news came that Jerusalem had fallen, they were not to grieve or to mourn. It was God's work of judgment because of the iniquities of Jerusalem.

So the Lord told Ezekiel in chapter twenty four, verse twenty seven, "In that day shall your mouth be opened to them which are escaped", actually, he was, he wasn't gonna be able, he wasn't to speak until the news came of the fall of Jerusalem. Now this was about two years before the fall of Jerusalem, and he was not to speak again until they received news of the fall of Jerusalem. "In that day, your mouth will be opened to those that have escaped, and you will speak, and you will no longer be mute. But you shall be a sign to them, and they shall know that I am the Lord."

So in this intervening time, from the ninth year, the tenth month, until the word came that Jerusalem had fallen, he was not to prophesy to the Jewish people. He was to be silent. God was more or less silent to them during this period of time, but then when news came, he was then to prophesy.

So the prophecies then in chapters twenty five, through chapters thirty two, are prophecies to the surrounding nations. We have looked at those prophecies to Egypt, and to the Pharaoh of Egypt and to the other nations round about, Moab and Philistines, and Edomites, and so forth, Tyre, and we've considered those prophecies.

But now, in chapter thirty three, it is in the evening, and of course as we have mentioned before, the Jewish days begin at sundown. They go from evening to morning, as far as their, it was evening, and it was morning, day one. So their days go from evening to evening. Thus in the evening, the Lord began to speak to Jeremiah concerning Israel once again. That next day, which would be the day that began in that evening, the people began to come from Jerusalem, and they were telling of the destruction that took place in Jerusalem.

So the prophecy now goes back to Israel. God had been silent, not speaking to Israel for a period of time, until the judgment against Jerusalem was fulfilled. Now God speaks again.

The interesting thing as we follow now these prophecies, they are prophecies of the future glory that God is going to bring to the nation. It's sort of exciting, because they've gone through probably the darkest hour in the history of the nation. The destruction of Jerusalem, the scattering of the people, they are demoralized, they're feeling rather hopeless, things look very bleak as far as the future is concerned.

But it is to that darkness that God addresses the people concerning the future glory, what God is going to yet do for these people, and for this nation. We've come to the time where the prophecy is going to center again upon Israel, and it is actually taking us on into the future, the future glory that shall yet come to Israel. The rebuilding of the temple and all, as we move on out to the end of the book of Ezekiel.

So this sort of marks a, a transition in the prophecies, and actually this came to him in the twelfth year of their captivity, and in the tenth month, in the fifth day of the month, which was actually some eighteen months, or a year and a half after Jerusalem fell. That's how long it took for the news to get there, to Babylon from the exiles. They believe that actually the messengers were the group of exiles who had made their way from Israel to Babylon, over this difficult long trek. Now they come with the news of the destruction, and the desolation of the city of Jerusalem. So...

Again the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, speak to the children of your people, [He had been silent, not speaking to them for three years, but once again he begins to speak to them.] and say

unto them, When I bring the sword upon a land, if the people of the land take a man of their coasts, and set him for their watchman: If when he sees the sword coming upon the land, he blows the trumpet, and warns the people; Then whosoever hears the sound of the trumpet, and takes not warning; if the sword comes, and takes him away, his blood will be upon his own head. He heard the sound of the trumpet, he didn't take the warning; so his blood shall be upon him. But he that taketh warning will deliver his soul. But if the watchman sees the sword coming, and doesn't blow the trumpet, and the people be not warned; if the sword comes, and takes away any person from among them, he is taken away in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at the watchman's hand. So thou, O son of man, I have set you as a watchman to the house of Israel (33:1-7);

So the Lord is sort of laying a heavy charge upon Ezekiel. He first of all says that, when a nation is in trouble, expecting an invasion, they hire a man to be a watchman, to watch for the enemy, the approach of the enemy. When he sees them approaching, if he blows the trumpet to warn the people, then he's fulfilled his obligation and duty as a watchman. If the people don't pay any attention to him, then that's their problem. If they do pay attention and take the precautions, they can save themselves. But if he doesn't warn them, and they be taken in their iniquity, then the Lord will require the blood of the people of the watchman. He is responsible.

Now I do not believe that this has a general application to all believers. I think it can be, but I don't think that, that's the thrust of the, the Lord then says, "I have set you as a watchman." But I do believe that it does have implications for all of those who have been set as ministers, to minister to the flock of God. I think that we have a definite responsibility to warn the people of the judgments of God that are coming. I believe that God holds us responsible to warn the people.

Now notice, the responsibility of the watchman was to warn. Once he had done that, he had discharged the obligation. Paul the apostle, when he was talking to the elders of the church at Ephesus, there in Acts nineteen, said, "I have fully proclaimed to you the word of God, so that I am free of the blood of all men. I, I have been faithful, I have discharged my duty. I have declared to you the full counsels of God, therefore I'm free of the blood."

James warns not to be many teachers, or masters. Don't just set yourself up as an authority in the word of God, he said, "Knowing that you will receive the greater condemnation". So those men who are ministers, who are set in the place of ministry, are in a place of greater responsibility. Thus, they will be judged by higher standards, and it is therefore very important that we take the position as a watchman, or as a minister, that we take it very seriously, realizing that God will require at our hands, the ministry, the faithfulness to the ministry, and to the word of God, and to warning the people.

So the Lord is laying this solemn charge upon Ezekiel. He has been set as a watchman and it is his responsibility to warn the people of the impending judgments that are coming.

But we cannot force the people, and what they do with the warning is not our responsibility. I think that many times in, in our Christian work, we feel that maybe it's a carry over from the worldly concepts, we feel that we only will be rewarded for getting the signatures on the dotted line. That we've got to somehow convince people of, of the truth of the Bible. We often find ourselves in the position of arguing with people, pressuring people, trying to you know, get them to make that decision for Jesus Christ. When they don't, we go away feeling all defeated and discouraged, and like, you know, "I'm a failure, I couldn't bring them around to a commitment to the Lord".

But in reality it's great to serve the Lord, because we are not paid commissions, we just are on salary. It's just our job to warn. What the people do with it, that's their problem, and that's their responsibility. My responsibility is to warn.

As a Christian, it's your responsibility to witness of the truth of Jesus Christ, but what they do with that witness, is, is really not your obligation, or responsibility. It, it's then on their own shoulders. It rests now completely with them, because they now have been warned.

So the necessity of our being faithful in giving the warnings, to declare what God has said. To be alert to the things that are happening so that we can warn the people. Here we are entering in to this area of prophecy here that God has declared, "And this is what is gonna happen, these are the judgments that are

coming”, and then people can say, “I don’t believe that”, or they can say, “Ooh, I better get right you know!” But at least you have fulfilled your obligation, and you’re free, as Paul the apostle, “I’m free from the blood of all men, because I have actually declared to you the full counsels of God”.

So the Lord goes on to amplify it then. They were to, he was to warn the people, the warning’s from God, and these are the warnings...

When I say unto the wicked, O wicked man, you are surely going to die (33:8);

The Bible tells us that, “the wages of sin is death”, the Bible tells us that, “the soul that sinneth, it shall surely die”. So, “When I say to the wicked, O wicked man, you will surely die”...

if you do not speak to warn the wicked of his way, that wicked man shall die in his iniquity; but his blood will I require at your hand (33:8).

Case one. Here’s a person who is living a wicked life, you’re responsible to warn them of the consequences of living a wicked life. “You’re gonna destroy yourself, you will be destroyed. The wages of sin is death.” If you warn them, you fulfilled your obligation to the Lord. But if you don’t warn them, then God will hold you responsible, in that you did not warn them.

Nevertheless, if you warn the wicked [verse nine] and he turns from it; [to turn from it] and if he does not turn from his way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul (33:9).

You’re, you’re not responsible. You’re free from the guilt.

Therefore, O son of man, speak unto the house of Israel; And thus you shall say, If our transgressions and our sins be upon us, and we pine away in them, how should we then live? [He is to warn them of their wickedness, and they say, “Okay if we are dying because of our sins, how shall we live?”] So you are to answer them, say unto them, As I live, saith the Lord God, I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked; but that the wicked turn from his way and live: turn ye, turn ye from your evil ways; for why will you die, O house of Israel (33:10-11)?

God’s pleading unto man, unto a nation that has turned its back on God. God is pleading with them. Because God said, “I have no pleasure in the death of the wicked.” The Bible tells us that, “God is not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance”.

I think that we make a great mistake when we talk about “sending men to hell”. I don’t think that God has ever sent a man to hell. In fact, God has done everything possible short of the violating of that man’s free will, to keep him out of hell. God sent His Only Begotten Son to die for our sins, that we would not perish. God has made every provision, and has gone as far as He can, short of violating a man’s free moral agency, his free will. Because God has given us the power of choice, the capacity of choice, but choice is invalid if God overrules the choice. God says, “Well choose what you want”, “Well, I’ll take that”, “No you can’t have that”. Well then that really isn’t choice. It invalidates choice. So God has given to us that capacity of choice, and He does everything short of violating that choice, to lead us away from destruction.

Here, as the people say, “Well you know, if we’re dying in our sins, then how shall we live?” The answer is, “Turn from your wickedness. For”, God said, “I don’t have any pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that the wicked turn from his way, and live. Therefore, turn ye, turn ye, from your evil ways, for why will you die O house of Israel?”

You know I, I feel much the same as I see people who are engaging in sinful practices that are destroying them. You can see how they are destroying their lives. They are destroying their families. You see them as they are pursuing these paths of unrighteousness, and you see what it’s doing to them, and to those around them, and you say, “Turn! Why do you want to do that? Why do you want to destroy these things that are really worthwhile?” So often they just continue in that path of destruction!

You see them start to, the kids, starting to mess around with drugs. You sit down and you talk to them, and you say, “Look these are not good, these can destroy you! You know, these can just wipe you out, it can destroy your future!” They won’t listen, they just continue. It hurts, you say, but you see you can’t just follow them around twenty four hours a day. You can’t just lock them up! So you hurt, you pain, you don’t take any pleasure in what they’re doing. You see them destroying themselves, and it pains, and it hurts.

I think how God must be pained, and God must be hurt when He sees His children destroying themselves, as they rebel against the law of God.

Again, I challenge you, show me one law that God has set that is really not for the best for a person. God has not prohibited one good thing. If it's good and beneficial, will make you a better person, will enrich, and enhance your life, bring you into a better, glorious life, then God says, "Go for it, that's what you should do!" But if it is destructive, if it can lead to pain, and if it can lead to destruction, the destruction of your marriage, or the destruction of, of your future, God says, "Don't do that!" He prohibits those things that destroy, He commands that you do those things that are beneficial and good!

When a person chooses to ignore God, and the commands of God, they are courting destruction upon themselves. God has sent those who are to warn them. But that's all we can do. Then God declares, "I don't really have any pleasure in the death of the wicked. My desire is that they would turn from their wickedness and live. Turn, turn, for why will you die?" Good question.

Therefore, thou son of man, say to the children of your people, The righteousness of the righteous shall not deliver him in the day of his transgression: as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turns from his wickedness; and neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sins (33:12).

Now the Lord is declaring that your good deeds, your righteousness, cannot really atone for your transgressions. Now this is a tragic mistake that is being made by the Jews today. In that, as God established His laws with them, the laws of sacrifice were established, the sin offerings were described, and proscribed, prescribed for the people, so that when they sinned, they were to bring an animal. The animal was to be slain, and the blood was to be put upon the mercy seat to make atonement for their sins, a covering for their sins, the kaphar. That was the way the sin had to be dealt with, because the wages of sin is death. The sentence against sin was death, and the animal became the substitute. He would lay his hand on the animal, confess his sins, transfer the guilt to the animal. He was then slain as a substitute for the person.

Now somewhere along the line, they have substituted for the animal being slain, good works. Thus they are trying to weigh in the balances their transgressions, and their good works. Yom Kippur becomes now the, the time in which you reflect over the past, and over the evil that you have done, and over the good that you've done. Hopefully the good over weighs the evil, and if not, then you're real busy the week before Yom Kippur, to go out and to make up for all of the, you know, minuses that you have. Hopefully by the day of atonement, you can balance out!

But here, God is declaring that, that doesn't work. During the days of Jesus Christ, they had the sect of the Pharisees and the Scribes. The men who studied the law, the Scribes. The Pharisees, those who studied the law, and sought to practice every jot, and tittle of the law, and were just so exacting in every little aspect of the law. As Jesus said, "They strained at a gnat". That came from the law that said, "You're not to eat anything that had, that had blood in it". You were to thoroughly bleed the meat before you eat it.

You know how it is sometimes, if you're jogging down the street, you're panting, a gnat will go in your mouth. Now it hasn't been properly killed, it hasn't been bled, it's not kosher to swallow that gnat. So they would put their finger down their throat, and gag! You'd see them with their finger down their throat, throwing up on the street corner. You realize that you know, they're straining at that gnat! You know trying to get the thing out! That's how concerned they were with every little aspect of the law, to keep it.

But the righteousness was a self-righteousness, as was manifested by the prayer of the Pharisee that Jesus quotes, when he went into the temple and said, "O God, I thank you that I'm not like other men! I'm not an extortioner, or an adulterer, and all these things. You know, I, I'm glad I'm so good!"

But Jesus told about the other fellow weighted down with sin, who would not even so much as lift his head towards heaven, who just smote on his chest and said, "O God be merciful to me a sinner!" Jesus said, "He went away justified, where the Pharisee went away guilty". Because the righteousness that he had was a self-righteousness, of his own efforts, of his own making, but that always comes short. It's short of God's ideal. You haven't achieved or attained. For if the Bible said, "If you keep the whole law, and yet you violate in one point, you're guilty of all".

Ezekiel's saying much the same thing here. "You may be very righteous, you may be doing a lot of righteous deeds. But for the transgression, you're gonna be judged." So the righteousness has to exceed that of the Scribes and Pharisees. But, you say, "Impossible! I'm guilty!"

Now that's exactly what God intended the law to do, is to make you realize your guilt. It was to expose your shortcomings, and to make you guilty before God. So that you would be forced to come to God on the basis of His love, and grace, and mercy, to receive forgiveness. Not coming and presenting your case to God, telling how wonderful you are, all the good works you've done, all of the charitable causes that you've supported, but just simply coming and saying, "God I'm a sinner. Have mercy on me!"

God has provided through the sacrifice of His Son, the provision whereby your sins can be atoned, covered! In fact, more! Washed away! "What the, the blood of goats, and bulls could not do, in that they could not put away sin, Jesus Christ has done in His death for us, the putting away of our sins."

So I can come to God, and I do come to God, not on the basis of my merits, my goodness, my works, my efforts, but I come to God on the basis of His love for me, and the provisions that He provided for me. Because of His love, in sending His Son, to receive the grace of the Lord, and the mercies of God, which I so desperately need! Thus, though my sins may be many and grievous, yet through Jesus Christ, and through my reliance upon Him, I am forgiven! My sins are washed, they're cleansed! They're blotted out!

That's what Ezekiel is talking about here. People who were living these righteous, self-righteous lives. How that their transgressions are damning them, and their righteousness, their self-righteousness is of no avail, because of their transgressions. "So the righteousness of the righteous will not deliver him in the day of his transgression. But as for the wickedness of the wicked, he shall not fall thereby in the day that he turns from his wickedness, neither shall the righteous be able to live for his righteousness in the day that he sins."

How do I approach God? How do I come to God? Confessing my sin, my guilt, seeking His mercy, then I'm forgiven. Telling Him how wonderful I am, and how it would, "I would be totally perfect if it weren't having to live with you imperfect people!" Ha, ha! "You just make me mad, and you get me upset, and I have to get even you know". So I am justifying that the evil that I do, by blaming you. But that doesn't wash with God. My self-righteousness is just like filthy rags in the eyes of God.

Now Paul the apostle sort of spoke about this in his letter to the Philippian church. Where, he talks about the righteousness which is from the law. He said, "If any man of the Jews has wherein he might boast, I more. I mean, I was ahead of all these guys. I was the head of the class in self-righteousness! I mean, I was a Hebrew of the Hebrews, I was of the tribe of Benjamin, I was circumcised the eighth day, and concerning the law, I was blameless. I was zealous, and persecuted the church, and was doing all of these things, and was at the head of the class! But those things which were gain to me in the Jewish culture, I counted loss, for the excellency of the knowledge of Jesus Christ. For whom I suffered the loss of all things, but to count them but refuse that I may know Him. To be found in Him not clothed, not covered with my own righteousness which is of the law, but with the righteousness which is of faith through Jesus Christ. Gladly I, I gave up the old filthy rags that I was wearing, that I might be clothed upon with this beautiful righteousness of Jesus Christ, that God imputes to me, through my faith in Jesus Christ." So the Lord said...

When I shall say to the righteous, that he shall surely live; if he trusts in his own righteousness, [That's it, you're trusting in your own righteousness.] and commits iniquity, all of his righteousnesses shall not be remembered; [It's your iniquity that's gonna wipe you out, so if, if you've sinned once man, you're in trouble, no matter how good you may have been since!] and you shall die for your iniquity. Again, when I say to the wicked, You will surely die; if he turns from his sin, and does that which is lawful and right; And if the wicked restores the pledge, gives again that which he had robbed, walks in the statutes of life, [And there's the key, walking in the statutes of life.] without committing iniquity; he shall surely live, and he shall not die. And none of his sins that he has committed shall be mentioned unto him: he has done that which is lawful and right; he shall surely live (33:13-16).

Interesting! There will be a lot of evil men in heaven, whose sins have been washed and cleansed, through Jesus Christ. There will be a lot of good moral people in hell, who have trusted in their own righteousness, rather than in the provisions that God has made for us, through Jesus Christ. I love that, "None of his sins that he has committed shall be mentioned". God wipes out the past. "If any man be in Christ, he's a new creation. The old things are passed away, and everything becomes new." But the people object. They say, "That's not fair".

The children of thy people say, The way of the Lord isn't equal (33:17):

“God isn’t fair, He isn’t fair to cleanse and to forgive the wicked! They’ve done such horrible things, and look I’ve been trying to be good. He’s condemning me, that’s not fair!” But God responds to that by saying...

they way is not equal. For when the righteous turns from his righteousness, and commits iniquity, he shall even die thereby. But if the wicked turns from his wickedness, and do that which is lawful and right, he shall live thereby. Yet you say, The way of the Lord is not equal. O ye house of Israel, I will judge you every one after his ways. [“I’m the Judge, and I will judge you according to your ways.”] So it came to pass [Now, this was the next, it was, the day began at evening, so this is the same day, but it was in the daylight, “It came to pass”,] in the twelfth year of our captivity, in the tenth month, the fifth day of the month, that one that had escaped out of the Jerusalem came unto me, saying, The city is smitten (33:17-21).

News finally arrives. Eighteen months after the fall of Jerusalem, news finally arrives to Ezekiel, and those captives that were there, that Jerusalem had been destroyed.

Now the hand of the Lord was upon me in the evening, [That was the evening before when he prophesied, the evening,] afore [Which is old English for “before”, before,] the one who had escaped had come; [The Lord had already spoken to him the night before, and let him know.] and he had opened my mouth, until he came to me in the morning; and my mouth was opened, and I was no more dumb (33:22).

So that evening, the Lord had already come, and began to speak to him again. He would give him prophecy for the people again, and in the morning, here came the news. So the Lord told him that he was to be dumb until you know, they received the message that Jerusalem had fallen. So God had sort of briefed him the evening before.

So then the word of the Lord came to me, saying, Son of man, they that inhabit those wastes of the land of Israel speak, saying, Abraham was one, and he inherited the land: we are many; and the land is given to us for an inheritance (33:23-24).

Now after Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians, Nebuchadnezzar left still a remnant of the people there. He set up this man Gedaliah, as the governor over the area. He came back to Babylon with the troops, but there were certain ones who rebelled against Babylon, and they were wanting to throw off again the yoke of Babylon, and so they killed Gedaliah. They sought to set up their own government. Of course, it incensed Nebuchadnezzar, so he came again to deal with them.

That’s when they came to Jeremiah and said, “What shall we do? Seek the Lord. Find out what God says. Whatever God says, we will do it. Please, please! Get God’s word for us. We need help from God to direct us!” So Jeremiah prayed, and the Lord said, “Tell them to just stay there, that they can make, make peace with the Babylonians. Don’t go down to Egypt, because if they go down to Egypt, the Babylonians will pursue them, and they’ll be destroyed.”

When he gave them the message, they said, “God didn’t tell you that! We’re gonna go to Egypt anyhow!” So they sort of forced everybody to go down to Egypt, and the word of the Lord came to pass, just as Jeremiah said. The Babylonians came, and they conquered Egypt. Those who fled to Egypt for safety, were slain.

So here after Jerusalem fell, the people were still making claim. They said, “God gave that land to Abraham, he was only one. We are many and so the land really belongs to us”. So Ezekiel is commanded to say to them...

Thus saith the Lord God; You eat with the blood (33:25),

This was the law that we mentioned, you were not to eat anything with the blood. You were to drain the blood completely before you ate it. But they, they were violating this. God was wanting to teach them a great respect for blood, the life of the flesh is in the blood. It was the blood of the sacrifices that was used for the covering of their sins. It was all pointing ahead to the blood of Jesus Christ that would cleanse us from all sins. The life of the flesh is in the blood. The blood represents life. Bloodshed represents death, life going out. So Jesus poured out His life for us, to make atonement for our sins.

So it was in the law they were not to eat anything that had not been bled, and yet these people were doing that. They were strangling the meat, and eating it. So they’re transgressing the laws of God.

you lift up your eyes towards your idols, and you are shedding innocent blood: [And God says,] shall

you possess the land (33:25)?

Here they're trying to claim the land, claiming that, "God gave it to our father Abraham, thus it's our inheritance". God says, "Hey, you're doing all of these evil, abominable things, and shall I give you the land?"

Say unto them, Thus saith the Lord God; As I live (33:27),

Here God is taking an oath. God is, you know the Bible says, "When you take an oath, you swear by something higher", you say, "By my mother's honor", you swear by something higher than yourself. But when God wants to take an oath to confirm His word, He's sort of stuck because there's nothing higher! So He has to swear by Himself. So this is one of those cases where God is sort of swearing, "As I live", saith the Lord...

surely they that are in the wastes [Those that have escaped to the wilderness.] shall fall by the sword, and he that is in the open field will I give to the beasts to be devoured, and they that have fled to the forts and are living in the caves shall die of the pestilence (33:27).

In other words, they are not going to escape the judgment of God no matter if they flee to the caves, or they flee to the wilderness, or they flee to Egypt. The judgment of God is going to come upon them because of their sin.

For I will lay the land most desolate, [“I’m gonna wipe out the land itself.”] and the pomp of her strength shall cease; the mountains of Israel shall be desolate, and none will pass through. And then shall they know that I am the Lord, when I have laid the land most desolate because of all of their abominations which they have committed. [So there’s no escaping from the judgment of God that’s going to come, because of the evil.] Also, thou son of man, the children of your people are talking against you by the walls and in the doors of their houses, and they speak to one another, every one to his brother, saying, Come, I pray you, and hear what [the word, what] is the word that cometh forth from the Lord (33:28-30).

They would talk about Ezekiel. "Oh that guy is a real character! You know, he lies on his side for a year, and he does all these weird things. He's just really an eccentric kind of a guy, but let's go over and just see what the Lord is saying".

The Bible speaks about those who have itching ears. They just want to hear for entertainment purposes. "Let's just see what he has to say now!" You know, and they have no intention of obeying the word of the Lord. They are like James described, "People who are hearers of the word, but not doers, and thus are deceiving themselves".

So here are these people who talk about, and talk against Ezekiel, but yet, when they come, they smile and they say, "Oh prophet tell us what's God saying? You know, we've come...", and they sit there in front of him, so that he can prophesy to them the word of the Lord.

And they come unto you [verse thirty one] as the people come, and they sit before you as my people, [Just like they're really anxious to hear the word of God.] and they hear your words, but they will not do them (33:31):

Hearers of the word, but not doers, now James said, "you deceive yourself". It's a self deception, to just take comfort, "Well, we go and we listen to the Bible studies". People take comfort in that. But if you're not doing, then you are just deceiving yourself! Thinking that, "Well I'm alright. You know, I do go to church and I listen to the messages". Well that's not sufficient! Has it found an application in your life? Are you obeying the word? Are you keeping the word of God?

So they hear the word, but they will not do them. For with their mouth they shew much love, but their hearts go after covetousness. With their mouths they can sing praises, great swelling words, "Oh how I love Jesus, take my life and let it be consecrated Lord to thee, take my hands and let them move at the impulse of my love...". We can, we can express love, and we can talk about love. But where's your heart? What's going on in your heart? It's not the words that really count, but it's the heart of man that God is looking at.

And, lo, you are to them as a very lovely song one that has a pleasant voice, and you can play well on the instrument: for they hear the words, but they don't do them (33:32).

Now usually the prophets in those days would, would play on a harp. David you know, was a prophet, and he had the harp, and he would play. Quite often they were sort of like minstrels, they would sing the

prophesies. People, Ezekiel had a great voice. He was excellent on the instrument. So people were entertained, and they looked at it as entertainment. They, they would come to be entertained. "The guy's got a good voice, he's a clever musician you know, so let's go down and listen". But they didn't obey. They didn't follow the counsels of God. They do not do what is said.

And so when this cometh to pass, [And then God affirms] (and it will come to pass,) then shall they know [When they see all of these things, then they will know] that there has really been a prophet among them (33:33).

When the words are fulfilled, then they will realize, "This man was a real prophet of God". Sort of like Jesus when all of the events of the, of, that happened when He was crucified, the earthquake, the sun turning dark and so forth, and all of these events. The Centurion said, "Truly this was the Son of God".

So with Ezekiel, "when these words, these prophesies are fulfilled, then they will know. Up till now, you're just an entertainer. They, they like your music, they like your songs, they like your voice. You've got a good voice. But they're not doing, they're not obeying. They'll realize that you're more than just a good musician, you were a true prophet of God, when these things", and God assures, "these things will surely come, and when they do, they'll know there's been a prophet in their midst".

Well, didn't make to thirty four, but I really didn't expect to, tell you the truth. There is so much in thirty four, that I wanted to spend a whole evening in chapter thirty four. So we'll get to chapter thirty four next Sunday night, and there's, there's just a lot of important, valuable things to learn in chapter thirty four. So tune in next week, same time, same station. Get the continuation! Shall we stand?

I pray that we will not be guilty as were the people of Israel, of being hearers of the word, and not doers. That somehow we get the idea that because we listen to the word of God, or because we have the word of God, that we are somehow justified. Or that, "because I am basically a good person, and I try to be honest, and try to treat people right", that, that somehow justifies me before God. But that I will realize that my only hope of eternal life lies in Jesus Christ, and in the provisions that God has made to put away my sin, through Him. That my faith in Jesus Christ will increase and grow, as I trust in Him, as I look to Him, and as I experience then, His work of love, and power in my life.

May this week be a wonderful week of walking in fellowship with Jesus. May you become more conscious of His presence. May we each, in our hearts, determine not to just be hearers of the word, but doers, putting into practice those things that God has commanded. May the Lord be with you and watch over and keep you in His love, as you walk in faith, with Him.