

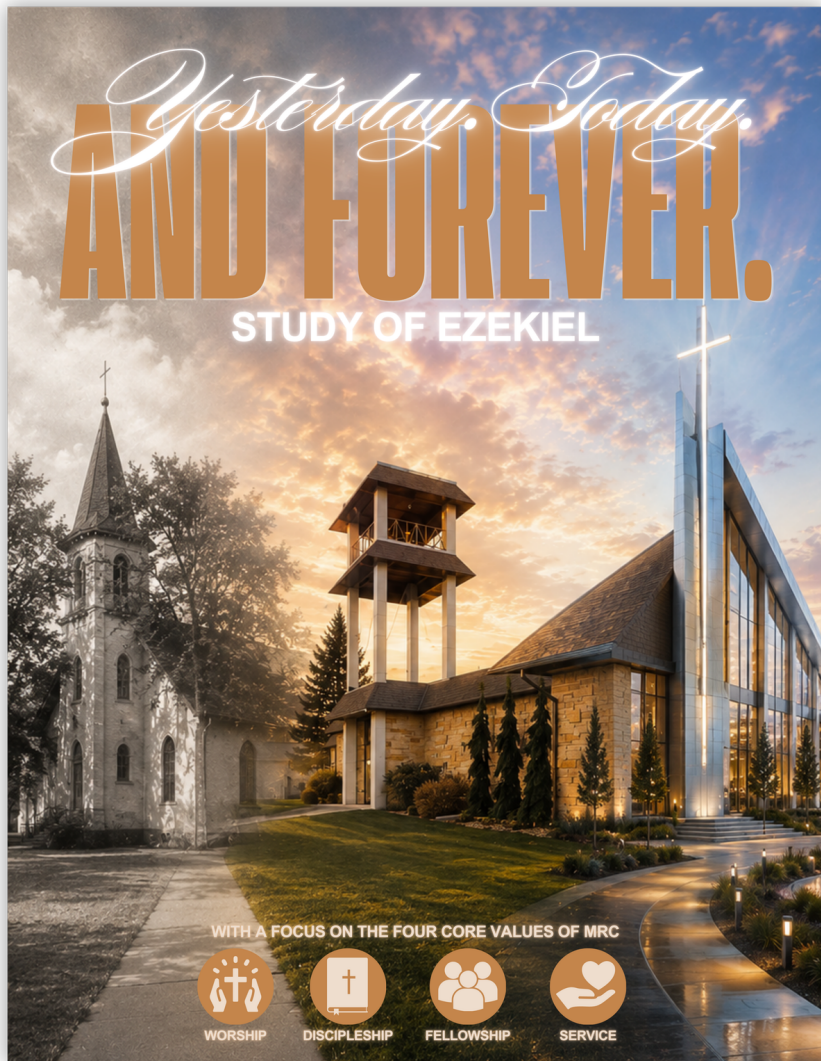
- WELCOME TO - MAURICE REFORMED CHURCH

...FOLLOWING GOD, LOVING OTHERS...



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Yesterday. Today. **AND FOREVER.** STUDY OF EZEKIEL



WITH A FOCUS ON THE FOUR CORE VALUES OF MRC



WORSHIP



DISCIPLESHIP



FELLOWSHIP



SERVICE

DAILY DEVOTIONALS

September 13-19

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13

Study of Ezekiel | Yesterday. Today. & Forever.

Ezekiel 3:1-21, 5:1-17, 37:1-14

“Discipleship”

What is discipleship?

K _____ , G _____ , G _____

1. S _____

a. G _____ W _____

2. A _____

a. L _____ L _____ J _____

3. T _____

a. G _____ A _____

MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 14

Ezekiel 2, 33:1-11 | Calling People to God

I love discipleship. A disciple is someone who follows a leader. In the Christian faith our leader is God, who came down to earth and became like us in flesh. Jesus is Immanuel, meaning God with us. So, this week we are going to look at what it means to be a disciple and a disciplemaker. Jesus wanted people to follow Him and then His desire, as we see in the great commission, is for the disciples to help others follow Him as well. God desired the same thing even in the Old Testament.

In Ezekiel 2 and 33 God is very clear with Ezekiel that he is to tell the people of Israel what he is being told. God tells Ezekiel that he will be held accountable for the death of anyone who he does not tell about the coming judgment. That doesn't mean everyone is going to listen, but the job of Ezekiel is to simply tell others about God and His truth. One more thing to note about God is that He does not take pleasure in the death of the wicked. God desires that the wicked would turn to Him, but if they don't, death is the just consequence to their behavior.

This is the message we are to pass on. We are to pass on the truth of scripture and point others to God. We are to pass on that God desires all people to be saved and then share the gospel of how to be saved. As disciples of Jesus Christ we are to be a part of the kingdom in helping others become disciples of Jesus Christ, and we do that by calling people to God. We point to Him and His justice, mercy, grace, and love and invite others to trust in Him completely as Lord and Savior. Where are we doing that church? I believe it is time that WE become better disciplmakers in northwest Iowa and beyond.

SONG:

“Follow You Anywhere” - Kristian Stanfill

KID'S QUESTION:

What are some ways you can help someone else learn about Jesus and follow Him?

YOUTH/ADULT QUESTION:

Who are you calling to Jesus? What truths is God asking us to share with others?

PRAYER:

Lord, give us ears to hear Your voice and a mouth to speak clearly what You have said.

[illegible]

TUESDAY, SEPTEMBER 15

Ezekiel 3 | Stand for Truth

Are you hard headed? Oftentimes in our lives being hard headed is seen as a bad thing and it definitely can be. It can mean that someone is unwilling to listen, change, or even consider another way. This can be a detriment to someone when they are unwilling to listen to the truth of God. On the positive side, it reminds me of Full Send Ministry and the encouragement to be 100% committed to Jesus Christ in everything.

In our passage today God says that he is giving Ezekiel a hard head that is like emery and harder than flint. He is giving Ezekiel a resolute mind on the truth of God so that He is not swayed by the rebellious and evil hearts of the Israelites. Ezekiel is also encouraged to take heart even when everyone seems against him. He is to hold to the truth no matter what their response is.

I pray that we have a hard head when it comes to the truth of scripture. I'm not saying we shouldn't be seeking a deeper understanding of the truth of scripture, but that we need to hold tight to what we know to be true. In our society people are trying to twist scripture and tell us that there is a different truth. We have watched churches and people be swept away by a current of lies disguised as truth and their minds are fixed on that deception. This is why it is so important to know what God truly said and not listen to the twisted version that a person comes up with to fit a societal norm. God's word doesn't change to fit us, we are to change to fit the word of God.

SONG:

"God and God Alone" - Chris Tomlin

KID'S QUESTION:

Can you think of a time when it might be hard to do what God says?
What could help you stand strong?

YOUTH/ADULT QUESTION:

What are some biblical truths that you have found it hard to stand on?

PRAYER:

Lord, give us strength and a hard head to keep standing on the truth.

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WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 16

Ezekiel 4 | Actions Must Match the Words pt. 1

Over the next two days we are going to focus on the actions rather than the words. We all know that it is important to speak the truth to those around us, but it is just as important to live out the truth. Christians can easily be labeled hypocrites because they do not live in ultimate perfection. Yes, we do all fall short of God's glory, but it is also true that God encourages us and commands us to live transformed lives for His kingdom right here and right now.

What we see in our passage today may seem strange, but God explains why Ezekiel is to do each of these things. They represent the attack on Jerusalem, the exile for both Israel and Judah and the struggle that will come after. Ezekiel first starts by setting up a miniature version of the attack as if he is playing with toys. Then he is to lay on his left and then his right for 430 days or about 14 months. Finally, during those days he is to eat a certain meal everyday as a sign of the limited resources available during the exile. His life literally portrayed times and situations for the people of Israel to see and understand.

It's possible that God is not going to ask us to mime out a situation for your friends to help them come to Christ, but He is asking us to reflect His truth in everything that we do. This becomes vitally important as we become aware that people are watching us all the time. Everywhere we go we are being watched by friends, family, neighbors, and co-workers. Just a reminder we are not to compare our behavior or actions to others, but to God. We shouldn't ask ourselves if we are living well compared to others, but if we are living well compared to the standard God has put out. Who is watching you today that needs to see Jesus?

SONG:

"Take My Life And Let It Be" - Tommy Walker

KID'S QUESTION:

How can your actions show someone else what it means to follow Jesus?

YOUTH/ADULT QUESTION:

Who watches you each day? When are some times that it is harder to live like Jesus?

PRAYER:

God, open our eyes to everyone who sees us each day. May we make sure to be a reflection of You in all we do.

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THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 17

Ezekiel 5 | Actions Must Match the Words pt. 2

Welcome back to theater 101 with Ezekiel. I love theater, in fact all of my family loves to act out skits and get into character, but Ezekiel is going all in. Ezekiel here is told to shave all of his hair off. Once the hair is completely off he is to take a third of it and burn it in the fire, then a third to be cut down by the sword, and a third should be scattered into the wind. A small amount was to be attached to his robe, but even some of that hair was to be put into the fire. Can you imagine watching this play out and wondering what in the world it is all supposed to mean?

Thankfully, God again shows us the picture of what it all means. This act in the drama of Ezekiel's life was to declare that some of the people would die by the sword, others would die by famine, and still others would go into exile. We know that this does come to pass when Babylon overthrows Judah that people are killed in the battle, some are left to die with nothing to eat, and yet others are taken away into exile. The actions of Ezekiel are representations of what God will do.

I think I would have a harder time shaving off all my head than laying on my side for 14 months. It makes me wonder if there is anything that I wouldn't do for God. If God asked me to shave off all of my hair, could I do it? If God asked me to give all my money away and sell my house and stop traveling would I do it? Are we willing to do whatever it takes to show other people who God is, even if it means doing something difficult? What limits have we intentionally or unintentionally set on what we are willing to do for God?

SONG:

"I Surrender All" - CeCe Winans

KID'S QUESTION:

What does it mean to obey God even when something is hard?

YOUTH/ADULT QUESTION:

What limits have you set on living out and sharing your faith?

PRAYER:

Lord, teach us that doing hard things for You is worth it every time.

[illegible]

FRIDAY, SEPTEMBER 18

Ezekiel 36 | Redemption

Why were we saved from our sins? I want us to ponder that question in light of this chapter. The chapter starts with a picture of God talking about the destruction of the land by all of the enemy nations. He then shares how these nations will now face destruction and that He will rebuild the nation of Israel. The nation of Israel will have new life and will flourish in all the land as it once did.

Then the focus switches. God declares that He is doing these things so that others can truly see who He is – that He holds all power and all authority over all things. God will remove the sin of Israel from them and give them a heart that desires Him rather than is hard towards Him. God will give them a Spirit to help them live daily for Him and follow His decrees. God will wash away all of their sins and rebuild the cities that have been destroyed. All of these things are to point to the truth that God is the King of kings and the Lord of lords.

We have made faith very self centered. There are sometimes that I even hear that faith is a personal thing that doesn't get talked about. What if God saved us to point others to Himself? What if our salvation was just as much for others as it is for us? We know that we cannot brag about anything we have done for our own salvation. We didn't earn it, we didn't deserve it, it truly was only by the grace and mercy of God that we have it. Now our lives are to be examples that point directly at God and what only He can do. Our redemption is not just for us, let's make sure it declares who it's really all about.

SONG:

“Jesus Paid It All” - Kim Walker-Smith

KID'S QUESTION:

Why do you think God wants us to tell others about Him?

YOUTH/ADULT QUESTION:

Do you think faith should be private or personal? How could that impact how we disciple others?

PRAYER:

Lord, You saved us so that we could point others to You. Help us help others follow You more closely.

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SATURDAY, SEPTEMBER 19

Ezekiel 37 | Dead Coming to Life

You might be thinking that this week has been more about evangelism than discipleship. I would argue that they go hand in hand. Discipleship is learning how to follow Christ with our words and deeds and we all need continuous discipleship and we are all tasked to continuously help others be discipled. This week we are going to end with a famous story from Ezekiel about life coming from death.

I love this story because it is a vivid picture of our spiritual lives. Each one of us started as a dead, dried out pile of bones. There was no life in us and nothing we could do to change it. Then God brought someone into our lives to speak His truth and show us how to follow Him. God moved through that person to impact our heart and mind and whole life for Him.

This week we were reminded what it looks like to truly follow God. It means that we speak His truth to the people around us, it means that we live our lives to reflect His character and His decrees. It means that we do this not to point to us, but we do this to point to Him. Finally, we see that God wants to use us to bring life to those around us. This can be a rebirth through salvation or an encouragement to keep getting stronger in the faith. Discipleship requires us to be faithful and also means we invite others to be faithful as well. Being a disciple who makes disciples is a lifelong task. Are we up for it?

SONG:

“Come Alive Dry Bones” - Lauren Daigle

KID'S QUESTION:

What is one thing you could do this week to help a friend grow closer to Jesus?

YOUTH/ADULT QUESTION:

How has God used someone in your life to help you grow in your faith?
How has God used you to help others grow in their faith?

PRAYER:

Lord, teach us how to be disciples who make disciples.

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