

Tuesday June 30, 2026

The Holy Spirit Brings Transformation

Ezekiel 36:26

As you enter your time with God today, take a moment to quiet your mind. Breathe this prayer: “Come, Lord Jesus, come. Fill me with your Spirit. Open my heart that you might share your words of life with me.”

We read today from Ezekiel 36:26. Read the passage now or at the end of this devotion. What does this passage teach us about the Holy Spirit bringing us to places of transformation?

I triple dog dare you to read the entire book of Ezekiel in one sitting. Yes, I know I broke “daring etiquette” by moving right to big one, and yes, I’m infantile enough to revert to playground tomfoolery to get you to read more of the Bible.

Ezekiel is quite a book. I would argue that it is the most ‘difficult’ book in the scriptures from a narrative standpoint because it mixes apocalyptic text with prophecy and adds liberal doses of deeply metaphorical and startling storytelling. As Lisa Liou shared last week, Ezekiel is called to semi-permanent reclining positions and repulsive food preparation for the sake of sharing a message with God’s people.

The point of the book of Ezekiel is two-fold. It tells us how far God’s people can fall when they lose sight of living into a love relationship with God. It also reminds us that even in our darkest moments, God’s hope and light can be seen when he does his work of restoration and transformation.

Which brings us to today’s verse.

“I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit in you; I will remove from you your heart of stone and give you a heart of flesh. And I will put my Spirit in you and move you to follow my decrees and be careful to keep my laws.”

It is important that God gives us these verses in the context of Ezekiel and not in some other book or genre. Otherwise, we might be prone to read this as God changing our emotions from unfeeling and stoic (a heart of stone) to empathetic and emotionally connected (a heart of flesh) towards the world around us. I have heard that sort of interpretation before and while it might be a little helpful, it is clearly not the intention of what the Lord is speaking to Ezekiel.

In context, this verse tells us that God promises to give his restored people a new heart of OBEDIENCE (flesh). In this gift that transforms the behavior of his people, God gets rid of a heart of disobedience (stone), or rejection of God.

Succintly, God changes us from death to life by getting rid of the source which moves us to disobey him.

Equally important to note is that God makes this promise to a group of people who have disparaged God’s name for generations through their idolatry, violence, and disobedience. He is not making this promise to a “moral and upright” people. He speaks these words to people who have “profaned his name” (vs.23). Even though they may look like they are beyond hope, God redeems his people for the glory of his name (vs.22).

God redeems those unworthy of his redemption who on their own reject him and profane the glory that is due him and he does so for his glory.

Read that previous sentence again. Read it again. That's you. That's me. That's all of us who are in relationship with God through the grace of Jesus Christ.

Without Christ, we are unworthy. Without Christ we would join the world in their rejection of him and his love. Without Christ we would profane his name with every breath as we go our own way on our own terms. Our hearts of stone would betray us and we would have nothing to separate us from God's anger and judgment.

But, that's not the story those of us who know Christ are telling because we are not fueled by hearts that cannot be trusted. God has given us a heart of flesh, a heart joined with Christ that is fueled differently. We don't always get it right and we allow our weakness to betray us, but we have the ability through Christ to actually give God glory. We can only do that because he has changed our hearts. We can only do that through our obedience. We can only do that as we seek his glory.

May the Spirit equip us to not listen to our hearts, but to listen instead to the heart he has given us. May his heart inspire us to obedience. In our obedience may God be glorified and the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ be proclaimed.

May the Lord bless you and keep you. May the Lord make his face shine upon you and be gracious to you. May the Lord turn his smile towards you and give you his peace.

In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Amen.

I love you all. Blessings.

Feel free to share this devotion with others.

To contact the author, please email: elgersma@therivercrc.com