

Small Group Guide: Ezekiel's Call to Ministry

Series: JOT that Down; Section: Major Prophets

Text: Ezekiel 1-3



Opening Prayer

Begin your time together by asking God to open hearts and minds to His Word, and to give courage to speak truth even when it's difficult.

Icebreaker Question

Share about a time when your plans completely fell apart. How did you respond? Looking back, can you see how God was working even then?

Key Takeaways

1. **God's sovereignty over our plans** - Ezekiel trained his entire life to serve as a priest in the temple, but God redirected him to be a prophet instead.

2. **The holiness of God** - Ezekiel's vision of God's throne room reveals the overwhelming majesty and holiness of God that demands our reverence.
 3. **The bittersweet nature of God's Word** - God's truth is sweet like honey when we receive it, but can be bitter in application when we must share difficult messages.
 4. **Our responsibility to warn others** - God holds us accountable not just for our own faithfulness, but for whether we warn others about sin and judgment.
 5. **Truth provokes a reaction** - When we speak God's truth, people will respond—either in acceptance or rejection—because deep down, everyone knows God is real.
-

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **Read Ezekiel 1:1-28.** How does Ezekiel describe his vision of God? What stands out to you about this description? Why do you think he uses phrases like "likeness of" and "appearance of"?
2. **Read Ezekiel 2:1-10.** What is God's message to Ezekiel about the people he's being sent to? What does God tell him to expect?
3. **Read Ezekiel 3:1-11.** What does it mean that the scroll was "sweet as honey" in Ezekiel's mouth but "bitter" in his stomach? Have you experienced something similar with God's Word?
4. **Read Ezekiel 3:16-21.** What responsibility does God place on Ezekiel as a "watchman"? What are the consequences if he fails to warn people?

Personal Reflection

5. Like Ezekiel, have you ever had your plans completely disrupted? How did you respond? In hindsight, can you see how God was redirecting you for His purposes?
6. The pastor shared his own story of how his ministry path didn't go as planned. What dreams or plans have you had to surrender to God? How has God used those disappointments?
7. When was the last time you had an "awkward conversation" with someone about faith or sin? What made it difficult? What made it worthwhile?

8. God told Ezekiel that people would know "a prophet has been among them" even if they didn't listen. How does this encourage you when sharing truth seems to fall on deaf ears?

Application and Challenge

9. **The Watchman Principle:** God told Ezekiel that if he didn't warn people, "their blood I will require at your hand." How does this apply to Christians today under the New Covenant? What is our responsibility to warn others?
 10. **Truth and Conviction:** The sermon mentioned that when we speak truth, it provokes a reaction because "there's something deep down inside of all of us that knows God is real." Have you witnessed this? How should this reality affect how we share the gospel?
 11. **Fear of Man vs. Fear of God:** The pastor said, "the fear of God is the beginning of wisdom" and that standing before God knowing what we failed to do is scarier than an awkward conversation. What keeps you from speaking truth to people in your life? How can "fear of God" overcome "fear of man"?
 12. **Sweet and Bitter:** Is there a truth from God's Word that you find "sweet" to receive but "bitter" to apply or share? What is it, and what's your next step?
-

Practical Application

This Week's Challenge:

Identify Your "Ezekiel Moment"

1. **Pray and Ask:** Is there someone God is calling you to warn or share the gospel with? Write their name down.
 2. **Prepare Your Heart:** Spend time this week reading Scripture and praying for courage. Remember: their response is their responsibility; your obedience is yours.
 3. **Take Action:** Before next week's meeting, have that conversation. It might be awkward, but remember Ezekiel's calling—and ours through the Great Commission.
 4. **Report Back:** Be prepared to share (without breaking confidences) how God worked through your obedience, regardless of the outcome.
-

Memory Verse

Ezekiel 3:17-19

"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: When I say to the wicked, 'You shall surely die,' and you give him no warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way, to save his life, 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 from his wickedness, nor from his wicked way, he shall die in his iniquity; but you have delivered your soul."

Closing Reflection

Silent Reflection (2-3 minutes):

- Is there anyone you've been avoiding confronting or sharing truth with because it would be uncomfortable?
- Are you more afraid of an awkward conversation or standing before God having failed to warn someone?
- What is God asking you to surrender—your plans, your comfort, your reputation—to be used by Him?

Group Prayer:

- Pray for courage to speak truth even when it's unpopular
 - Pray for the specific people group members identified as needing to hear God's Word
 - Pray for hearts to be tender to God's redirecting in our lives
 - Pray for boldness to value God's approval over human approval
-

For Further Study

- **Revelation 10:8-11** - John's similar experience of eating the scroll
- **Matthew 7:28-29** - Jesus teaching with authority
- **Jeremiah 1:4-10** - Another prophet's calling and God's promise to be with him
- **Acts 20:26-27** - Paul declaring himself "innocent of the blood of all men"
- **2 Timothy 4:1-5** - Paul's charge to Timothy to preach the Word in season and out

Leader's Notes

- Be sensitive to group members who may be processing disappointment or redirected plans
- Create a safe space for people to admit fears about sharing their faith
- Emphasize both grace and responsibility—we're not saved by warning others, but we are called to do it
- Be prepared to share your own struggles with speaking truth in difficult situations
- Follow up throughout the week with group members who commit to having difficult conversations

5-Day Devotional: Called to Speak Truth



Day 1: When Plans Change, God Remains

Reading: Ezekiel 1:1-3; Proverbs 16:9

Devotional: Ezekiel trained his entire life to serve as a priest in the temple, only to be taken captive before fulfilling that calling. Everything he worked for vanished. Yet in that disappointment, God met him with a greater purpose. Sometimes our carefully laid plans crumble, not because God has abandoned us, but because He's redirecting us toward something we couldn't have imagined. The career you trained for, the ministry you envisioned, the life you planned—when these fall apart, remember that God's plans are not canceled, just different. Your disappointment may be the doorway to your divine assignment. What feels like loss today may be preparation for tomorrow's purpose. Trust that God wastes nothing in your story.

Day 2: The Weight of God's Presence

Reading: Ezekiel 1:26-28; Isaiah 6:1-5

Devotional: When Ezekiel encountered God's throne room, he could only describe it in approximations—"likeness," "appearance," "as it were." The glory was beyond words, and his only response was to fall on his face. In God's presence, there is no room for pride, only humility. We live in a culture that elevates self-confidence and personal achievement, but genuine encounter with God's holiness produces the opposite effect. We see ourselves clearly—our inadequacy, our need, our dependence. This isn't meant to crush us but to position us rightly. When we understand who God is, we finally understand who we are: beloved children desperately in need of grace. Have you encountered God's holiness lately, or have you domesticated Him into something manageable?

Day 3: Sweet Words, Bitter Calling

Reading: Ezekiel 3:1-3; Revelation 10:8-11

Devotional: God's word was sweet as honey in Ezekiel's mouth but bitter in his stomach. Truth is always sweet because it comes from God, but its application can be difficult to digest. We love hearing about God's love, grace, and promises, but the call to speak hard truths to a resistant world? That's the bitter part. Yet both Ezekiel and John experienced this same reality—God's word is complete, both comforting and confronting. We cannot pick and choose which parts of Scripture to embrace. The gospel includes both amazing grace and the call to repentance. When we truly consume God's word, we accept all of it—the blessings and the responsibilities. Are you willing to speak the whole counsel of God, even when it's uncomfortable?

Day 4: The Watchman's Responsibility

Reading: Ezekiel 3:16-21; Acts 20:26-27

Devotional: God appointed Ezekiel as a watchman with a sobering responsibility: warn the people or bear accountability for their blood. This isn't about manipulation or fear-mongering; it's about love. If you saw someone walking toward a cliff in the dark, wouldn't warning them be the most loving thing to do? We live in a world walking toward judgment, and we have the light of truth. Our silence isn't kindness—it's negligence. Yes, people may reject the message. Yes, conversations will be awkward. But their response is between them and God; our responsibility is simply to speak. Paul could say he was "innocent of the blood of all men" because he declared the whole truth. Can you say the same? Who needs to hear truth from you today?

Day 5: Speaking with Authority

Reading: Matthew 7:28-29; John 1:1-5, 14

Devotional: Ezekiel had to say "Thus says the Lord" because he spoke as a man representing God. But when Jesus taught, people marveled because He spoke with inherent authority—He didn't need to reference anyone else. He IS the Word made flesh. This is the foundation of our faith: we don't follow a prophet's teachings or a philosopher's wisdom; we follow God Himself who entered our world. Jesus didn't just bring a message; He IS the message. When we share our faith, we're not offering religious opinions or moral suggestions—we're introducing people to the living God who spoke creation into existence and speaks life into dead hearts. Let this embolden you: the gospel you carry isn't your word; it's God's. And His word never returns void.