

Small Group Guide: The Book of Ezekiel - God's Promises of Hope

Opening Prayer



Begin your time together by thanking God for His faithfulness to His promises and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion and application.

Ice Breaker

Share about a time when you had to wait a long time for a promise to be fulfilled. How did waiting affect your faith or perspective?

Key Takeaways

1. **God's Judgment and Mercy Coexist:** God takes no pleasure in judgment but desires repentance and restoration (Ezekiel 33:11)
2. **Jesus as the True Shepherd:** God promised to personally seek out His scattered sheep, fulfilled in Jesus as the Good Shepherd
3. **Israel's Restoration:** God's promises include both physical restoration of Israel and spiritual salvation
4. **Future Hope:** Despite present difficulties, God's ultimate plan involves Jesus' return and eternal fellowship with His people

Discussion Questions

Understanding the Text

1. **The Watchman's Role** (Ezekiel 33)

- What was Ezekiel's responsibility as a "watchman"?
- How does this apply to believers today in warning others about spiritual danger?
- Have you ever struggled with sharing difficult truths with someone you care about?

2. **False vs. True Shepherds** (Ezekiel 34)

- What characterized the false shepherds in Israel's leadership?
- How does Jesus fulfill the role of the "True Shepherd" described in this passage?
- What are some characteristics of false spiritual leadership we should watch out for today?

3. **The Valley of Dry Bones** (Ezekiel 37)

- What does this vision represent about God's power to restore what seems dead?
- Can you share an area of your life that has felt like "dry bones" that God has brought or could bring back to life?

Theological Reflection

4. **God's Fairness** (Ezekiel 33:17-20)

- The Israelites complained that "God's way is not fair." Why is God's mercy actually the ultimate fairness?
- How does understanding God's grace change our perspective on justice?

5. **The Coming Temple** (Ezekiel 40-48)

- The pastor suggested the future temple might serve as a memorial practice, similar to communion. What are your thoughts on this?

- Why is it important for us to have physical practices (like communion) that help us remember spiritual truths?

6. **Already But Not Yet**

- Israel was regathered to their land in 1948 in unbelief, yet God promises future spiritual restoration. What does this teach us about God's timing and faithfulness?
- What promises of God are you waiting to see fully fulfilled?

Personal Application

7. **Repentance and Restoration**

- God said He doesn't delight in punishment but desires people to turn back to Him. How does this affect how you view God's character?
- Is there an area where you need to turn back to God or experience His restoration?

8. **Living in Hope**

- The pastor emphasized that the ultimate hope is "Jesus is coming and we get to be with Him." How does this hope affect your daily life?
- What changes when we truly live with an eternal perspective?

9. **Preparation for Christ's Return**

- The pastor asked: "Have I allowed the Holy Spirit to work in me, to turn me into the person I want Jesus to see when He comes back?"
- What areas of your life is the Holy Spirit currently working on?
- What practical steps can you take this week to cooperate with the Holy Spirit's work in you?

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge

Choose one of the following to practice this week:

1. **Be a Watchman:** Pray for courage to lovingly warn someone who may be heading toward spiritual danger. Ask God for wisdom and the right timing.

2. **Remember the Shepherd:** Set aside time each day to meditate on Jesus as your Good Shepherd. Journal about how He has sought you out and cared for you.
 3. **Practice Memorial:** Take communion (alone or with family) and spend intentional time remembering and thanking Jesus for His sacrifice.
 4. **Live with Eternal Perspective:** When facing a difficulty this week, pause and remind yourself: "Jesus is coming back, and I get to be with Him forever." Let that truth reshape your response.
 5. **Examine Your Heart:** Spend time in honest self-examination. Are there areas where you've been living in spiritual "dryness"? Ask God to breathe new life into those areas.
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Memory Verse

Ezekiel 34:11-12a "For thus says the Lord God: 'Indeed I Myself will search for My sheep and seek them out. As a shepherd seeks out his flock on the day he is among his scattered sheep, so will I seek out My sheep.'"

Prayer Prompts

- Thank God that He takes no pleasure in judgment but desires our restoration
 - Praise Jesus for being our True Shepherd who seeks us out
 - Pray for Israel's spiritual awakening and salvation
 - Ask God to prepare our hearts for Christ's return
 - Pray for areas of "dry bones" in your own life and in the lives of group members
 - Ask for boldness to be faithful "watchmen" who speak truth in love
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Closing Prayer

Close by praying together the hope expressed at the end of the sermon: that each person would allow the Holy Spirit to transform them into who they want to be when Jesus returns, motivated by love for Him and the joy of being with Him forever.

5-Day Devotional: The Promise of God's Faithful Presence



Day 1: The Watchman's Warning - God's Desire for Life

Reading: Ezekiel 33:10-20

Devotional:

God takes no pleasure in judgment. His heart longs for restoration, not destruction. Like Ezekiel the watchman, we are called to warn others not out of condemnation, but from love. Notice God's passionate plea: "Turn from your evil ways, for why should you die?" This reveals the Father's heart—He desires that the wicked turn and live.

Today, examine your own heart. Are there areas where you've drifted from God? He stands ready to forgive, not eager to condemn. His mercy extends to anyone who genuinely turns back to Him. Perhaps you've been living righteously but feel weary. Remember, God's grace sustains you. Or maybe you've wandered far—His arms remain open. The question isn't about your past performance, but your present posture toward Him. Will you turn and live?

Reflection: What warning has God placed on your heart that you need to heed today?

Day 2: The True Shepherd Seeks His Sheep

Reading: Ezekiel 34:11-16; John 10:11-18

Devotional:

Centuries before Jesus walked the earth, God declared, "I myself will search for my sheep and seek them out." This wasn't merely poetic language—it was prophetic promise. God Himself would become the Good Shepherd, leaving the ninety-nine to find the one lost sheep.

Jesus fulfilled this ancient promise. He didn't send an angel or a prophet; He came Himself. The Creator entered creation, the King became a servant, God took on flesh. Why? Because you matter that much to Him. You aren't just part of a flock—you are individually known, personally sought, and deeply loved.

The false shepherds fed themselves, but the True Shepherd feeds His sheep, even at the cost of His own life. Today, rest in this truth: you are not abandoned in your scattered state. Jesus is actively seeking you, calling you by name, leading you to green pastures.

Reflection: How have you experienced Jesus as your Good Shepherd recently?

Day 3: Restoration After Judgment

Reading: Ezekiel 36:22-38

Devotional:

God's restoration of Israel wasn't based on their merit—it was based on His name, His character, His promises. "I do not do this for your sake," God declares, "but for my holy name's sake." This is simultaneously humbling and liberating. Our salvation isn't dependent on our worthiness; it rests on God's faithfulness.

Notice the sequence: God gathers His people first, then cleanses them. He doesn't wait for us to get our lives together before He draws us near. He brings us close in our brokenness, then transforms us. He gives us a new heart and puts His Spirit within us.

Like Israel returning to their land in disbelief, many of us come to God skeptical, wounded, uncertain. Yet He doesn't reject us. He receives us, then begins the gentle work of spiritual renewal. Trust that God's commitment to you isn't based on your performance but on His unchanging character.

Reflection: Where do you need God's cleansing and renewal today?

Day 4: Dry Bones Coming to Life

Reading: Ezekiel 37:1-14; Ephesians 2:1-10

Devotional:

"Can these bones live?" God asked Ezekiel. The prophet stood in a valley of death, surrounded by hopelessness. Yet God breathed life into what seemed irredeemably dead. This vision wasn't just about Israel's national restoration—it's a picture of spiritual resurrection that applies to every believer.

Before Christ, we were spiritually dead, dry bones without hope. But God, rich in mercy, breathed His Spirit into us. He didn't just improve our condition; He made us alive. This is the miracle of salvation—not self-improvement, but resurrection.

Perhaps you feel spiritually dry today, like those bones scattered in the valley. Maybe your faith feels lifeless, your prayers hollow, your hope depleted. Remember: the same Spirit who raised Christ from the dead dwells in you. God specializes in bringing life from death. Invite His breath to revive what feels dead within you. He is still in the resurrection business.

Reflection: What area of your spiritual life needs God's resurrection power?

Day 5: The Promise of His Presence Forever

Reading: Ezekiel 37:24-28; Revelation 21:1-7

Devotional:

Ezekiel's vision culminates with the ultimate promise: "My tabernacle will also be among them. Indeed, I will be their God. They will be my people." This is the thread running through all of Scripture—God dwelling with His people. From Eden's garden to the tabernacle, from the temple to Jesus ("God with us"), to the church indwelt by the Holy Spirit, to the New Jerusalem where God dwells forever with redeemed humanity.

This is what we're waiting for. Not just streets of gold or mansions in heaven, but unbroken fellowship with Jesus. The One who created every beautiful thing we've ever experienced, who loved us enough to die for us, promises, "I'm coming back for you. I want to be with you for eternity."

This hope transforms how we live today. We endure trials knowing they're temporary. We pursue holiness because we love Him and want to be ready. We serve others because His love compels us.

Reflection: How does the promise of Jesus's return shape your daily choices and priorities?

Closing Prayer:

Lord Jesus, thank You for being the fulfillment of every promise. You are the True Shepherd who sought us when we were lost, the One who brings life to our dry bones, and the King who is coming again. Help us live in light of Your promised return, growing daily into the people You've called us to be. We love You and long to be with You forever. Amen.