

Sunday Celebration (February 8, 2009)  
"The Entrance Way of Grace"

Walking in Newness of Life (Pt. 2)

## INTRO

- **The Symptoms of Spiritual Illness** (from Pt. 1)
  - God's Solution ... Ez 36:23-27
- **Substitutes for the truths contained in Ez 36 (and the N.T.)**

**EXTERNALIZED RELIGION** = the Practice of the Law + Good Intentions and Self-Effort

*How Do I Know If I've Been Doing That?*

- **The Presence of Condemnation, Guilt, and Frustration**
  - the meditating emphasis is on YOUR Efforts and Failures. You are more aware of your responsibilities and your need to do than you are of your having been Fully Qualified and Accepted.

*"... Moreover, we are always challenging ourselves and one another to "try harder." We seem to believe success in the Christian life (however we define success) is basically up to us: our discipline, and our zeal, with some help from God along the way. " Jerry Bridges, "Transforming Grace," p. 11*

**Beware: Striving for Sanctification can result in a Greater Focus on YOUR actions and attitudes than on God's**

... In Ez 36 the Emphasis is on what GOD WILL DO

- **The Presence of Pride** – “Good Intentions and Self-Effort” are things that I attribute to myself, therefore I begin to conclude that my spiritual growth or my success is unavoidably rooted in ME.  
Evidence of this kind of pride can be seen:
  - ***In my tendency to COMPARE***  
... Comparing gives way to Competition, Jealousy, etc.
  - ***In my IMPATIENCE with other’s struggles & weaknesses***
  
- **The Pursuit of Passing Pleasures** – This occurs because external religion can never be internally satisfying. God has wired us (according to Ez 36) to experience his life through the portals of GRACE and the SPIRIT ... When that’s not occurring, we will seek pleasure and soul satisfaction through other venues.  
*... The Reality: I am Pursuing Fleshly Pleasure NOT because I am finding my pleasure in God, but rather I’m BORED with God and my life doesn’t have ENOUGH PLEASURE in it.*  
  
*... Grace enables me to DRAW NEAR TO GOD—*  
**Ps 73**
  - v. 1-3 ... The Condition of “Envy the Lost” (wanting their lifestyle & ways)
    - Is this a function of GRACE?
  - v. 16-17 ... Up to this point, “I was OUT OF MY MIND”
  - v. 25-26, 28 ... Wandering & Envy are the product of DISTANCE from God, not NEARNESS to God!**Ps 36:7-9** ...Feasting and the Fountain of Delights  
  
**Ps 27:4** “One thing have I asked of the Lord, that will I seek after: that I may dwell in the house of the Lord all the days of my life, to gaze upon the beauty of the Lord and to inquire in his temple.”

*In the absence of living lives motivated by satisfaction and joy in God, we will create a substitute form of religion... but it won't sound like Ezekiel 36 and it will end up being based in self-effort—which will ultimately end up producing lives of disobedience and waywardness.*

## **The Entrance Way of God's GRACE**

### *Ez 36:24 ... God's Ingathering and Bringing Us to Himself*

- **Why Does God Do This? ... Is it Based in Performance?** (NO! Remember their 600 yrs of performance leading to this point! Remember God's choosing of Israel in Deut 7:6-8)
- **Why Does this Matter to Curing "External Religion"?** ... Because External Religion ultimately wants to put our sense of confidence and future blessing on the basis of Our Performance

### *Ez 36:25 ... God's Cleansing and Forgiving*

- **What is the Basis of God's Cleansing and Forgiving Us?**  
**Heb 9:22** without the shedding of blood there is no forgiveness of sins.  
**1 John 1:7-9** But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. 8 If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. 9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.
- **Which Sins are Cleansed and Forgiven and Which Ones are Not?**  
**Col 2:13-14** "And you, who were dead in your trespasses and the uncircumcision of your flesh, God made alive together with him, having forgiven us all our trespasses, 14 by canceling the record of debt that stood against us with its legal demands. This he set aside, nailing it to the cross."

- **What place do these sins maintain in our relationship with God?... None.**  
Heb 8:12 "For I will be merciful toward their iniquities, and I will remember their sins no more."
- **What place do these sins maintain in our understanding of ourselves?** (That we are weak and vulnerable... that in my flesh dwells no good thing (Rom 7:18)... that my righteousness is as filthy rags(Is 64:6)... that I need the gospel every moment of my life)—Therefore, Christians don't become OBLIVIOUS to their sins; they must keep them isolated into the right areas of thought.

### ***Heb 10 ... The Powerful Implications of God's Work of Cleansing & Forgiving***

**v. 2-3** ... External Religion with its practices and "offerings" produces an increased awareness/consciousness/reminder of sin

**v. 11-18**

v. 14 ... ONE EVENT perfected for all time those who are being sanctified

v. 15-17 ... The language of Ezekiel & Jeremiah

v. 18 ... The Ramifications of God's Completed Actions – Don't Do Acts of Righteousness As a Means of Getting on God's Good Side!... It's not necessary! AND it's an OFFENSE to the Work of Christ (as though it were not enough without YOUR Contribution!!)

**v. 19-22** ... The Entrance Way of Grace

***If We Don't Get Through the Entrance Way—Ez 36:26 becomes an Inoperable Reality in Our Lives!***