

Week 5: Dedication During Disgrace

Ezekiel 4:1-17

A. Setting the Stage

1. Ezekiel means, "Whom God strengthens."
2. Ezekiel was a priest who prophesied about the judgement of God and the grace of God.
3. Ezekiel was exiled to what is now Iraq.

B. Wordless, Dramatic Acts

1. Act 1: The Siege

"Now, son of man, take a block of clay, put it in front of you and draw the city of Jerusalem on it. Then lay siege to it: Erect siege works against it, build a ramp up to it, set up camps against it and put battering rams around it. Then take an iron pan, place it as an iron wall between you and the city and turn your face toward it. It will be under siege, and you shall besiege it. This will be a sign to the people of Israel." *Ezekiel 4:1-3 (NIV)*

- a. A clay brick (tablet/pavement)
- b. The instruments of siege
- c. An iron cooking pan

2. Act 2: The Length

"Then, lie on your left side and put the sin of the people of Israel upon yourself. You are to bear their sin for the number of days you lie on your side. I have assigned you the same number of days as the years of their sin. So, for 390 days you will bear the sin of the people of Israel. After you have finished this, lie down again, this time on your right side, and bear the sin of the people of Judah. I have assigned you 40 days, a day for each year. Turn your face toward the siege of Jerusalem and with bared arm prophesy against her. I will tie you up with ropes so that you cannot turn from one side to the other until you have finished the days of your siege." *Ezekiel 4:4-8 (NIV)*

- a. Left side: 390 days for Israel (Northern)
- b. Right side: 40 days for Judah (Southern)

3. Act 3: The Conditions

"Take wheat and barley, beans and lentils, millet and spelt; put them in a storage jar and use them to make bread for yourself. You are to eat it during the 390 days you lie on your side. Weigh out twenty shekels of food to eat each day and eat it at set times. Also measure out a sixth of a hin of water and drink it at set times. Eat the food as you would a loaf of barley bread; bake it in the sight of the people, using human excrement for fuel.' The Lord said, 'In this way the people of Israel will eat defiled food among the nations where I will drive them.' Then I said, 'Not so, Sovereign Lord! I have never defiled myself.'

*From my youth until now I have never eaten anything found dead or torn by wild animals. No impure meat has ever entered my mouth.' 'Very well,' He said, 'I will let you bake your bread over cow dung instead of human excrement.' He then said to me: 'Son of man, I am about to cut off the food supply in Jerusalem. The people will eat rationed food in anxiety and drink rationed water in despair, for food and water will be scarce. They will be appalled at the sight of each other and will waste away because of their sin.'" *Ezekiel 4:9-17 (NIV)**

a. The bread

b. The water

c. The fuel

C. Final Act: The Restoration

1. The bread of life

"Then Jesus declared, 'I am the bread of life. Whoever comes to Me will never go hungry.'" *John 6:35a (NIV)*

2. The water of life

"and whoever believes in Me will never be thirsty."

John 6:35b

3. The fuel of the Spirit

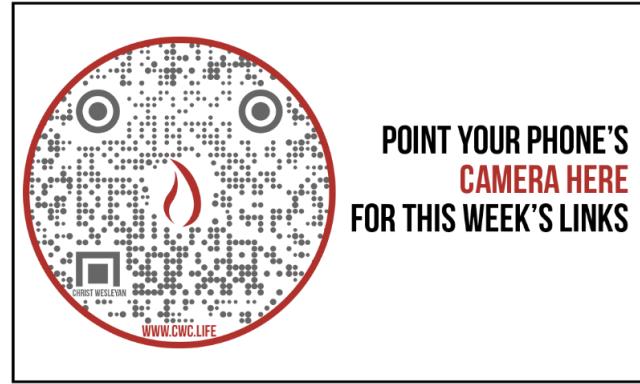
"If you love Me, keep My commands. And I will ask the Father, and He will give you another Advocate to help you and be with you forever—the Spirit of truth. The world cannot accept Him because it neither sees Him nor knows Him. But you know Him, for He lives with you and will be in you." *John 14:15-17 (NIV)*

D. How do we respond?

1. Following Christ comes at a cost. What is it costing you to follow Jesus?
2. Speak out of conviction, not complaint. When God asks you to trust and it is not in the way you want, how do you approach Him?
3. You might be led out of your comfort zone because of an illustration God wants you to paint to others.
4. We must set our hearts on obedience and faithfulness, rather than lip service and token efforts.

To begin a relationship with Jesus...
Text: I Choose Jesus to 88202

**Next Sunday: Week 6: The Power of 40: Dedication or
Disobedience?**



Giving & Attendance Update

Giving last Sunday: 83%

Giving year to date: 89.5%

Attendance last Sunday: 1,754

Salvations to date: 148 | Baptisms to date: 14