

Ezekiel Devotionals - C H Spurgeon

DEVOTIONALS ON EZEKIEL C H SPURGEON

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Ezekiel 3:7: All Impudent & Hardhearted

Are there no exceptions? No, not one. Even the favoured race are thus described. Are the best so bad?—then what must the worst be? Come, my heart, consider how far thou hast a share in this universal accusation, and while considering, be ready to take shame unto thyself wherein thou mayst have been guilty. The first charge is impudence, or hardness of forehead, a want of holy shame, an unhallowed boldness in evil. Before my conversion, I could sin and feel no compunction, hear of my guilt and yet remain unhumiliated, and even confess my iniquity and manifest no inward humiliation on account of it. For a sinner to go to God's house and pretend to pray to him and praise him argues a brazen-facedness of the worst kind! Alas! since the day of my new birth I have doubted my Lord to his face, murmured unblushingly in his presence, worshipped before him in a slovenly manner, and sinned without bewailing myself concerning it. If my forehead were not as an adamant, harder than flint, I should have far more holy fear, and a far deeper contrition of spirit. Woe is me, I am one of the impudent house of Israel. The second charge is hardheartedness, and I must not venture to plead innocent here. Once I had nothing but a heart of stone, and although through grace I now have a new and fleshy heart, much of my former obduracy remains. I am not affected by the death of Jesus as I ought to be; neither am I moved by the ruin of my fellow men, the wickedness of the times, the chastisement of my heavenly Father, and my own failures, as I should be. O that my heart would melt at the recital of my Saviour's sufferings and death. Would to God I were rid of this nether millstone within me, this hateful body of death. Blessed be the name of the Lord, the disease is not incurable, the Saviour's precious blood is the universal solvent, and me, even me, it will effectually soften, till my heart melts as wax before the fire.

Ezekiel 11:16: God is a Sanctuary

BANISHED from the public means of grace, we are not removed from the grace of the means. The Lord who places His people where they feel as exiles will Himself be with them, and be to them all that they could have had at home, in the place of their solemn assemblies. Take this to yourselves, O ye who are called to wander!

God is to His people a place of refuge. They find sanctuary with Him from every adversary. He is their place of worship too. He is with them as with Jacob when he slept in the open field, and rising, said, "Surely God was

in this place.” To them also He will be a sanctuary of quiet, like the Holy of Holies, which was the noiseless abode of the Eternal. They shall be quiet from fear of evil.

God Himself, in Christ Jesus, is the sanctuary of mercy. The ark of the covenant is the Lord Jesus, and Aaron’s rod, the pot of manna, the tables of the law, all are in Christ our sanctuary. In God we find the shrine of holiness and of communion. What more do we need? O Lord, fulfill this promise and be ever to us as a little sanctuary!

Ezekiel 15:2: God’s People, God’s Vine

These words are for the humbling of God’s people; they are called God’s vine, but what are they by nature more than others? They, by God’s goodness, have become fruitful, having been planted in a good soil; the Lord hath trained them upon the walls of the sanctuary, and they bring forth fruit to his glory; but what are they without their God? What are they without the continual influence of the Spirit, begetting fruitfulness in them? O believer, learn to reject pride, seeing that thou hast no ground for it. Whatever thou art, thou hast nothing to make thee proud. The more thou hast, the more thou art in debt to God; and thou shouldst not be proud of that which renders thee a debtor. Consider thine origin; look back to what thou wast. Consider what thou wouldst have been but for divine grace. Look upon thyself as thou art now. Doth not thy conscience reproach thee? Do not thy thousand wanderings stand before thee, and tell thee that thou art unworthy to be called his son? And if he hath made thee anything, art thou not taught thereby that it is grace which hath made thee to differ? Great believer, thou wouldst have been a great sinner if God had not made thee to differ. O thou who art valiant for truth, thou wouldst have been as valiant for error if grace had not laid hold upon thee. Therefore, be not proud, though thou hast a large estate—a wide domain of grace, thou hadst not once a single thing to call thine own except thy sin and misery. Oh! strange infatuation, that thou, who hast borrowed everything, shouldst think of exalting thyself; a poor dependent pensioner upon the bounty of thy Saviour, one who hath a life which dies without fresh streams of life from Jesus, and yet proud! Fie on thee, O silly heart!

Ezekiel 16:10

See with what matchless generosity the Lord provides for his people’s apparel. They are so arrayed that the divine skill is seen producing an unrivalled brodered work, in which every attribute takes its part and every divine beauty is revealed. No art like the art displayed in our salvation, no cunning workmanship like that beheld in the righteousness of the saints. Justification has engrossed learned pens in all ages of the church, and will be the theme of admiration in eternity. God has indeed “curiously wrought it.” With all this elaboration there is mingled utility and durability, comparable to our being shod with badgers’ skins. The animal here meant is unknown, but its skin covered the tabernacle, and formed one of the finest and strongest leathers known. The righteousness which is of God by faith endureth for ever, and he who is shod with this divine preparation will tread the desert safely, and may even set his foot upon the lion and the adder. Purity and dignity of our holy vesture are brought out in the fine linen. When the Lord sanctifies his people, they are clad as priests in pure white; not the snow itself excels them; they are in the eyes of men and angels fair to look upon, and even in the Lord’s eyes they are without spot. Meanwhile the royal apparel is delicate and rich as silk. No expense is spared, no beauty withheld, no daintiness denied.

What, then? Is there no inference from this? Surely there is gratitude to be felt and joy to be expressed. Come, my heart, refuse not thy evening hallelujah! Tune thy pipes! Touch thy chords!

“Strangely, my soul, art thou arrayed
By the Great Sacred Three!
In sweetest harmony of praise
Let all thy powers agree.”

Ezekiel 16:60: Back, Then Forward

NOTWITHSTANDING our sins, the Lord is still faithful in His love to us.

He looks back. See how He remembers those early days of ours when He took us into covenant with Himself, and we gave ourselves over to Him. Happy days those! The Lord does not twit us with them, and charge us with being insincere. No, He looks rather to His covenant with us than to our covenant with Him. There was no hypocrisy in that sacred compact—on His part, at any rate. How gracious is the Lord thus to look back in love!

He looks forward also. He is resolved that the covenant shall not fail. If we do not stand to it, He does. He solemnly declares, “I will establish unto thee an everlasting covenant.” He has no mind to draw back from His

promises. Blessed be His name! He sees the sacred seal, “the blood of the everlasting covenant,” and He remembers our Surety, in whom He ratified that covenant, even His own dear Son; and therefore He rests in His covenant engagements. “He abideth faithful; he cannot deny himself.”

O Lord, lay this precious word upon my heart, and help me to feed upon it all this day!

Ezekiel 20:41: The Merits of our Great Redeemer

The merits of our great Redeemer are as sweet savour to the Most High. Whether we speak of the active or passive righteousness of Christ, there is an equal fragrance. There was a sweet savour in his active life by which he honoured the law of God, and made every precept to glitter like a precious jewel in the pure setting of his own person. Such, too, was his passive obedience, when he endured with un murmuring submission, hunger and thirst, cold and nakedness, and at length sweat great drops of blood in Gethsemane, gave his back to the smiters, and his cheeks to them that plucked out the hair, and was fastened to the cruel wood, that he might suffer the wrath of God in our behalf. These two things are sweet before the Most High; and for the sake of his doing and his dying, his substitutionary sufferings and his vicarious obedience, the Lord our God accepts us. What a preciousness must there be in him to overcome our want of preciousness! What a sweet savour to put away our ill savour! What a cleansing power in his blood to take away sin such as ours! and what glory in his righteousness to make such unacceptable creatures to be accepted in the Beloved! Mark, believer, how sure and unchanging must be our acceptance, since it is in him! Take care that you never doubt your acceptance in Jesus. You cannot be accepted without Christ; but, when you have received his merit, you cannot be unaccepted. Notwithstanding all your doubts, and fears, and sins, Jehovah’s gracious eye never looks upon you in anger; though he sees sin in you, in yourself, yet when he looks at you through Christ, he sees no sin. You are always accepted in Christ, are always blessed and dear to the Father’s heart. Therefore lift up a song, and as you see the smoking incense of the merit of the Saviour coming up, this evening, before the sapphire throne, let the incense of your praise go up also.

Ezekiel 20:43: Precious Repentance

WHEN we are accepted of the Lord, and are standing in the place of favor, and peace, and safety, then we are led to repent of all our failures and miscarriages toward our gracious God. So precious is repentance that we may call it a diamond of the first water, and this is sweetly promised to the people of God as one most sanctifying result of salvation. He who accepts repentance also gives repentance; and He gives it not out of “the bitter box,” but from among those “wafers made with honey” on which He feeds His people. A sense of blood-bought pardon and of undeserved mercy is the best means of dissolving a heart of stone. Are we feeling hard? Let us think of covenant love, and then we shall leave sin, lament sin, and loathe sin—yea, we shall loathe ourselves for sinning against such infinite love. Let us come to God with this promise of penitence, and ask Him to help us to remember, and repent, and regret and return. Oh, that we could enjoy the meltings of holy sorrow! What a relief would a flood of tears be! Lord, smite the rock, or speak to the rock, and cause the waters to flow!

Ezekiel 33:22: The Hand of the Lord Upon Me

In the way of judgment this may be the case, and, if so, be it mine to consider the reason of such a visitation, and bear the rod and him that hath appointed it. I am not the only one who is chastened in the night season; let me cheerfully submit to the affliction, and carefully endeavour to be profited thereby. But the hand of the Lord may also be felt in another manner, strengthening the soul and lifting the spirit upward towards eternal things. O that I may in this sense feel the Lord dealing with me! A sense of the divine presence and indwelling bears the soul towards heaven as upon the wings of eagles. At such times we are full to the brim with spiritual joy, and forget the cares and sorrows of earth; the invisible is near, and the visible loses its power over us; servant-body waits at the foot of the hill, and the master-spirit worships upon the summit in the presence of the Lord. O that a hallowed season of divine communion may be vouchsafed to me this evening! The Lord knows that I need it very greatly. My graces languish, my corruptions rage, my faith is weak, my devotion is cold; all these are reasons why his healing hand should be laid upon me. His hand can cool the heat of my burning brow, and stay the tumult of my palpitating heart. That glorious right hand which moulded the world can new-create my mind; the unwearied hand which bears the earth’s huge pillars up can sustain my spirit; the loving hand which incloses all the saints can cherish me; and the mighty hand which breaketh in pieces the enemy can subdue my sins. Why should I not feel that hand touching me this evening? Come, my soul, address thy God with the potent plea, that Jesus’ hands were pierced for thy redemption, and thou shalt surely feel that same hand upon thee which once touched Daniel and set him upon his knees that he might see visions of God.

Ezekiel 34:11 An Expert Searcher

THIS He does at the first, when His elect are like wandering sheep that know not the Shepherd or the fold. How wonderfully doth the Lord find out His chosen! Jesus is great as a seeking Shepherd as well as a saving Shepherd. Though many of those His Father gave Him have gone as near to hell-gate as they well can, yet the Lord, by searching and seeking, discovers them and draws nigh to them in grace. He has sought out us: let us have good hope for those who are laid upon our hearts in prayer, for He will find them out also.

The Lord repeats this process when any of His flock stray from the pastures of truth and holiness. They may fall into gross error, sad sin, and grievous hardness; but yet the Lord, who has become a surety for them to His Father, will not suffer one of them to go so far as to perish. He will by providence and grace pursue them into foreign lands, into abodes of poverty, into dens of obscurity, into deeps of despair; He will not lose one of all that the Father has given Him. It is a point of honor with Jesus to seek and to save all the flock, without a single exception. What a promise to plead, if at this hour I am compelled to cry, "I have gone astray like a lost sheep!"

Ezekiel 34:15 Food and Rest

UNDER the divine shepherdry, saints are fed to the full. Theirs is not a windy, unsatisfying mess of mere human thought; but the Lord feeds them upon the solid, substantial truth of divine revelation. There is real nutriment for the soul in Scripture brought home to the heart by the Holy Spirit. Jesus, Himself, is the true life-sustaining Food of believers. Here our Great Shepherd promises that such sacred nourishment shall be given us by His own self. If, on the Lord's Day, our earthly shepherd is empty-handed, the Lord is not.

When filled with holy truth, the mind rests. Those whom Jehovah feeds are at peace. No dog shall worry them, no wolf shall devour them, no restless propensities shall disturb them. They shall lie down and digest the food which they have enjoyed. The doctrines of grace are not only sustaining, but consoling: in them we have the means for building up and lying down. If preachers do not give us rest, let us look to the Lord for it.

This day may the Lord cause us to feed in the pastures of the Word and make us to lie down in them. May no folly, and no worry, but meditation and peace mark this day.

Ezekiel 34:26: Showers of Blessing

Here is sovereign mercy—"I will give them the shower in its season." Is it not sovereign, divine mercy?—for who can say, "I will give them showers," except God? There is only one voice which can speak to the clouds, and bid them beget the rain. Who sendeth down the rain upon the earth? Who scattereth the showers upon the green herb? Do not I, the Lord? So grace is the gift of God, and is not to be created by man. It is also needed grace. What would the ground do without showers? You may break the clods, you may sow your seeds, but what can you do without the rain? As absolutely needful is the divine blessing. In vain you labour, until God the plenteous shower bestows, and sends salvation down. Then, it is plenteous grace. "I will send them showers." It does not say, "I will send them drops," but "showers." So it is with grace. If God gives a blessing, he usually gives it in such a measure that there is not room enough to receive it. Plenteous grace! Ah! we want plenteous grace to keep us humble, to make us prayerful, to make us holy; plenteous grace to make us zealous, to preserve us through this life, and at last to land us in heaven. We cannot do without saturating showers of grace. Again, it is seasonable grace. "I will cause the shower to come down in his season." What is thy season this morning? Is it the season of drought? Then that is the season for showers. Is it a season of great heaviness and black clouds? Then that is the season for showers. "As thy days so shall thy strength be." And here is a varied blessing. "I will give thee showers of blessing." The word is in the plural. All kinds of blessings God will send. All God's blessings go together, like links in a golden chain. If he gives converting grace, he will also give comforting grace. He will send "showers of blessing." Look up to-day, O parched plant, and open thy leaves and flowers for a heavenly watering.

Ezekiel 34:22: He of Tender Conscience

SOME are fat and flourishing, and therefore they are unkind to the feeble. This is a grievous sin and causes much sorrow. Those thrustings with side and with shoulder, those pushings of the diseased with the horn, are a sad means of offense in the assemblies of professing believers. The Lord takes note of these proud and unkind deeds, and He is greatly angered by them, for He loves the weak.

Is the reader one of the despaired? Is he a mourner in Zion and a marked man because of his tender

conscience? Do his brethren judge him harshly? Let him not resent their conduct; above all let him not push and thrust in return. Let him leave the matter in the Lord's hands. He is the Judge. Why should we wish to intrude upon His office? He will decide much more righteously than we can. His time for judgment is the best, and we need not be in a hurry to hasten it on.

Let the hard-hearted oppressor tremble. Even though he may ride roughshod over others with impunity for the present, all his proud speeches are noted, and for every one of them account must be given before the bar of the Great Judge.

Patience, my soul! Patience! The Lord knoweth thy grief. Thy Jesus hath pity upon thee!

Ezekiel 34:25: Peace Whatever Exposure

IT is the height of grace that Jehovah should be in covenant with man, a feeble, sinful, and dying creature. Yet the Lord has solemnly entered into a faithful compact with us, and from that covenant He will never turn aside. In virtue of this covenant we are safe. As lions and wolves are driven off by shepherds, so shall all noxious influences be chased away. The Lord will give us rest from disturbers and destroyers; the evil beasts shall cease out of the land. O Lord, make this thy promise good even now!

The Lord's people are to enjoy security in places of the greatest exposure: wilderness and woods are to be as pastures and folds to the flock of Christ. If the Lord does not change the place for the better, He will make us the better in the place. The wilderness is not a place to dwell in, but the Lord can make it so. In the woods one feels bound to watch rather than to sleep, and yet the Lord giveth His beloved sleep even there. Nothing without or within should cause any fear to the child of God. By faith the wilderness can become the suburbs of heaven, and the woods the vestibule of glory.

Ezekiel 34:30: Necessary Knowledge

TO be the Lord's own people is a choice blessing, but to know that we are such is a comfortable blessing. It is one thing to hope that God is with us, and another thing to know that He is so. Faith saves us, but assurance satisfies us. We take God to be our God when we believe in Him, but we get the joy of Him when we know that He is ours and that we are His. No believer should be content with hoping and trusting; he should ask the Lord to lead him on to full assurance so that matters of hope may become matters of certainty.

It is when we enjoy covenant blessings and see our Lord Jesus raised up for us as a plant of renown, that we come to a clear knowledge of the favor of God toward us. Not by law, but by grace, do we learn that we are the Lord's people. Let us always turn our eyes in the direction of free grace. Assurance of faith can never come by the works of the law. It is an evangelical virtue and can only reach us in a gospel way. Let us not look within. Let us look to the Lord alone. As we see Jesus we shall see our salvation.

Lord, send us such a floodtide of thy love that we shall be washed beyond the mire of doubt and fear.

Ezekiel 35:10: Whereas the Lord was There

Edom's princes saw the whole country left desolate, and counted upon its easy conquest; but there was one great difficulty in their way—quite unknown to them—"The Lord was there"; and in his presence lay the special security of the chosen land. Whatever may be the machinations and devices of the enemies of God's people, there is still the same effectual barrier to thwart their design. The saints are God's heritage, and he is in the midst of them, and will protect his own. What comfort this assurance yields us in our troubles and spiritual conflicts! We are constantly opposed, and yet perpetually preserved! How often Satan shoots his arrows against our faith, but our faith defies the power of hell's fiery darts; they are not only turned aside, but they are quenched upon its shield, for "the Lord is there." Our good works are the subjects of Satan's attacks. A saint never yet had a virtue or a grace which was not the target for hellish bullets: whether it was hope bright and sparkling, or love warm and fervent, or patience all-enduring, or zeal flaming like coals of fire, the old enemy of everything that is good has tried to destroy it. The only reason why anything virtuous or lovely survives in us is this, "the Lord is there."

If the Lord be with us through life, we need not fear for our dying confidence; for when we come to die, we shall find that "the Lord is there"; where the billows are most tempestuous, and the water is most chill, we shall feel the bottom, and know that it is good: our feet shall stand upon the Rock of Ages when time is passing away. Beloved, from the first of a Christian's life to the last, the only reason why he does not perish is because "the Lord is there." When the God of everlasting love shall change and leave his elect to perish, then may the Church of God be destroyed; but not till then, because it is written, JEHOVAH SHAMMAH, "The Lord is there."

Ezekiel 36:25: Thorough Cleansing

WHAT an exceeding joy is this! He who has purified us with the blood of Jesus will also cleanse us by the water of the Holy Spirit. God hath said it, and so it must be: "Ye shall be clean." Lord, we feel and mourn our uncleanness, and it is cheering to be assured by thine own mouth that we shall be clean. Oh that thou wouldst make a speedy work of it!

He will deliver us from our worst sins. The uprisings of unbelief, the deceitful lusts which war against the soul, the vile thoughts of pride, and the suggestions of Satan to blaspheme the sacred name—all these shall be so purged away as never to return.

He will also cleanse us from all our idols, whether of gold or of clay, our impure loves, and our excessive love of that which in itself is pure. That which we have idolized shall either be broken from us, or we shall be broken off from it.

It is God who speaks of what He Himself will do. Therefore is this word established and sure, and we may boldly look for that which it guarantees to us. Cleansing is a covenant blessing, and the covenant is ordered in all things and sure.

Ezekiel 36:26: Heart of Flesh

A heart of flesh is known by its tenderness concerning sin. To have indulged a foul imagination, or to have allowed a wild desire to tarry even for a moment, is quite enough to make a heart of flesh grieve before the Lord. The heart of stone calls a great iniquity nothing, but not so the heart of flesh.

"If to the right or left I stray,
That moment, Lord, reprove;
And let me weep my life away,
For having grieved thy love"

The heart of flesh is tender of God's will. My Lord Will-be-will is a great blusterer, and it is hard to subject him to God's will; but when the heart of flesh is given, the will quivers like an aspen leaf in every breath of heaven, and bows like an osier in every breeze of God's Spirit. The natural will is cold, hard iron, which is not to be hammered into form, but the renewed will, like molten metal, is soon moulded by the hand of grace. In the fleshy heart there is a tenderness of the affections. The hard heart does not love the Redeemer, but the renewed heart burns with affection towards him. The hard heart is selfish and coldly demands, "Why should I weep for sin? Why should I love the Lord?" But the heart of flesh says; "Lord, thou knowest that I love thee; help me to love thee more!" Many are the privileges of this renewed heart; "'Tis here the Spirit dwells, 'tis here that Jesus rests." It is fitted to receive every spiritual blessing, and every blessing comes to it. It is prepared to yield every heavenly fruit to the honour and praise of God, and therefore the Lord delights in it. A tender heart is the best defence against sin, and the best preparation for heaven. A renewed heart stands on its watchtower looking for the coming of the Lord Jesus. Have you this heart of flesh?

Ezekiel 36:27 Prayer

Prayer is the forerunner of mercy. Turn to sacred history, and you will find that scarcely ever did a great mercy come to this world unheralded by supplication. You have found this true in your own personal experience. God has given you many an unsolicited favour, but still great prayer has always been the prelude of great mercy with you. When you first found peace through the blood of the cross, you had been praying much, and earnestly interceding with God that he would remove your doubts, and deliver you from your distresses. Your assurance was the result of prayer. When at any time you have had high and rapturous joys, you have been obliged to look upon them as answers to your prayers. When you have had great deliverances out of sore troubles, and mighty helps in great dangers, you have been able to say, "I sought the Lord, and he heard me, and delivered me from all my fears." Prayer is always the preface to blessing. It goes before the blessing as the blessing's shadow. When the sunlight of God's mercies rises upon our necessities, it casts the shadow of prayer far down upon the plain. Or, to use another illustration, when God piles up a hill of mercies, he himself shines behind them, and he casts on our spirits the shadow of prayer, so that we may rest certain, if we are much in prayer, our pleadings are the shadows of mercy. Prayer is thus connected with the blessing to show us the value of it. If we had the blessings without asking for them, we should think them common things; but prayer makes our mercies more precious than diamonds. The things we ask for are precious, but we do not realize their preciousness until we have sought for them earnestly.

“Prayer makes the darken’d cloud withdraw;
Prayer climbs the ladder Jacob saw;
Gives exercise to faith and love;
Brings every blessing from above.”

Ezekiel 37:13: Out of Spiritual Death

INDEED it must be so: those who receive life from the dead are sure to recognize the hand of the Lord in such a resurrection. This is the greatest and most remarkable of all changes that a man can undergo—to be brought out of the grave of spiritual death, and made to rejoice in the light and liberty of spiritual life. None could work this but the living God, the Lord and giver of life.

Ah me! how well do I remember when I was lying in the valley full of dry bones, as dry as any of them! Blessed was the day when free and sovereign grace sent the man of God to prophesy upon me! Glory be to God for the stirring which that word of faith caused among the dry bones. More blessed still was that heavenly breath from the four winds which made me live! Now know I the quickening Spirit of the ever-living Jehovah. Truly Jehovah is the living God, for He made me live. My new life even in its pinings and sorrowings is clear proof to me that the Lord can kill and make alive. He is the only God. He is all that is great, gracious, and glorious; and my quickened soul adores Him as the great I AM. All glory be unto His sacred name! As long as I live I will praise Him.

Ezekiel 47:9: Life-Giving Stream

THE living waters, in the prophet’s vision, flowed into the Dead Sea, and carried life with them even into that stagnant lake. Where grace goes, spiritual life is the immediate and the everlasting consequence. Grace proceeds sovereignly according to the will of God, even as a river in all its windings follows its own sweet will; and wherever it comes it does not wait for life to come to it, but it creates life by its own quickening flow. Oh, that it would pour along our streets and flood our slums! Oh, that it would now come into my house and rise till every chamber were made to swim with it! Lord, let the living water flow to my family and my friends, and let it not pass me by. I hope I have drunk of it already; but I desire to bathe in it, yea, to swim in it. O my Saviour, I need life more abundantly. Come to me, I pray thee, till every part of my nature is vividly energetic and intensely active. Living God, I pray thee, fill me with thine own life.

I am a poor, dry stick; come and make me so to live that, like Aaron’s rod, I may bud and blossom and bring forth fruit unto thy glory. Quicken me, for the sake of my Lord Jesus. Amen.