

The Grace of God

Introduction (16:1-3a)

They say “a picture speaks a thousand words.” I don’t know about all of you, but I am a visual learner. If I can draw it out on paper, outline what I am trying to learn or draw a diagram, then I got it, if I can’t then I don’t got it.

One great thing about the Bible is it is full of pictures. In order to help us understand Him, God gave us truth about Himself, many times in the form of pictures. Even Christ taught in parables, which are “earthly pictures of heavenly truths.”

We are given many pictures of our relationship to God, both before and after salvation. One of those pictures can be found in Ezekiel 16.

Now Ezekiel 16 was not initially written to us, or to Gentile believers in Christ. It was written to Judah part of God’s chosen people in the Old Testament. However, in Christ we are now God’s chosen. We, that is, the church (NT believers) do not replace Israel, but we receive the spiritual blessings in Christ.

- The man Ezekiel
 - o He is from a priestly family living in Babylon during the time of captivity.
 - o He is a contemporary of Jeremiah who is living in Jerusalem.
 - o Like Jeremiah, Ezekiel is God’s prophet called by God to prophesy judgment on Judah because of their sins.

- Ezekiel chapter 16
 - o The longest judgment Oracle in the book of Ezekiel (3 to 4 times longer than the next).
 - o Longer than six of the twelve Minor Prophets.
 - o This judgment Oracle is one of the most graphic pictures of Judah’s sin (pictured here in the city of Jerusalem) and God’s grace in all the Old Testament.
 - o We see in verses 1 – 3a, God calls Ezekiel to speak for Him. God is going to outline His accusation against Jerusalem.
 - o This is a judicial arraignment. Rather than two parties and a judge, here there are only the two parties. God, the defendant (the One offended) and Jerusalem the plaintiff (the one who committed the offence).
 - o God outlines his complaint against Jerusalem. When God finishes showing His people their sin, they have no argument left to give!

Proposition: In order to experience God’s grace today, you must actively remember God’s grace from your past.

I. The Indictment of Jerusalem (16:3b – 34)

a. Her Desperate Need for Grace (3b – 5)

- i. “Cutting the cord, washing, rubbing down with salt, and clothing the newborn were...customary legal acts of legitimating...The parent legally relinquished all rights to and responsibility for the child.”
- ii. No one, not even her parents cared for her!
- iii. Jerusalem was an orphan, without hope of survival.
- iv. This is a graphic picture of total depravity. In our unsaved condition we are completely and totally helpless.

b. God’s Expression of Grace (6 – 14)

- i. God’s declaration to “live” was a legal term that was used in cases of adoption. God was choosing to adopt this hopeless helpless child who was left to die. (v. 6)
- ii. God then raises his adopted daughter to maturity. (v. 7)
- iii. God then saves the woman’s purity by marrying her.
 1. The spreading of the garment over her was a sign of a new relationship and a symbolic declaration of the husband to provide for the sustenance and future of his wife. (v. 8)
 2. God pledges Himself to her in a one sided covenant. A normal marriage would have had both parties pledging themselves to each other. Here God only pledges Himself. (v. 8)
 3. God cleanses and anoints her (v. 9). This was part of the ancient marriage ritual.
 4. When her parents would not even wrap her in rags, God clothes her in garments fit for a queen. (v. 10)
 5. He adorns her with the finest jewelry. (v. 11-13a)
 6. When her parents would not even feed her milk, God provides her with royal food. (v. 13b)
 7. God reminds her that her beauty and fame are a reflection of Him and His glory. It has nothing to do with her. (v. 14)

- c. Jerusalem's Response to Grace (15 – 34)
 - i. Religious prostitution – the prostitution of God's gifts (vv. 15-22).
 - 1. Notice how many times the first person pronouns 'I' & 'My' occur in these verses.
 - 2. Nothing she has is hers. Everything was given to her by God and she has no right to use it for her own benefit, or how she wants!
 - a. Her clothes – God's clothes (vv. 16,18)
 - b. Her jewelry – God's jewelry (v. 17)
 - c. Her food – God's food (v. 19)
 - d. Her children – God's children (v. 20,21)
 - ii. **Key summary statement (v. 22) – She did not actively remember God's grace!**
 - iii. Political prostitution (vv. 23-34).
 - 1. God declares a double “woe” on the city! (v. 23) – Absolute, irrevocable judgment is about to come!
 - 2. Harlotry is being used to picture Jerusalem's deliberate choice to seek political alliances with her surrounding nations.
 - 3. Rather than trusting God, she put her trust in others.
 - 4. Her actions were so despicable that even the picture of a harlot does not adequately describe them. Harlots get paid, Jerusalem paid her lovers! (vv. 33,34)
- II. The Suspension of Grace (16:35 – 43)
- a. Summary of God's Charges Against Jerusalem (35,36)
 - b. God's Response (37-42)
 - i. She will suffer the natural consequences of her sin. (v. 37)
 - ii. God will punish her according to the law. (vv. 38-41)
 - c. **Concluding Summary (43) – Repetition of the key statement. She did not actively remember God's grace.**

III. Jerusalem's Disqualification From Grace (16:44 – 52)

a. Jerusalem's Family (44 – 46)

- i. Jerusalem's behavior has reflected that of her real family.
- ii. Not that of Abraham and Sarah who are normally thought of as Israel's "parents."
- iii. Not that of her adoptive Father.

b. Jerusalem's Personal Responsibility (47 – 52)

- i. She has out done her own family.
- ii. Her judgment is not due to her family association, but her own actions and choices.

IV. There is Yet Hope (16:53 – 63)

a. God's discipline is intended to lead to repentance and restoration (53 – 59).

- i. Jerusalem will be shamed for their actions (v. 54).
- ii. Jerusalem will be returned to her state prior to her harlotry (vv. 55-57)

b. The Triumph of Grace (60 – 63)

- i. God will actively remember His covenant (v. 60).
- ii. He will restore His covenant (v. 60).
- iii. God's grace will cause Jerusalem to have a sense of guilt (v. 61).
- iv. Now Jerusalem will remember God's grace, His covenant and that HE IS THE LORD.

Conclusion

Proposition: In order to experience God's grace today, you must actively remember God's grace from your past.

Ezekiel 16:1-63 - NASB

- ¹ Then the word of the LORD came to me saying,
- ² "Son of man, make known to Jerusalem her abominations,
- ³ and say, "Thus says the Lord God to Jerusalem, "Your origin and your birth are from the land of the Canaanite, your father was an Amorite and your mother a Hittite.
- ⁴ "As for your birth, on the day you were born your navel cord was not cut, nor were you washed with water for cleansing; you were not rubbed with salt or even wrapped in cloths.
- ⁵ "No eye looked with pity on you to do any of these things for you, to have compassion on you. Rather you were thrown out into the open field, for you were abhorred on the day you were born.
- ⁶ "When I passed by you and saw you squirming in your blood, I said to you while you were in your blood, 'Live!' I said to you while you were in your blood, 'Live!'
- ⁷ "I made you numerous like plants of the field. Then you grew up, became tall, and reached the age for fine ornaments; your breasts were formed and your hair had grown. Yet you were naked and bare.
- ⁸ "Then I passed by you and saw you, and behold, you were at the time for love; so I spread My skirt over you and covered your nakedness. I also swore to you and entered into a covenant with you so that you became Mine," declares the Lord God.
- ⁹ "Then I bathed you with water, washed off your blood from you, and anointed you with oil.
- ¹⁰ "I also clothed you with embroidered cloth, and put sandals of porpoise skin on your feet; and I wrapped you with fine linen and covered you with silk.
- ¹¹ "And I adorned you with ornaments, put bracelets on your hands, and a necklace around your neck.
- ¹² "I also put a ring in your nostril, earrings in your ears, and a beautiful crown on your head.
- ¹³ "Thus you were adorned with gold and silver, and your dress was of fine linen, silk, and embroidered cloth. You ate fine flour, honey, and oil; so you were exceedingly beautiful and advanced to royalty.
- ¹⁴ "Then your fame went forth among the nations on account of your beauty, for it was perfect because of My splendor which I bestowed on you," declares the Lord God.
- ¹⁵ "But you trusted in your beauty and played the harlot because of your fame, and you poured out your harlotries on every passer-by who might be willing.
- ¹⁶ "And you took some of your clothes, made for yourself high places of various colors, and played the harlot on them, which should never come about nor happen.
- ¹⁷ "You also took your beautiful jewels made of My gold and of My silver, which I had given you, and made for yourself male images that you might play the harlot with them.
- ¹⁸ "Then you took your embroidered cloth and covered them, and offered My oil and My incense before them.

¹⁹ "Also My bread which I gave you, fine flour, oil, and honey with which I fed you, you would offer before them for a soothing aroma; so it happened," declares the Lord God.

²⁰ "Moreover, you took your sons and daughters whom you had borne to Me, and you sacrificed them to idols to be devoured. Were your harlotries so small a matter?"

²¹ "You slaughtered My children, and offered them up to idols by causing them to pass through the fire.

²² "And besides all your abominations and harlotries you did not remember the days of your youth, when you were naked and bare and squirming in your blood.

²³ "Then it came about after all your wickedness ('Woe, woe to you!' declares the Lord God),

²⁴ that you built yourself a shrine and made yourself a high place in every square.

²⁵ "You built yourself a high place at the top of every street, and made your beauty abominable; and you spread your legs to every passer-by to multiply your harlotry.

²⁶ "You also played the harlot with the Egyptians, your lustful neighbors, and multiplied your harlotry to make Me angry.

²⁷ "Behold now, I have stretched out My hand against you and diminished your rations. And I delivered you up to the desire of those who hate you, the daughters of the Philistines, who are ashamed of your lewd conduct.

²⁸ "Moreover, you played the harlot with the Assyrians because you were not satisfied; you even played the harlot with them and still were not satisfied.

²⁹ "You also multiplied your harlotry with the land of merchants, Chaldea, yet even with this you were not satisfied.""

³⁰ "How languishing is your heart," declares the Lord God, "while you do all these things, the actions of a bold-faced harlot.

³¹ "When you built your shrine at the beginning of every street and made your high place in every square, in disdain of money, you were not like a harlot.

³² "You adulteress wife, who takes strangers instead of her husband!

³³ "Men give gifts to all harlots, but you give your gifts to all your lovers to bribe them to come to you from every direction for your harlotries.

³⁴ "Thus you are different from those women in your harlotries, in that no one plays the harlot as you do, because you give money and no money is given you; thus you are different."

³⁵ Therefore, O harlot, hear the word of the LORD.

³⁶ Thus says the Lord God, "Because your lewdness was poured out and your nakedness uncovered through your harlotries with your lovers and with all your detestable idols, and because of the blood of your sons which you gave to idols,

³⁷ therefore, behold, I shall gather all your lovers with whom you took pleasure, even all those whom you loved and all those whom you hated. So I shall gather them against you from every direction and expose your nakedness to them that they may see all your nakedness.

³⁸ "Thus I shall judge you, like women who commit adultery or shed blood are judged; and I shall bring on you the blood of wrath and jealousy.

³⁹ "I shall also give you into the hands of your lovers, and they will tear down your shrines, demolish your high places, strip you of your clothing, take away your jewels, and will leave you naked and bare.

⁴⁰ "They will incite a crowd against you, and they will stone you and cut you to pieces with their swords.

⁴¹ "And they will burn your houses with fire and execute judgments on you in the sight of many women. Then I shall stop you from playing the harlot, and you will also no longer pay your lovers.

⁴² "So I shall calm My fury against you, and My jealousy will depart from you, and I shall be pacified and angry no more.

⁴³ "Because you have not remembered the days of your youth but have enraged Me by all these things, behold, I in turn will bring your conduct down on your own head," declares the Lord God, "so that you will not commit this lewdness on top of all your other abominations.

⁴⁴ "Behold, everyone who quotes proverbs will quote this proverb concerning you, saying, 'Like mother, like daughter.'

⁴⁵ "You are the daughter of your mother, who loathed her husband and children. You are also the sister of your sisters, who loathed their husbands and children. Your mother was a Hittite and your father an Amorite.

⁴⁶ "Now your older sister is Samaria, who lives north of you with her daughters; and your younger sister, who lives south of you, is Sodom with her daughters.

⁴⁷ "Yet you have not merely walked in their ways or done according to their abominations; but, as if that were too little, you acted more corruptly in all your conduct than they.

⁴⁸ "As I live," declares the Lord God, "Sodom, your sister, and her daughters, have not done as you and your daughters have done.

⁴⁹ "Behold, this was the guilt of your sister Sodom: she and her daughters had arrogance, abundant food, and careless ease, but she did not help the poor and needy.

⁵⁰ "Thus they were haughty and committed abominations before Me. Therefore I removed them when I saw it.

⁵¹ "Furthermore, Samaria did not commit half of your sins, for you have multiplied your abominations more than they. Thus you have made your sisters appear righteous by all your abominations which you have committed.

⁵² "Also bear your disgrace in that you have made judgment favorable for your sisters. Because of your sins in which you acted more abominably than they, they are more in the right than you. Yes, be also ashamed and bear your disgrace, in that you made your sisters appear righteous.

⁵³ "Nevertheless, I will restore their captivity, the captivity of Sodom and her daughters, the captivity of Samaria and her daughters, and along with them your own captivity,

⁵⁴ in order that you may bear your humiliation, and feel ashamed for all that you have done when you become a consolation to them.

⁵⁵ "And your sisters, Sodom with her daughters and Samaria with her daughters, will return to their former state, and you with your daughters will also return to your former state.

⁵⁶ "As the name of your sister Sodom was not heard from your lips in your day of pride,

⁵⁷ before your wickedness was uncovered, so now you have become the reproach of the daughters of Edom, and of all who are around her, of the daughters of the Philistines-- those surrounding you who despise you.

⁵⁸ "You have borne the penalty of your lewdness and abominations," the LORD declares.

⁵⁹ For thus says the Lord God, "I will also do with you as you have done, you who have despised the oath by breaking the covenant.

⁶⁰ "Nevertheless, I will remember My covenant with you in the days of your youth, and I will establish an everlasting covenant with you.

⁶¹ "Then you will remember your ways and be ashamed when you receive your sisters, both your older and your younger; and I will give them to you as daughters, but not because of your covenant.

⁶² "Thus I will establish My covenant with you, and you shall know that I am the LORD,

⁶³ in order that you may remember and be ashamed, and never open your mouth anymore because of your humiliation, when I have forgiven you for all that you have done," the Lord God declares.