

Sunday Morning Message

September 3, 2017

Title – *“Don’t Be Like Your Sisters”*

Topic –

Text – Ezekiel 16

Congregational Reading – Ezekiel 16:48 - 50

Introduction

“Behold, this was the iniquity of thy sister Sodom, pride, fulness of bread, and abundance of idleness was in her and in her daughters, neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy.” (Ezekiel 16:49)

Illustrate – Did your parents ever compare you to your brother or sister growing up? “Why don’t you be like your brother?” or if your brother was bad, “You’re just like your brother.”

God is warning Jerusalem that they were being just like their sisters, Samaria and Sodom, and God was saying, “Don’t Be Like Your Sisters”.

Ezekiel was a prophet to the southern kingdom of Judah prior to and during the time of the Babylonian Captivity. He was taken captive in the second of three invasions of Jerusalem which took place in 597 BC.

His ministry was at first to warn the people of God to repent: to turn from their wickedness and back to the Lord because if they did not, God would surely judge them. Historically, we know that Israel did not repent and God did judge them, and they were carried away as captives into the land of Babylon. They lost everything: many thousands of lives, their homes, their beautiful capital city of Jerusalem along with their Temple. It was all destroyed. All because they had forsaken their God. The first 24 chapters of Ezekiel were written prior to the invasion of Babylon in an attempt to get God’s people to wake up and turn back to God.

Chapter sixteen of Ezekiel gives presents a thorough indictment against Jerusalem and all of Judah with a detailed explanation of what they were doing wrong. As we read through this, we cannot help but make the application to where we are today as a nation, and also where we are today in our individual Christian lives.

I The Condition of God’s People When God Found Them (Ezekiel 16:1 – 5)

Notice v. 2 – God wanted His people to know what they were doing wrong. God wants us to know what we are doing wrong. That’s why we come to hear preaching.

*“Preach the word; be instant in season, out of season; **reprove, rebuke, exhort** with all longsuffering and doctrine.” (2 Timothy 4:2)*

When God found Israel, they were nothing special, and they weren't doing particularly well. Nobody cared about them. They were pretty insignificant. That's the way I was when God found me.

II The Care For God's People After He Loved Them (Ezekiel 16:6 – 14)

III The Collapse of God's People (Ezekiel 16:15 – 45)

God will now show that Israel was like an unfaithful spouse that committed adultery with many lovers. Israel was wonderfully blessed and prospered by God, but she became enamored by all of the gods of the nations around her. All throughout Israel the people were setting up their little idols in the high places and in the groves. They even sacrificed their children to these false gods. They were a redeemed people who were living like the godless people around them. Their idolatry also led to immorality and drunkenness, and excesses of every kind. Though they worshipped these other gods, their real god was self, they were consumed with pleasure. They turned their backs completely on the God who found them and cleaned them up and cared for them and blessed them abundantly.

IV The Comparison of God's People to Samaria and Sodom (Ezekiel 16:46 – 52)

Samaria was the northern kingdom of Israel that split off from the land of Judah during the reign of Rehoboam, King Solomon's son. They were also a very idolatrous and immoral nation, and God finally judged them and allowed them to be taken captive by the Assyrians about 100 years earlier.

Sodom was a very wicked city famously known for its homosexuality and was completely destroyed by God with fire and brimstone, along with Gomorrah and a few other cities. You might remember that Lot lived there and God had to rescue him and his two daughters away from the city before he destroyed it.

"And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes condemned them with an overthrow, making them an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly; And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked: (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day with their unlawful deeds;)" (2 Peter 2:6-8)

"Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire." (Jude 1:7)

God was telling Jerusalem, "You are just like your sisters". In fact, God was telling Jerusalem that they were far worse than her sisters. (v. 47, 51 – 52)

Notice vs. 49 – 50. What were the sins of Sodom that Jerusalem was also guilty of:

1 Pride

God hates pride:

"These six things doth the LORD hate: yea, seven are an abomination unto him: A proud look, a lying tongue, and hands that shed innocent blood, An heart that deviseth wicked imaginations, feet that be swift in running to mischief, A false witness that speaketh lies, and he that soweth discord among brethren." (Proverbs 6:16-19)

America is prideful; too many Christians are prideful.

2 Gluttony – “fullness of bread” – speaks about more than just food and has to do with all kinds of excess.

"And be not drunk with wine, wherein is excess; but be filled with the Spirit;" (Ephesians 5:18)

We are very “excessive” today. We have more than our parents and grandparents ever dreamed of, and we complain because it is not enough – we want more.

3 Laziness – “abundance of idleness”

"For the drunkard and the glutton shall come to poverty: and drowsiness shall clothe a man with rags." (Proverbs 23:21)

"How long wilt thou sleep, O sluggard? when wilt thou arise out of thy sleep? Yet a little sleep, a little slumber, a little folding of the hands to sleep: So shall thy poverty come as one that travelleth, and thy want as an armed man." (Proverbs 6:9-11)

Illustrate – the beginning of the school year is a good time to get back on a schedule, and a good time to set goals.

4 Selfishness – “neither did she strengthen the hand of the poor and needy”

Illustrate – Hurricane Harvey – example of God working all things together for good. People are coming together. People are helping people.

"I have shewed you all things, how that so labouring ye ought to support the weak, and to remember the words of the Lord Jesus, how he said, It is more blessed to give than to receive." (Acts 20:35)

5 Immoral – Sodom was known for homosexuality. Paul’s letter to the Corinthians speaks of a man who slept with his father’s wife. Immorality is rampant and, for the most part, completely accepted in America.

I find it curious that immorality was mentioned last in this list. Immorality is not a root sin, it is a fruit sin. It comes after we have already forsaken God in these other ways.

Jerusalem should have known better. Jerusalem was taught better. Jesus made a similar comparison in the New Testament.

"And thou, Capernaum, which art exalted unto heaven, shalt be brought down to hell: for if the mighty works, which have been done in thee, had been done in Sodom, it would have remained until this day. But I say unto you, That it shall be more tolerable for the land of Sodom in the day of judgment, than for thee." (Matthew 11:23-24)

America should know better also.

Christians ought to know better.

"And that servant, which knew his lord's will, and prepared not himself, neither did according to his will, shall be beaten with many stripes. But he that knew not, and did commit things worthy of stripes, shall be beaten with few stripes. For unto whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required: and to whom men have committed much, of him they will ask the more." (Luke 12:47-48)

Read Romans 1:18 - 32

Conclusion

Ezekiel was warning the people of God in Jerusalem to repent, but they didn't listen. God is still warning the people of God today through Ezekiel. Will we listen?

Have you gotten away from God?

How are you doing with pride?

Are you appreciative of the "excess" that God has allowed you to have, or do you think that you deserve more?

Have you gotten lazy spiritually?

How is your giving? Are you a giving person? Are you generous?

Are you living morally?

God destroyed Jerusalem for these things.

Don't be like your sisters. Don't be like Samaria; don't be like Sodom; don't be like Old Testament Jerusalem or New Testament Corinth; don't be like the rest of America; don't be like some other Christians who are away from God. Don't be like your sisters.