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Oaks Early Risers Bible Class

The Oaks
Baptist Church
Grand Prairie, Texas

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A Call to Repentance Ezekiel 18:1-13, 30-32

Aim and Application of the Lesson

The lesson describes one of God's requirements from His people who sin is **A Call to Repentance**. The **study's aim** is to understand the importance of personal responsibility and culpability in the context of the new covenant of grace. The **study's application** is to identify an area of blame-shifting in our lives and make a plan for change.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

Lesson Introduction and Background

Ezekiel, a contemporary of Jeremiah, prophesied during and after the final chaotic years of the kingdom of Judah. King Jehoiakim, whose reign in Judah ended in 597 BC, was succeeded by his son Jehoiachin. He reigned only three months before the Babylonians conquered Jerusalem and took him, along with thousands of the most prominent and skilled people of Judah, to Babylon (2 Kings 24:14). This group of deportees included the prophet Ezekiel (Ezekiel 1:1-3). The Babylonians placed Zedekiah, Jehoiachin's uncle, on the throne in Jerusalem to implement the will of the Babylonian government (2 Kings 24:17). Zedekiah eventually conspired with other nations to revolt, but this did not succeed. The Babylonians put down the rebellion and destroyed Jerusalem and the temple in 586 BC. While Jeremiah was preaching in Jerusalem before its destruction, Ezekiel lived with a community of fellow exiles in Babylon. He ministered to a people who had been torn from the land that God had promised them, away from the temple where he promised his presence to be, away from all that was familiar. As they pondered and grieved their situation, what lessons would they learn?

Ezekiel teaches us how a person is to respond to the condition of a community. It is true that each generation influences the next, but none controls what its successor does. A generation is not predetermined for blessings or judgments by actions of the previous one. The individual and the generation of which he or she is part of have freedom to choose how to live: either walking the path of God or the path of rebellion. Those who keep God's Word will live; those who rebel will die. Each will bear his or her own iniquity. Even if a person lives in a grossly immoral society, that is not to be an excuse for sin. Rather, living in such a society is all the more reason to do what is just, right, and true. Ezekiel also teaches us that individuals form the overall tone of communities. The choices of individuals determine the spiritual and moral condition of the whole. God desires that each individual turn to Him and thus help build strong and righteous communities. The choices each person makes today will have more impact on determining the condition of the community than either heredity or environment.

(Adapted from the NIV Standard Lesson Commentary)

FOOD FOR THOUGHT

THOUGHT FOR THE WEEK:
If you are truly sorry for your sins, you will want to give them up

POEM FOR THE WEEK:
When we confess our sins to God,
We're washed as white as snow;
And He keeps on forgiving us
Each time to Him we go. —
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SCRIPTURE FOR THE WEEK:
I have not come to call the righteous, but sinners, to repentance
(Luke 5:32 NKJV)

(From "Our Daily Bread", Nov 29, 2001)

Series: GOD DEMANDS JUSTICE

UNIT: Advocates of Justice for All

NEXT WEEK

A Demand for Justice
(Zechariah 7:8-14)

NOTES AND CROSS-REFERENCES

REPENTANCE REQUIRES CORRECT INTERPRETATION (EZEK 18:1-4)

Beware of man's traditions (1-2)

Beware of traditions based on principles of the world (Col 2:8)

Beware of traditions that break the command of God (Matt 15:2-4)

Beware of traditions by being ready to change when God reveals the truth (Gal 1:14-16)

Know that God owns our souls (3-4)

Owens our souls because God is the God of our spirit (Num 16:22)

Owens our souls because God is the Father of our spirit (Heb 12:9)

Owens our souls because it returns to God at physical death (Eccl 12:6-8)

REPENTANCE REQUIRES TAKING RESPONSIBILITY (EZEK 18:5-13)

Responsibility to live righteously (5-9)

Live righteously because the Day of the Lord is near (2 Peter 3:10-12)

Live righteously because Jesus sacrificed Himself for it (1 Peter 2:24)

Live righteously because God's Divine power provides everything we need to do so (2 Peter 1:3)

Live righteously because we are commanded to do so (1 Tim 6:11)

Responsibility to not live unrighteously (10-13)

Because unrighteousness is condemned through God's word (Rom 7:7-9)

Because unrighteousness is revealed through how one lives (1 John 3:10)

Because unrighteousness is punished by God (Rom 1:18)

REPENTANCE IS ALLOWED BY GOD'S MERCY (EZEK 18:30-32)

Mercy in allowing repentance in judgment (30-31)

Because mercy triumphs over judgment (James 2:13)

Because God's mercy keeps God from putting an end to the wicked (Neh 9:30-31)

Because God's mercy sometimes causes Him to relent (Ps 106:45)

Mercy due to God taking no pleasure in death (32)

God is merciful and does not willingly want man to suffer or die (Lam 3:33)

God is merciful because He wants everyone to repent (2 Peter 3:9)

God is merciful even in the death of the wicked (Ezek 33:11)