



Devotional

June 28 - Oct. 3

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Ezekiel 18:20 New Revised Standard Version (NRSV)

“The person who sins shall die. A child shall not suffer for the iniquity of a parent, nor a parent suffer for the iniquity of a child; the righteousness of the righteous shall be his own, and the wickedness of the wicked shall be his own.”

This verse clearly outlines to us that we must be responsible for our actions, thoughts, and intentions. We cannot cling to the righteousness of those around us and rely upon their good deeds to carry us in life. Nor, can we allow the excuse of other’s poor judgement to become our excuse for poor judgement and bad deeds. Depending on your circumstance this may come as a relief or may seem overwhelming. We are surrounded each day with temptations and opportunities to stray from God’s will. We are tested by those around us and sometimes loving our neighbors and enemies becomes very difficult. We can have people around us that continuously fall to sin and therefore tempt us to follow in their footsteps. Still we must remember that we are going to be held accountable for our actions. We must confess our sins to Jesus, spend time in prayer, and remember that he died for our forgiveness of sin.

Prayer: May we feel your spirit lord and go through each day with you guiding our way. May we remember to love all, be selfless, and praise you and you alone. Amen.

Day 215: August 2, 2020

Full Plan: Ezekiel 22:1–26:21

Abbreviated Plan: Ezekiel 34:1–31

As much as we might believe in an all-powerful God, Ezekiel reminds us that there is one important thing that God cannot do: God cannot force us to be faithful. We have the power to choose to obey God or not. When we don’t, we live with the consequences.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 216: August 3, 2020

Full Plan: Ezekiel 27:1–32:32

Abbreviated Plan: Ezekiel 36:1–38

Ezekiel 27-32 contains judgments over two of the greatest economic empires in the ancient near east: Tyre and Egypt. Their downfall is a reminder that economic and military might does not provide the kind of security that only obedience to God can provide.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 217: August 4, 2020

Full Plan: Ezekiel 33:1–37:28

Abbreviated Plan: Ezekiel 37:1–28

Ezekiel 36-37 has three images of hope: 1) God will replace our hearts of stone with hearts of flesh, 2) God will breathe new life into our dry bones, 3) God will bring unity out of division. This is good news for a people and a world that feels like it is in exile. Which image of hope speaks the most to you today?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 218: August 5, 2020

Full Plan: Ezekiel 38:1–42:20

Abbreviated Plan: Ezekiel 40:1–4, Ezekiel 43:1–12

Ezekiel 40-48 is a highly detailed vision of the restored Temple and its worship. It imagines the fulfillment of God's promise in the future that gave courage in the present. We should live today with the assurance that what God promises, God will fulfill.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 219: August 6, 2020

Full Plan: Ezekiel 43:1–48:35

Abbreviated Plan: Ezekiel 44:9–14, Ezekiel 45:9–12

Up until now, Ezekiel was envisioning a brighter future for the Israelites. But 43:10-11 is an important pivot: God says, "Now make it happen." Often, the best word of hope we have is this: God is calling you to act. You are not as helpless as you think. So get busy.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 220: August 7, 2020

Full Plan: Daniel 1:1–3:30

Abbreviated Plan: Daniel 1:1–21; 2:1, 16–19, 24–49

Daniel 1-3 is a call to non-violent resistance against those in power whose paranoia and narcissism incite fear and violence. Daniel and his friends choose holiness instead, and they are not just protected; God uses them to transform the world.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 221: August 8, 2020

Full Plan: Daniel 4:1–6:28

Abbreviated Plan: Daniel 4:1–37

Sometimes faithfulness looks like staring down fear and refusing to compromise God's values, even if walking in integrity means being thrown into the lion's den (Daniel 6). If that's you today, may God "shut the mouths of the lions" around you (6:22).

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

August 2–8, 2020: Weekly Devotional by Whitney Smith

Three themes appeared to me in this reading. Three themes that are relevant to modern society as much as they were in antiquity: Humility, Faith and Evangelism.

Daniel trusted in God. He trusted in God to keep him safe as he was taken hostage to a foreign land. He trusted as he served people of a different religion and culture. He trusted God to provide him with the insight needed to interpret the King's dream, even with the threat of death. He trusted God to deliver him from the Lion's Den. And through this trust, God used Daniel to open the eyes of those who didn't believe.

Daniel gave the glory to God. He made sure that the kings knew that his own intellect and power were not responsible for the miraculous events. He not only trusted God, but he made sure

credit was given where credit was due in situations where he could have very easily taken the credit himself.

This humility probably seemed extremely peculiar to these kings who lived exulting themselves and their own power. Daniel's faith and humility seems equally rare and strange today. If I think about society, how many people in power give the credit to anyone besides themselves? Even us regular people tend to think, "I've worked hard for this. I deserve it."

How many times have we thought ourselves as better than other people because we are more educated, have more career success or more exciting experiences? We live in a land of self-promotion and influencers. We all want to take credit for our own success, but what about when we are struggling or we are faced with failure? During these times a lack of humility goes hand and hand with a lack of faith.

Or how many times run with the negative thoughts of "I have to work harder and harder, do more and more" or "What if this happens?". Its easy to worry about the worst possible scenarios. The people around us may even feed the drama. Instead of resting in peace and trust in God, we can scurry around taking in more and more information, start hoarding (our feelings, our money, buying more and more), or make decisions based out of fear instead of led by the spirit. In our more and more world, we can take for granted current blessings and forget all the times that God has seen us through.

Daniel is an example of one of the best ways we can live, both when facing success and adversity. His unwavering faith in God,

not only brought him through personal trials, but his humility through his trust brought an understanding of the power of God to Kings and a nation.

WEEK SEVEN (AUGUST 9–15)

Day 222: August 9, 2020

Full Plan: Daniel 7:1–12:13

Abbreviated Plan: Daniel 6:1–28

Daniel ends with an apocalyptic vision in the style of Revelation. It is written to sound like predictions of the future, but are mostly meant to encourage us in the present: No matter what happens, we must be faithful, and God will triumph. How might these be good words for today?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 223: August 10, 2020

Full Plan: Hosea 1:1–5:15

Abbreviated Plan: Hosea 1:11, 2;1–5

Hosea shows us the challenge of having to love a person or persons who are causing harm to themselves and others. But there is encouragement: Hosea 3 offers transformation that comes from tough love, which is what God sometimes has to have with us. What might tough love look like to you?

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life:

Day 224: August 11, 2020

Full Plan: Hosea 6:1–10:15

Abbreviated Plan: Hosea 2:6–23, 3:1–5

Hosea reminds us that religious actions alone aren't enough (9:4), nor are pious hearts. We need both. We need hearts that are true (6:6, 10:2) and actions that are faithful (8:1-3) to live life as God intends it.

What God is revealing to me today, and how I will apply it to my life: