

The Day The Music Died

Scriptural Text: James 1:21-25 & Ezekiel 33:30-33

Ezekiel was a priest & a prophet of God. He began prophesying while in Babylonian exile between the first & second groups of captives taken. Ezekiel was a prophet of God prophesying to the Jews in Babylonian captivity because he too was one of the captives. Ezekiel had a very theatrical pedagogy in prophesying God's word. Ezekiel would use props or he would act out a scene. When Judah would ask the meaning of this, Ezekiel would explain the symbolism of the props & scene to make clear the word of the Lord.

At the point of this text, Ezekiel had just gotten his voice back; the captives had received word that King Zedekiah (Judah's king) was teaming up with Egypt to fight against Babylon. Therefore, this gave the captives hope. Ezekiel made it clear that there was no way Judah would inherit the land of Judah at this point because they ate blood, turned to idols, work abomination, & defiles each other's wives (**Ezekiel 33:25-26**). During this revolt, Judah would not get an advantage, but its fall would be complete.

Ever since Judah was taken captive, Ezekiel was prophesying God's word & the people enjoyed listening to Ezekiel, but they would not obey what they heard. Daniel got it. Hananiah got it. Mishael got it. Azariah got it, but everybody else in this initial stage of captivity missed the point. Let us not miss the point on today. What we say to people & how we explain the gospel message to individuals is crucial in knowing whether individuals are showing up to hear the word of the Lord or if they are hearing music. Let us take a look at Judah & purpose in our hearts not to make the same mistakes.

What They Thought (Ezekiel 33:30)

They thought they were evangelizing. Judah had no problem encouraging others to come & hear the word of the Lord from the mouth of Ezekiel. Unfortunately, the captives were selling each other on the messenger & not the message. As Christians, we need to emphasize the message & not the one who delivers the message. Listen to your Bible! In **Romans 1:16**, the Bible reads, "**For I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ: for it is the power of God unto salvation to everyone that believeth; to the Jew first, and also to the Greek.**" The power to save is in the gospel & not the gospel preacher.

They thought they were increasing their faith. In **Romans 10:17**, the Bible teaches, "**So then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.**" They were hearing the word, but they were not applying the word they were hearing, even though they were showing up faithfully to hear it. Our faith cannot increase unless we both hear the word of God & believe it. Judah was hearing it, but they did not believe it & because they did not believe it, they were not doing it. As Christians, we ought not to be satisfied with individuals merely hearing the word. We must emphasize believing the word & obeying the word, for Jesus is in the business of saving those who obey Him (**Hebrews 5:9**).

What God Says (Ezekiel 33:31)

Judah thought they were evangelizing & increasing in faith, but God said they were hearers only. This was a problem then & it is still a problem today. Listen to your Bible! In **James 1:22-24**, the Bible reads, "**But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.**" Judah was deceiving themselves. God said anybody who hears the word & does not obey it is like a man who looks in the mirror, sees his reflection, turns away, & immediately

forgets what he looks like. The Bible has a term for this & it is called foolishness. Jesus concludes His sermon on the mount by saying in **Matthew 7:26-27**, **“And every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man, which built his house upon the sand: And the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house; and it fell: and great was the fall of it.”**

Judah thought they were evangelizing & increasing their faith, but God said all they did was show much love with their mouths & their hearts go after their own covetousness. God wants us to provide service (**Romans 12:1**), but God is vehemently opposed to us providing lip service. Listen to your Bible! In **Matthew 15:7-8**, the Bible reads, **“Ye hypocrites, well did Esaias prophesy of you, saying, This people draweth nigh unto me with their mouth, and honoureth me with their lips; but their heart is far from me.”** When God identifies us as hypocrites, then it is not a good thing. Therefore, we must make things right with him before it is eternally & everlasting too late.

What’s Really Going On (Ezekiel 33:32)

The word of God is nothing more than a song to those in Judah. The prophet is one with a pleasant voice & is one who plays an instrument well. Judah liked the beat. Judah danced to the music, but they paid no attention to the lyrics. Literally speaking, this is what some of our young people do today. We choose songs based upon the beat & not the lyrics. Songs about disobeying parents, raping women, slapping people, holding grudges, getting even, & being a menace to society, we buy because we can nod our heads to the beat. We do it with music & we also do it with gospel preaching. Sometimes I wonder, if the Elders & Deacons here really believe the Bible or if the preached word of God merely a sweet melody they can tolerate. I wonder, if we believe what is preached is the word of God, or if our presence here, like Judah, is because the presentation of truth is entertaining. One day, what we think is music will die & then what?

What Happens When The Music Dies? (Ezekiel 33:33)

God through Ezekiel told Judah the music will stop. Everything Ezekiel said was going to happen will happen & it did happen. The word will show itself true. We may not believe it now, but if you want to dance to music, then you are going to have to pay the piper. God through Ezekiel told Judah that when this comes to pass, they will know a prophet was among them. We will know the Bible was right all along. Therefore, we must call Bible things by Bible names. We must do Bible things by Bible ways. We must speak where the Bible speak & remain silent where the Bible is silent. We may not think it is a big deal today to speak where God has not spoken or to do things God has not authorized, but we are all going to have to press a dying pillow. We are all going to have to stand before our Maker. We are all going to have to give an account for the things we did that we should not have done & all the things we did not do we should have done.

Applying James 1:21-25

God commands us to put away sin. God commands us to receive the word with meekness. God commands us to stop deceiving ourselves. God promises us that if we look at God’s word, don’t forget God’s word, & continual do what God’s word says, then God will bless the work we do.