

Alton Baptist Church e-Service 2nd August 2020

God's message is hard to deliver

Hello to everyone, it is good to be sharing with you and to update you that I went out last Saturday for the first time resuming my Street Pastor duties. I miss the opportunity to be with you but it is good that through these e-services I have been able to share in your ministry over the past weeks. Let us worship the Lord.

Deuteronomy 32: 3 – 4 “I will proclaim the name of the Lord. Oh, praise the greatness of our God! He is the Rock, his works are perfect, and all his ways are just. A faithful God who does no wrong, upright and just is he.”

Song: Ascribe greatness to our God the rock

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oXomlNaDI0E>

Prayer:

Loving Father we thank you that in these uncertain times you give us a firm foundation on which to build our lives for you are a Rock. We praise you that you are faithful and just. However we acknowledge that we fail you in so many ways and we are rebellious, we confess our sin and ask for your forgiveness. Take this time we spend with you and enable us by the power of the Holy Spirit to offer you a fragrant offering of worship, in the name of Jesus. Amen

Song: Before the throne of God above

This song reminds us that we have One who pleads for us, so we come before the throne of God to bring our petitions and request.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EQ6QaZcPphM&list=RDEQ6QaZcPphM&index=1>

Intercessory Prayer:

Father we thank you that your son, Jesus, intercedes for us. So we bring before you now our prayers at this difficult time as this virus impacts our world; bringing loss of life, economic ruin, anxiety and despair to so many people.

Let us individually bring to the Lord:

Those people known to us who are suffering from health issues, loneliness, and depression

Those facing financial difficulties

Our government and the decisions they make

Scientists working to provide us with a vaccine

We pray also for those in the fellowship and those linked to Alton Baptist Church

Father hear the prayers we offer. Amen

Song: Speak O Lord

This song encourages us to receive the food of Your holy word. Follow the words as it leads us into the passage of scripture we will be looking at today.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ubRIJj8xkds>

Reading: Ezekiel 2: 1 - 10

1. He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you" 2. As he spoke to me, the Spirit came into me and raised me to my feet and I heard him speaking to me.
3. He said: "Son of man, I am sending you to the Israelites, to a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very day. 4. The people to whom I am sending you are obstinate and stubborn. Say to them, "This is what the Sovereign Lord says." 5. And whether they listen or fail to listen – for they are a rebellious house – they will know that a prophet has been among them. 6. And you, son of man, do not be afraid of them or their words. Do not be afraid, though briars and thorns are all around you and you live among scorpions. Do not be afraid of what they say or terrified by them, though they are a rebellious house. 7. You must speak my words to them, whether they listen or fail to listen, for they are rebellious. 8. But you, son of man listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel like that rebellious house; open your mouth and eat what I give you"
9. Then I looked, and I saw a hand stretched out to me. In it was a scroll, 10. which he unrolled before me. On both sides of it were written words of lament and mourning and woe.

Prayer: Father speak to us as we study Your Word that we might plant it deep into our hearts and minds so that we will be faithful to proclaim your truths to a needy world. We ask this in the Name of Jesus. Amen

The theme this week is: God's message is hard to deliver

In this passage we see the call of Ezekiel to become a **prophet**. Verse 5 states, "they will know that a prophet has been among them." The Israelites desperately need to hear from God as they have drifted far from Him. Just look at what God says about them. Verse 3 "They are a rebellious nation that has rebelled against me; they and their fathers have been in revolt against me to this very dayVerse 4 they are obstinate and stubborn." What a situation that Ezekiel is being sent into! Verse 3 "says son of man, I am sending you". By saying son of man God is indicating that Ezekiel is simply a mortal man but he is being called by an immortal God. Although being sent to this rebellious nation God says to him in verse 6 three times, "do not be afraid". This must have been encouraging to Ezekiel as he goes into a situation described in verse 7 "where thorns and briars are all around you and you live among scorpions". What a daunting picture is being painted for Ezekiel to face. This is encouraging to us because God does not want us to be afraid when we face difficult tasks and situations. 2 Timothy 1: 7 states, "For God did not give us a spirit of timidity, but a spirit of power."

What is the task given to Ezekiel? He is to **proclaim**. Verse 7 "You must speak my words to them." He is also told in verse 8, "listen to what I say to you. Do not rebel open your mouth and eat what I give you." He is also told to **persevere**, verse 5 says "whether they listen or fail to listen." He is to proclaim what the Sovereign Lord says. Just as Ezekiel is called to proclaim what the Sovereign Lord says so are we. As part of the great commission in Matthew 28 v 20 it says, "and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you."

What Ezekiel was commanded to proclaim was a difficult message to a rebellious nation likewise we find that our nation does not want to listen to the teachings from the Bible. But just as we heard in the song, we are to receive the food of the holy word and we have a responsibility to proclaim it even if people reject it and that requires perseverance.

Summary

From this passage we see a mortal man being called to be a **prophet**. That is a role we too can undertake for the dictionary says a prophet is – "a teacher, a revealer or interpreter of God's will." We can reveal God to others by our words and actions.

We are to **proclaim** God's word even if it falls on those who have deaf ears. But it is essential that we hear what the Lord is speaking to us and therefore we must be faithful in reading His Word and obeying His commands.

We are to **persevere** for Ezekiel was not given a promise that he would have success. If anything he was told that the message would be hard to deliver and be rejected.

So remember this passage from Ezekiel in the context of these 3 **Ps** and be encouraged that God wants to use us in Kingdom work.

Prayer:

Father we thank you that we can see in the call of Ezekiel that you want to use ordinary folk to be revealers of your Word, that we need not be afraid that what we proclaim will be to a hostile environment that may well reject it. Make us faithful and willing to be your servants in the Name of Jesus. Amen

Song: Facing a task unfinished

The last lines of verse 1 – the solemn pledge we owe Thee, to go and make Thee known

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zOpt_bulJxY

Blessing

May the God of peace, who through the blood of the eternal covenant brought back from the dead our Lord Jesus, that great Shepherd of the sheep, equip you with everything good for doing his will, and may He work in us what is pleasing to Him, through Jesus Christ, to whom be glory for ever and ever, Amen

As an extra you might like the National Blessing

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=PUtl13mNj5U>