

Blood on Your Own Hands

by Chuck Smith

The sermon calls believers to faithfully warn others about sin and the consequences of rebellion against God while emphasizing God's mercy and love.

Duration: 31:20

Scripture: Psalm 9:1

Topics: "Faithful Obedience", "Righteous Judgment"

Description

This sermon focuses on the themes of praising God with a whole heart, seeking refuge in Him, and the importance of delivering God's word faithfully even in the face of rejection. It emphasizes God's compassion, faithfulness, and righteous judgment, urging listeners to heed His warnings and turn from wickedness to receive mercy and forgiveness.

Transcript

Shall we turn in our Bibles now to Psalm 9. I'll read the first, the unnumbered verses, and Pastor Brian will lead the congregation in the reading of the even-numbered verses as we stand to read the ninth psalm. I will praise Thee, O Lord, with my whole heart. I will show forth all Thy marvelous works.

I will be glad and rejoice in Thee. I will sing praise to Thy name, O Thou Most High. When my enemies are turned back, they shall fall and perish at Thy presence.

For Thou hast maintained my right and my cause. Thou saddest in the throne judging right. Thou hast rebuked the heathen.

Thou hast destroyed the wicked. Thou hast put out their name forever and ever. O Thou enemy, destructions are come to a perpetual end.

And Thou hast destroyed cities. Their memorial is perished with them. But the Lord shall endure forever.

He hath prepared His throne for judgment. And He shall judge the world in righteousness. He shall minister judgment to the people in uprightness.

The Lord also will be a refuge for the oppressed, a refuge in times of trouble. And they that know Thy name will put their trust in Thee. For Thou, Lord, hast not forsaken them that seek Thee.

Sing praises to the Lord which dwelleth in Zion. Declare among the people His doings. When He maketh inquisition for blood, He remembereth them.

He forgetteth not the cry of the humble. Have mercy upon me, O Lord. Consider my trouble which I suffer from them that hate me.

Thou that liftest up from the gates of death, that I may show forth all Thy praise in the gates of the daughter of Zion. I will rejoice in Thy salvation. The heathen are sunk down in the pit that they made, and in the net which they hid is their own foot taken.

The Lord is known by the judgment which He executed. The wicked is snared in the work of His own hands. The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all of the nations that forget God.

For the needy shall not always be forgotten. The expectation of the poor shall not perish forever. Arise, O Lord, and let not man prevail.

Let the heathen be judged in Thy sight. Put them in fear, O Lord, that the nations may know themselves to be but men. Let's pray.

Father, we know that Your judgments are righteous and that they are true. Lord, even as the psalmist was crying out for righteous judgment, so Lord, we today cry out for righteous judgment. That is Your judgment, Lord, here on this earth.

We so often, Lord, see the righteous oppressed, and we see, Lord, the wicked in positions of exaltation. Lord, we just pray Your kingdom come. Your will be done here on earth, even as it is in heaven.

In Jesus' name, Amen. You may be seated. Tonight, Pastor Skip will lead us in the beginning of our study of the book of Ezekiel, the first three chapters tonight.

The prophet Ezekiel was a very interesting prophet. He was a very colorful prophet. Yet, in the book of Ezekiel, as we will get into it, we will discover some of the most amazing prophecies in the Bible.

Many of them prophecies that were made long before the events took place, but how the events did take place with such complete accuracy as was predicted by Ezekiel. As we move further in the book of Ezekiel, we'll find him prophesying things that we see taking place in our world today, and things that have not yet taken place, but will be taking place in the next few years here on planet earth. So, you'll find it an extremely fascinating book as we move into it.

Chapter one, a lot of people who are into the flying saucer bit think that Ezekiel was describing flying saucers. Skip will be telling you tonight what he was actually describing, but it should be an interesting study, the book of Ezekiel. In chapters two and three, they deal with the commission that God is giving to the prophet Ezekiel to minister to the people the word of God.

He, first of all, describes the people that he will be giving God's word to. God calls them a rebellious nation who have rebelled against God. They were impotent, the Lord said.

They had a history of transgressing against God, which continued to the present time. They were hard-headed. They had hardened hearts.

And the Lord said, chances are they're not going to listen to you. They might drag you through the thorns and through the briars. Now, if God would call me to minister to a church and would describe the congregation that I was to minister to, like these people that he's calling Ezekiel to minister to, I, like Jonah, I think would head for the furthest part of the ancient world and try and get away from the call of God.

These are not pleasant people that he is calling to minister to. It's interesting that God really doesn't give him any promise of success in the ministry. But there is certain to be hardship and there's certain to be failure.

But the Lord said, you're to minister my word to them, whether they believe it or not. And chances are they won't. They won't listen to you because they are a rebellious people.

In fact, they won't hearken to you because they don't hearken to me. But don't be afraid of their threats and don't be afraid of the angry looks that they give to you. Now, what if you were sent out on a job and you were assured that you weren't going to be able to be successful.

You're going to fix a problem that can't be fixed, but you're to try. You're at least to give it your best, though it isn't going to happen. That's basically what God is saying to Ezekiel and the commission that he is giving him to do.

So that Ezekiel, you will not be responsible for the success or the failure. What you will be responsible for is to declare the word that I've given to you. And once you have declared the word, your responsibility is ended, but you are responsible to give them my word.

He was to speak the word of God to these stubborn, rebellious people. He was to say to them, this is what God is saying to you. In chapter three, verse 18, we actually have the commission.

God said, when I say to the wicked, you will surely die and you give him not warning, nor speak to warn the wicked from his wicked way to save his life. The same wicked man will die in his iniquity, but his blood will I require your hand. If you warn the wicked and turn not from his wickedness, nor from the wicked way, he will die in his iniquity, but you have delivered your soul.

Again, when a righteous man turns from his righteousness and commits iniquity, I lay a stumbling block before him and he shall die. Because you have not given him warning, he will die in his sin and his righteousness which he has done will not be remembered, but his blood I will require at your hand. Nevertheless, if you warn the righteous man that the righteous man sin not and he does not sin, he shall surely live, because he is warned also, you have delivered your soul.

So basically Ezekiel, this is the deal. You're to go and to give them my word. I'm holding you responsible to do that.

Whether or not they listen, whether or not they hearken, doesn't matter. You're to give the word faithfully. That's your responsibility.

Warn the people. Warn the wicked to turn from their wickedness. Warn those who were once righteous but have turned from their righteousness to turn back to righteous living.

He was not responsible for the outcome. He was definitely responsible for sharing the truth. I think that many times we misunderstand what it is to witness to people concerning Jesus Christ and God's love that was manifested through Jesus Christ.

I think that we have the feeling that we have to win people to Jesus Christ and that it is our responsibility to persuade them to believe. Basically, our responsibility is to tell them about Jesus Christ, to witness to them what God's word has to say about salvation and about eternal life. But in reality we can't win people for Jesus Christ.

That is the job of the Holy Spirit and as we are witnessing to the truth of God we then are delivering our souls from the responsibility of that person being lost. At least we have given warning. At least we have given them God's word.

When I have shared the word of God, my responsibility is ended. Sometimes people say, doesn't it bother you that when you preach a message there are times when nobody seems to respond? No, it doesn't bother me at all. God has called me to declare his word, his truth.

When I have done that my hands are clean. I've delivered my soul. I do my best and I just commit the rest.

When I see God commissioning the prophet Ezekiel to go to these people, I see here God's undying love for the people. Though their hearts are hard, though they will not listen to God, though they have set their faces against him, though they are in rebellion, still he speaks to warn them from destruction. It would seem that the Spirit of God will pursue a man right up to death's door.

Surely as God told Ezekiel later on in the book, that he had no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but that they would turn from their wickedness and live. And so God cried, turn, turn for why will you die, O house of Israel? I see not only God's unfailing compassion, but I see his unfailing faithfulness. He is faithful in letting them know exactly what they are doing to themselves and what they are doing to others around them whose lives are being influenced by theirs.

The Bible tells us that no man lives unto himself. That is our lives have an influence on those around us like it or not. An influence either for good or for evil.

Dads, you are a hero in the eyes of your little boys and you're setting a model for them. When they grow up, they want to be just like you. What kind of an example are you setting for them? Mothers, it's true also.

Your little girls, they look up to you and they want to grow up to be like you. But what kind of a model are you setting for them? Several years ago we had a lady here in the church whose husband was a plumber. He was an alcoholic and she asked if I would go and speak to him, which I did.

And as I was sitting there at the table across from him and talking to him about his life, about his need of giving his life over to Jesus Christ, and concerning the problem that he had with alcohol. He admitted to me that he was an alcoholic. That he had a real problem with drinking.

But he assured me that it only affected him. He didn't hurt anybody else. He was only hurting himself.

And he knew that he was hurting himself, but he said, I only hurt myself when I drank. I pointed to his two young boys and I said, what about them? The years have gone by. The wife has moved on.

I don't know where she is. I've lost contact. He died of alcoholism.

But I did hear concerning the two boys. They're both in prison. One today is on death row waiting for execution.

When you say it only hurts me, it doesn't hurt anybody else. False. What you do does have an impact and influence on others.

And God is warning, you know, that you don't live to yourself. What you are doing is affecting others, either in a positive or in a negative way. It's a lie of Satan to think that what you do doesn't take its toll on others.

Many years ago when I was first in the ministry, I was pastoring in Tucson, Arizona. A lady asked if I would come and talk to her husband who was dying. And the doctors had only given him a few days to live.

And so I went over to the house. I was greeted at the door by this lady and her daughter. And I was ushered into the house and taken into the bedroom where this man was lying there dying.

He had been a football coach at Amphitheater High School. And it just so happened that I was teaching a Bible class of kids from Amphitheater High. So I knew many of them.

Some of the fellows actually were on the football team. Amphitheater High that year had won the championship in football. And so I was very familiar with the team and with their victories.

And so I started talking to him about the football team at Amphitheater, bringing up some of the boys that I knew on the team and congratulating him for a winning season, for winning the championship. And as I talked to him about football, he was right into it. And I was seeking actually to sort of develop a bridge.

And then I brought up the subject of his need for Jesus Christ to seek the forgiveness of sins and to surrender his life to the Lord. He began to curse me like I've never been cursed in my life. He called me every foul name you could think of.

He ordered me out of his house in no uncertain terms. In fact, he became so angry. His face was just flushed as he ordered me out of his house never to return again.

And he was just livid. He tried to get out of bed. I think he wanted to throw me out of the house.

As I went out of the room, the daughter and the mother were standing there sobbing and apologizing to me for the treatment that I had received. And I said, it's all right. Don't worry about me.

I can handle it. I said, I have delivered my soul. I've shared with him the truth of Jesus Christ.

Obviously, he's rejected it, but that I can't do anything about. That's his responsibility now that he has heard the truth. You see, my responsibility is tell you what God's word says.

When I tell you what God's word has said, my responsibility ends. It's now your responsibility as to whether or not you receive it or you reject it. Back to the text.

The people of Judah are now captives in Babylon. They're there because they wouldn't listen to the word of God. Jeremiah, the prophet of God, had told them the word of God that if they tried to resist the Babylonian army, that their city would be destroyed, that they would be taken captive, and that they would find themselves as slaves in Babylon.

Exactly what Jeremiah said has come to pass. They are now there as captives in Babylon. You see, there were other prophets who were saying to them, oh, you're going to conquer Babylon.

Don't listen to Jeremiah. He's just, you know, doom and gloom. He's just saying you've got to turn from your wicked ways.

You're all right, and they sought to make the people comfortable in their sin. The seeker friendly prophets never mentioned sin. In fact, their main duty was, they felt, make the people feel good about themselves.

If you are in sin, I don't want to make you feel good about yourself. I want you to know that your sin is going to destroy you, and that God hates wickedness. They have rejected God's word.

They are now captives, but still they won't listen to the word of God. But God is going to give them another opportunity through Ezekiel, here in the land of captivity, to turn from the evil that has brought them there, and to get right with God. As we read, or as we read actually in Lamentations last week, there in chapter three, he said, it is the Lord's mercies that we were not consumed.

Because his compassions, they fail not. Great is thy faithfulness. And truly, in God sending Ezekiel to these rebellious people, not only is the compassion of God revealed, but the faithfulness of God is revealed.

But we also see the mercies of God. Even at this advanced stage of rebellion, God is still offering forgiveness and mercy. David tells us that as the heavens are high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him.

But we see God offering his mercy even to those who don't fear him. God is loving, God is faithful, God is merciful, but it's possible for you to reject his love, his faithfulness, and his mercy. God said to Noah, my spirit will not always strive with man.

It is possible for a person to say no once too many times unto God. I finally see in the text the righteous judgment of God. God had declared what he would do if they continued in their wickedness.

They continued in their wickedness and God did it. He was faithful in judgment. It is because of God's love that he must judge the wicked.

If God allowed the wicked to enter heaven, they would soon make a hell out of heaven. And so in his righteous judgment, he will not allow the wicked into heaven. One of the things that makes heaven heaven is not only those who are going to be there, but those who won't be there.

Paul wrote to the Corinthians, don't you know that the wicked will not inherit the kingdom of heaven? Neither the sexually immoral, or idolaters, or adulterers, or male prostitutes, or homosexual offenders, nor thieves, nor greedies, nor drunkards, nor slanders, nor swindlers will inherit the kingdom of God. In the book of Revelation, as the Lord is revealing to John the beauty and the glory of heaven, there in Revelation 21 he said, I saw a new heaven and a new earth. For the first heaven and the first earth had passed away.

I saw the holy city, the new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven as beautiful as a bride adorned for her husband. And I heard a great voice out of heaven saying, behold the dwelling place of God is with men, and he will be their God, and God will wipe away all tears from their eyes. There will be

no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain, for the former things are passed away.

And he that sat upon the throne said, behold I make all things new. He said unto me, write for these words are true and faithful words of God. He said unto me, it is done.

I am the alpha, the omega, the beginning and the end. I will give unto him that is a thirst of the fountain of the water of life freely, and he that overcomes will inherit everything. And I will be his God, and he will be my son.

But the fearful, the unbelieving, the abominable, the murderers, the whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars will have their part in a lake which burns with fire and brimstone, which is the second death. This is what God's word declares. Now you can accept it or not.

You can believe what God's word declares, and you can turn from your sinful ways, and you can receive mercy, pardon, forgiveness, and the hope of heaven. Or you can reject what God's word says. You can go on in your rebellion against God and righteous living, and you will be separated from God forever, and from the people of God.

That's what God's word declares. I have declared it to you. Not just out of my own head, I read it to you.

Now you are responsible for what you do with it. I've delivered my soul. I will not compromise nor seek to tone down what God has said in order to just draw a crowd of people.

But by the grace of God, I will tell the truth of God, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth. So help me God. Let's pray.

Father we are grateful that in faithfulness you continue to speak. In love Lord you won't let go easily. In mercy Lord you offer it to those who will repent and turn.

And so Father there are those today, some who have not yet surrendered their lives to you. Those that have been living lives that are opposed to your standards. And you are offering this day to cleanse them and to change their lives.

There are those who once walked with you who have turned aside, no longer living a righteous life. Lord you've declared that all of the righteousness they ever did will not even be remembered. They'll die in their sin.

But we pray Lord that they will give heed to your word, and that they will turn from their sin back to serving you, living for you. Lord do a work in hearts and lives today, in Jesus name we ask, Amen.

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