

Connection

What is your favorite party game?

Content

God instructed His prophet Ezekiel to perform a series of “sign acts,” like charades or metaphors, to deliver a message of warning and, ultimately, restoration to the disobedient people of ancient Israel. Those warnings have much to teach us about God and His plan to gather and save us because of his love.

The Reality of Isolation

Read Ezekiel 3:24-27. In the first sign act of Ezekiel, the prophet is tied up, left in isolation and cannot speak.

1. How is this a sign of what is in store for the people of Israel?
2. Why would God make it so Ezekiel can't speak?
3. In your life, what keeps you from hearing what God wants to say?

The Reality of Destruction

Read Ezekiel 4:1-3. On a piece of clay, Ezekiel draws a picture of Jerusalem being attacked and puts an “iron wall” in front of it that blocks the view.

4. What does the sign act imply about the relationship between God and His people?

Jesus breaks down iron walls. Proverbs 16:18 warns that pride and haughtiness end in destruction, while in John 10:10 Jesus says He has come bringing life to the fullest.

5. What can keep you on the wrong side of the “iron wall” between you and God?

The Reality of Transgression

Read Ezekiel 4:4-8. For over a year, the prophet is tied down in front of his drawing of Jerusalem to symbolize a judgement of bondage against the people for carrying on in sin for so long. James 1:13-17 tells us that sin gives birth to death, but perfect gifts come from God. And Romans 5:6 says Christ died for the ungodly.

6. Do you believe Jesus died for you? What would you say to someone who wanted you to explain what that means?

The Reality of Starvation

Read Ezekiel 4:9-17. In a sign act, Ezekiel demonstrates the horror of starvation—which will shortly befall the people.

7. What details of this starvation seem most disturbing to you?

For us, the metaphor shows how we starve without the Lord in our lives. Read John 6:32-35 and John 7:38.

8. In what way is Jesus both Bread of Life, and Living Water?

The Reality of Desperation

Read Ezekiel 5:1-7. The prophet is instructed by God to cut off his hair, burn it, chop it up, toss it to the wind. This symbolized the exile and scattering of the people of Israel. Later, Ezekiel 10 and 11 describe God's abandonment of the defiled temple and Jerusalem.

Sin can be likened to a disease in us, with consequences for our body, mind and spirit, as it separates us from God. Only God has the remedy for our sin.

9. What steps can we take to allow God's remedy for sin?

Ezekiel 11:17-20 shows God's promise to restore to Israel the people who find faith in Him. God does not force Himself on us, but His plan all along (His "purpose and grace" as described in 2 Timothy 1:9) is to save us.

Commitment

Jesus gave us two sign acts to perform in His name. They are baptism and communion. Take a moment to write down what each of these acts means to you.