

Prayer List

Gene
Veda
Wallace
Sheila
Ophelia

Services:

Sunday

Bible Class 9:00 a.m.
Assembly 10:00 a.m.
Assembly 11:00 a.m.

Wednesday

Bible Class 7:00 p.m.

Pinole Tidings

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Elders:

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Michael Odom - MichaelOdom@pinolechurchofchrist.com
Ernie Sprinkel - preacher@pinolechurchofchrist.com

This Week's Question:

Who slept on a stone pillow at Bethel and had a dream of a stairway to heaven?

Answer To Last Week's Question:

The king of Edom - Numbers 20:14-20

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Ezekiel's Faith: "You Are What You Eat"

Mark White

The prophet Ezekiel is a prophet of both doom and hope. His work of faith among the people of God during a time of suffering and punishment is a testimony to the personal faith of one man determined to do God's will. He was God's man for a captive people in Babylon. Along with Daniel, they were the prophets to the exiled nation of Judah. Unlike the pre-exilic prophets who warned of impending doom if repentance was not forthcoming, Ezekiel's warning and instruction were to an already dispossessed people.

His message was not complete gloom, however, for he also brightly predicted better days for Judah following her punishment. Because of his deep, abiding faith in God, Ezekiel could look forward to a time when God's remnant would return to Judah and new life would return to the nation.

Ezekiel 3:1-4 is an interesting passage which describes the source of Ezekiel's faith. God instructed him to "eat"

the scroll containing His words. “ ‘Son of man, eat what you find; eat this scroll, and go, speak to the house of Israel.’ So I opened my mouth, and He caused me to eat that scroll. And He said to me, ‘Son of man, feed your belly, and fill your stomach with this scroll that I give you.’ So I ate it, and it was in my mouth like honey in sweetness. And He said to me, ‘son of man, go to the house of Israel and speak with my words to them.’ ” God had shown Ezekiel the writing in this scroll and it was filled with lamentations, mourning and woe (2:10). This was to be Ezekiel’s message of faith to the nation. These were the words God chose to speak to the house of Israel by Ezekiel’s tongue.

How could such a negative message have a taste as sweet as honey? Isn’t “negative preaching” always bitter and distasteful? Our modern dislike for corrective preaching and teaching is a sad commentary on the quality of our own faith. We must preach God’s words even if correction seems unpleasant or unproductive. It is the word of the Lord, and it will accomplish its Divinely designed purpose. Ezekiel was pleased to receive the words of God, whether judgmental or merciful. Their sweetness derived from the source of the words rather than their content. David, in Psalm 19:9–11, says the same: “The judgments of the Lord are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, Yea, than much fine gold; Sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb. Moreover by them Your servant is warned, And in keeping them there is great reward.” John, in Revelation 10:9–11 was also told to eat a little book which would taste sweet but would make his stomach bitter. He

was to prophesy some unpleasant things, for God’s words bring not only grace, but judgment as well. Please observe that Ezekiel was told to eat these words. This means he was to ingest the words of the Lord, digest them, and allow them to give him the strength only such spiritual food could provide. If “you are what you eat”, then Ezekiel was a walking, talking, living, breathing Bible! The word of God was “internalized”—it became a part of him. Time was when members of the church were known as walking Bibles because they knew the text so well. In any community, members of the church could be counted upon to give a Bible answer to the questions raised by their neighbors and friends. If this is no longer true, it is because our diet has changed! We are eating too much psychology and self-help instruction and we are drinking deeply from the well of entertainment and pop-culture. Faith will not be nurtured with such junk food. Remember, “Faith comes by hearing, and hearing by the word of God.” (Romans 10:17)

If your faith is withering, or if you are not progressing spiritually, the culprit is most likely your diet. Faith will remain strong when it is properly fed. Strong faith will be exercised, and the appetite will increase for even more words from the Lord. “Your words were found, and I ate them, And your word was to me the joy and rejoicing of my heart; For I am called by Your name, O Lord God of hosts.” (Jeremiah 15:16)