

Listen Carefully to My Words and Take Them to Heart (Ezekiel 3)

The Proverbs of Solomon are rich in instructing us to be hearers and keepers of the commands of God. There are sure rewards for those who attentively listen and obey. We read in Proverbs chapter three verse one: My son, don't forget My teaching, but let your heart keep My commands; for they will bring you many days, a full life, and well-being. In this chapter we find several rewards for listening and keeping the Word of God in our heart, and one of them is wisdom with the blessings it brings to ones' life. However, the warning given to Ezekiel to listen carefully to God's Word, was for the purpose to pass the message on to others. God had called Ezekiel to be His watchman, His messenger to the house of Israel, even though they were not going to listen to him, due to their stubbornness. The Lord said, Tell them: **This is what the Lord God says**, whether they listen or refuse to listen (Ezekiel 3:11b).

God's calling to Ezekiel carried a heavy weight of responsibility and consequence on Ezekiel when a person died without his warning of his sins. God said, If you did not warn him, he will die because of his sin and the righteous acts he did will not be remembered, yet I will hold you responsible for his blood (Vs.20 b). But if you warn the righteous person that he should not sin, and he does not sin, he will indeed live because he listened to your warning, and you will have saved your life (vs.21). For Ezekiel to be a faithful messenger, he had to listen carefully to God's instructions; that meant for him to be cautious, caring, and watchful; to pay close attention to them, to guard against errors. He was to listen with his heart to give the message exactly as God told him to do. God is very concerned that men would know the truth, and be saved. In the past, God appointed prophets and shepherds to teach the people, but the shepherds led the sheep astray, and guided them the wrong way, to the point that they lost their way and wandered from mountain to hill and had forgotten their resting place (Jeremiah 50:6), so Ezekiel was instructed to prophesy against the shepherds of Israel saying: This is what the Lord God says to the shepherds: Woe to the shepherds of Israel, who have been feeding themselves! Shouldn't the shepherds feed their flock? You have not strengthened the weak, healed the sick, bandaged the injured, bought back the strays, or sought the lost; I am against the shepherds; I will demand My flock from them and prevent them from shepherding the flock... I will rescue My flock from their mouths so that they will not be food for them (Ezekiel 34:1-10).

This warning is not only for those shepherds of yesterday; it is for today's shepherds, called pastors. Many pastors today are feeding the flock cakes and ice-cream; they fatten the flock with spiritual junk, weaken them spiritually and because of that, they cannot digest the protein, which is the essence of life- the Word of God. They are rocking the sheep with wild rock music and covering them with icing of deceit, so they cannot see and perceive the truth. These shepherds have been warned; they will be held responsible for the blood of their flock. Paul warned Timothy, I solemnly charge you: proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not; rebuke, correct and encourage with great patience and teaching, for all Scripture is inspired by God and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting for training in righteousness, so that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work; before God and Christ YAHSHUA, Who is going to judge the living and the dead, and by His appearing

and His kingdom, I solemnly charge you; **proclaim the message; persist in it whether convenient or not, rebuke, correct and encourage with great patience and teaching** (Tim. 3:14, 16; 4:1-2). The Word of God says that if anyone even an angel should preach a gospel other than what the Bible teaches, a curse be on him. The Word of our God should be taught complete in its power; not watered down with man's ideas and philosophies. God calls each of His messengers to listen carefully to His word and take them to heart, because only the Word of God has the power to transform the heart of man for the good, because only the Word of God can penetrate into the inmost part of the soul; it is the only living Word effective and sharper than any two edge sword, penetrating as far as to divide the soul, spirit, joints and marrow; it is the judge of the ideas and thoughts of the heart (Heb. 4:14). When the Word of God is taught mingled with jokes, it loses the effectiveness of the Holy Spirit in one's life, because He is not in jokes.

The prophet Ezekiel was called to perform difficult tasks in order to represent the coming judgments to the nation of Israel, as we read in chapter four of Ezekiel. In this chapter he had to perform the most unique command. Ezekiel was a true prophet; one who followed and accomplished the will of God. When he was commissioned to be a prophet, the Lord instructed him to say, This is what the Lord God says; speak My words to them whether they listen or refuse to listen, for they are rebellious. Nothing was to stop the message from going forth through Ezekiel. Otherwise God was going to hold him responsible for every life that he had not warned.

When the Lord called Jeremiah to be His prophet, He said to him: I chose you before I formed you in the womb; I set you apart before you were born; I appointed you a prophet to the nations. Look I have filled your mouth with My words; get ready. **Stand up and tell them everything that I command you.** Do not be intimidated by them or I will cause you to cower before them. They will fight against you but never prevail over you, since I am with you to rescue you; I watch over My word to accomplish it (Jeremiah 1). Nothing that comes from His mouth will return to Him void; it will accomplish what He pleases and will prosper in what He sent it to do (Isaiah 55:11-12). So the messengers of God must be truthful and zealous for the words that they hold from God to pass them on. Before YAHSHUA returned to heaven, He gave His disciples the command to "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember I am with you always, to the end of the age" (Matt. 28:19-20). The disciples were witnesses of all YAHSHUA taught and did among them. He instructed them how to live a life of surrender to obedience by His own examples. His words are now in their hearts to teach what YAHSHUA had taught them. He also equipped them with power over the enemy and diseases. This responsibility is also for all believers in YAHSHUA'S name, being careful to manage well His Word, for its power to flow in accomplishing its purpose in the life of the hearer. Just like it was required of Ezekiel to pay attention to the word given and to take it to heart, so must we do the same, to preserve the word of our God pure and effective. The world waits for us to take a stand that will make a difference. And God will hold us responsible for not warning the world of its wickedness when it is perishing in the darkness of its ignorance. Today's world is the same as it was in the time of Ezekiel concerning the acceptance of the

truth. But we are light, we hold the light of truth that will break the darkness of sin; we know the way that leads to heaven; we must not keep silent and let others fall into the hole of hell, just because we are afraid of them. YAHSHUA died for all; but how will they believe, if they have not heard? For believing comes through hearing and hearing the word of God; and the gospel given to us is God's power for salvation to everyone who believes (Roman 1: 16b). Let's pass on His word as YAHSHUA commanded us to do!