

**Series:** A New Heart: The Book of Ezekiel  
**Message:** The One-Man Street Performer | Ezekiel 4-5  
**Prepare for Next Week:** Read chapters 6-11



| Sermon Big Idea                                                          | Helpful Resources                                                                                                    |
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| God's methods may surprise you — His commitment to reach you never will. | The Bible Project Guide: Ezekiel  |

### Head: Grasping the Text

*Goal: To grasp the theological concepts and historical context of the text.*

1. God shifts from verbal warnings to dramatic sign-acts in Ezekiel 4–5 after generations of prophetic words that went unheeded. What does this tell us about human nature and our tendency to tune out God's voice? What does it reveal about God's relentless creativity in reaching His people? (Read some of this background from an older, but prophet who was a contemporary of Ezekiel: Jeremiah 25:3–7).
2. The iron plate in Sign 1 (4:3) represents an impenetrable barrier — God's face set against Jerusalem. This language echoes the covenant curses. Read Leviticus 26:14–17, where God warned He would "set His face against" a disobedient Israel. How does knowing this is the fulfillment of a centuries-old covenant warning deepen the weight of what Ezekiel is enacting?
3. In Sign 2, Ezekiel "bears" the iniquity of Israel and Judah for 430 days. The word "bear" or "carry" is the same word used in Leviticus 16 for the scapegoat on the Day of Atonement, the single most sacred day in Israel's calendar. On that day, the High Priest entered the Holy of Holies to make atonement for the sins of the entire nation. Two goats were central to the ritual: one was sacrificed as a blood offering, and the other — the scapegoat — had the sins of Israel confessed over it, then was driven into the wilderness, symbolically carrying the guilt of the people away from the community. The theology is profound: sin is not simply overlooked or minimized — it must be transferred and carried away. There is a real cost and a real removal. How does Ezekiel's act echo this ritual? And what does it tell us about what Jesus ultimately came to do? (Cross-references: *Leviticus 16:21–22; Isaiah 53:4–6*).
4. Ezekiel 5:5 says God placed Jerusalem "in the center of the nations" — not geographically, but redemptively. Israel was chosen to be a blessing and a light to all peoples? (cross references: *Genesis 12:1–3; Exodus 19:5–6; Isaiah 42:6; 49:6; 60:1–3*). How does understanding this calling help explain why Israel's failure and the severity of God's judgment go hand in hand? What principle does this establish about the relationship between privilege and responsibility?

## Heart: Internal Transformation

Goal: Examine how the text reshapes our identity, affections, and motivations to bring about honest self-examination.

5. The sermon reminded us that God's warnings are acts of mercy, not cruelty — "He doesn't ambush; He announces." Think of a time when something uncomfortable — a hard Scripture, a disrupted plan, a rattled assumption, etc., that turned out to be God trying to get your attention. How did you respond at the time? Looking back, what do you wish you had done differently?
6. Sign 2 shows that sin has weight, duration, and history. Ezekiel lay bound for 430 days to embody centuries of accumulated covenant unfaithfulness. We live in a culture that wants quick forgiveness with no reckoning. Where in your own life do you tend to minimize the weight or history of sin — in yourself or in how you engage others? What does it stir in you to know that God takes it far more seriously than you do?
7. The "Ezekiel bread" sold today, ironically illustrates something real: what God designed to be confronting, we often repackage as comfortable. Is there a passage of Scripture, a conviction, or a teaching you've been making peace with instead of genuinely responding to? What would it look like to sit with it honestly this week?

## Hands: Living it Out

*Goal: To move from hearing the Word to living it out as a disciple with specific, practical, and achievable steps for the coming week.*

8. Is there something in your life right now that feels more like a disruption or annoyance rather than God trying to get your attention— a job shift, a relationship strain, a financial pressure, an unexpected change? What would it look like this week to pause and genuinely ask God, "What are you saying through this?" Identify one specific step you will take to stop and listen.
9. Jesus was the true and better Ezekiel — not just teaching the kingdom but performing it in His own body, all the way to the cross. We are called to be living sign-acts of that same kingdom. Who in your life — a neighbor, coworker, classmate, or family member — needs to see the gospel lived out, not just heard? Name one specific, visible act of love or service you will offer them this week? (*Reflect on: 2 Corinthians 5:20; Matthew 5:14–16*)

