

Series: A New Heart: The Book of Ezekiel

Message: The Blame Game | Ezekiel 18

Preparation: Read Ezekiel 19-24



Sermon Big Idea	Helpful Resources
God's forgiveness restores — but it requires repentance, and repentance requires owning your sin.	The Bible Project Guide: Ezekiel 

Head: Grasping the Text

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

1. Ezekiel 18 opens with God confronting a popular proverb: "The fathers eat sour grapes, and the children's teeth are set on edge" (v. 2). What was the exiles' point in using this proverb? Why does God tell them to stop using it (v. 3)? What does His declaration — "every life belongs to Me" (v. 4) — establish as the foundation for everything that follows?
2. Walk through the three portraits: the righteous father (vv. 5–9), the wicked son (vv. 10–13), and the righteous grandson (vv. 14–18). What does the verdict on each — life, death, life — reveal about how God assigns moral accountability? Notice that the grandson's righteousness list nearly mirrors his grandfather's. What does that pattern suggest about how moral character is formed and reformed across generations?
3. In 18:21–24, God applies the principle in both directions: the wicked can turn and live; the righteous can turn and die. The Hebrew word "to turn" — means repentance, a change of direction, not merely a feeling. How does understanding repentance as direction rather than emotion change how you think about it? How does verse 23 function as the emotional center of the chapter and gives a glimpse into God's heart?
4. Israel objects twice — in verse 25 and again in verse 29 — using almost identical words: "The Lord's way isn't fair." Why do you think Ezekiel records the same objection twice? What does God's patient, repeated response reveal about how He handles resistant hearts? Where does God ultimately locate the unfairness — in His own ways, or in theirs?

Heart: Internal Transformation

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

5. The exiles were using a real verse — Exodus 20:5 — selectively, to build a case that removed their personal responsibility. Is there a truth (theological, psychological, or circumstantial) you

have leaned on to justify not changing? What does Ezekiel 18 in light of the work of Christ say to that posture?

6. Blame functions as a defense mechanism — it protects our self-image, shields us from the cost of change, and keeps us from owning what we've done. Reflect honestly: is there an area of your life where you are more comfortable explaining why you are this way than actually turning? What story are you telling yourself — and is it possibly preventing the change you say you want?
7. The righteous grandson grew up watching his father's destruction, saw the wrong road clearly, and chose differently (v. 14). He had every reason to quote the proverb — and didn't. Have you seen anyone in your life that represents someone who broke a destructive pattern through deliberate, faithful choice? What made that possible?

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. Ezekiel 18:31 commands: "Get yourselves a new heart and a new spirit." But Ezekiel 36:26 reveals God saying: "I will give you a new heart." The command exposes what we cannot do on our own; the promise declares what Christ has made possible. What is one specific area where you need to stop explaining and start turning — trusting that God will do in you what He has promised?
9. Martin Luther wrote that "the entire life of believers should be repentance." This isn't about living under guilt — it's about ongoing, daily attentiveness to what still needs to turn. What would it look like, practically this week, to build a small habit of repentance into your daily life rather than treating it as a one-time event? What daily rhythm or practice can you introduce to foster daily repentance?
10. Is there a relationship — with a family member, a friend, a colleague — where blame (given or received) has created distance or stagnation? What would it look like to take personal responsibility for your part, regardless of what the other person does? How does the gospel free you to do that without waiting for them to go first?