



The Newness of Life

Week 4: A new heart & Spirit

Passage: Ezekiel 36v 22-39 (especially v26-27)

Ezekiel was among the first to be exiled to Babylon and about 5 years afterwards God revealed himself to Ezekiel in an amazing way. Chapter 1 is dedicated to the vision God gives him and ends with Ezekiel flat on his face before the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord!

God reveals himself as the Holy God of Israel and throughout the passage God uses the phrase “then you/they will know that I am the Lord”.

- What does God being holy mean to you?
- Have you ever experienced this certain knowledge that He is the Lord? What were the circumstances?

God says his name has been profaned (defiled, polluted); Israel was supposed to reflect who God is to the nations but when people looked at them they didn't see a holy God but a god like those of the other nations.

- Dave talked about idols as anything that takes the place of God in our lives; ‘Where your treasure is, there your heart is also’ (Matthew 6v21). What idols do you have/have you had in your life that threaten to take God's place?

Focussing on things other than God can lead to our hearts becoming hard like stone; cold, unfeeling, unkind, unmoved and inflexible so that we cannot be responsive towards God and we react with cynical indifference.

- Share your thoughts and experience of this – how do you notice areas of your life where your heart is hardened?
- Read Ezekiel 33v30-33. How does this challenge your own attitudes and behaviour?

God says that he will replace the Israelites' hearts of stone with one of flesh and put His Spirit in them but he repeatedly makes clear that this is not for their benefit.

- Does that surprise you? Why/why not? Why does God say that he will do this?
- How does that inform or challenge your view of God?

Dave ended by reminding us that this passage is written to a people and should not simply be applied to us as individuals. Spend time praying for one another but also for us as a church family; that we would be open and responsive to God.