

The LORD Is There

Session 2. The Scroll and the Sending

God fed his prophet before he sent him: a scroll full of grief that tasted like honey, and a week of sitting in silence before a single word was spoken.

What We Found

God called Ezekiel 'son of man', a mortal, and then told him to stand. Before he could obey, the Spirit set him on his feet. That order is the whole Christian life in two verses: God commands, and God supplies what the command requires, and the standing is still really ours.

We read the job description and found what was missing from it. Rebels, briers, thorns and scorpions, and twice over, whether they hear or refuse to hear. Ezekiel is made responsible for speaking. He is not made responsible for the response, and God says so twice. For anyone worn out from trying to manage how other people receive the faith, that line is a mercy rather than a loophole.

Then God handed him a scroll written on both sides, full of lamentation and mourning and woe, and told him to eat it. It tasted sweet as honey. We held those two facts side by side without smoothing them out: the sweetness is not the subject matter, it is whose word it is. We found Jeremiah saying he ate God's words and they became the joy of his heart, and we found John, six centuries later, eating the same kind of scroll and reporting the aftertaste Ezekiel left us to guess: sweet in the mouth, bitter in the stomach, and then sent out to speak again.

The night ended where the chapter ends. Ezekiel goes in bitterness, with the hand of the LORD strong upon him, and sits among the exiles for seven days without saying anything. Obedience and devastation in the same sentence, and the book does not call that a failure. Before he preaches to them, he sits where they sit.

Voices of the Church

St. Jerome, d. 420

Ignorance of the Scriptures is ignorance of Christ.

Commentary on Isaiah, prologue.

For the group. The Catechism quotes this line (CCC 133) when it urges every Catholic to read Scripture often. Ezekiel had to fill his stomach with the scroll before he opened his mouth; the same word is on your shelf.

St. Gregory the Great, d. 604

Gregory reads the scroll written on front and back as a picture of Scripture's own fullness: there is what stands on the surface, and there is what waits inside for the reader who keeps chewing. He insists too that no one can pour out what he has not first taken in.

Homilies on Ezekiel, Book 1 (no section number claimed). Summary of his teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. If you have ever finished a chapter of the Bible and felt nothing, Gregory's answer is not to read faster. It is to stay longer.

St. Ambrose, d. 397

Ambrose teaches that prayer and the reading of Scripture are two halves of one conversation: we speak to God when

we pray, and we listen to him when we read what he has spoken.

On the Duties of the Clergy (De officiis ministrorum) I.20.88. Summary of his teaching, not a direct quotation.

For the group. This is the practical shape of eating the word, and it fits in ten minutes. Read, then answer.

Live It This Week

Practices

1. Take one paragraph of Scripture a day this week, the same paragraph if you like, and read it slowly four times: once to hear it, once to think about it, once to pray it back, once in silence. That is lectio divina, and it is the Church's oldest way of eating the word.
2. Pick one person you have been quietly managing, praying for results rather than for them. Hand the outcome back to God, out loud, and keep the faithfulness that is actually yours.
3. Sit with someone in something hard this week without offering a solution. Ezekiel gave seven days; try twenty minutes.
4. Memorize this week's verse and say it before you open your phone in the morning.

Scripture Memory

Ezekiel 3:3

"And he said to me, 'Son of man, eat this scroll that I give you and fill your stomach with it.' Then I ate it; and it was in my mouth as sweet as honey."

Ezekiel 3:3

Go Further in the Catechism

- **CCC 104.** in the sacred books the Father meets his children and speaks with them
- **CCC 133.** the Church urges frequent reading of Scripture; Jerome's warning about ignorance of it
- **CCC 2653.** prayer should accompany the reading of Scripture, so that it becomes a dialogue
- **CCC 2708.** meditation engages thought, imagination, emotion and desire

Before next session. Read Ezekiel 3:16-5:17 before we meet again.