

## **November 9, 2014**

### **Ezekiel 43:13-21 (NIV)**

**13** “These are the measurements of the altar in long cubits, that cubit being a cubit and a handbreadth: Its gutter is a cubit deep and a cubit wide, with a rim of one span around the edge. And this is the height of the altar:

**14** From the gutter on the ground up to the lower ledge that goes around the altar it is two cubits high, and the ledge is a cubit wide. From this lower ledge to the upper ledge that goes around the altar it is four cubits high, and that ledge is also a cubit wide.

**15** Above that, the altar hearth is four cubits high, and four horns project upward from the hearth.

**16** The altar hearth is square, twelve cubits long and twelve cubits wide.

**17** The upper ledge also is square, fourteen cubits long and fourteen cubits wide. All around the altar is a gutter of one cubit with a rim of half a cubit. The steps of the altar face east.”

**18** Then he said to me, “Son of man, this is what the Sovereign LORD says: These will be the regulations for sacrificing burnt offerings and splashing blood against the altar when it is built:

**19** You are to give a young bull as a sin offering to the Levitical priests of the family of Zadok, who come near to minister before me, declares the Sovereign LORD.

**20** You are to take some of its blood and put it on the four horns of the altar and on the four corners of the upper ledge and all around the rim, and so purify the altar and make atonement for it.

**21** You are to take the bull for the sin offering and burn it in the designated part of the temple area outside the sanctuary.

Good Morning First Baptist Members and Friends!

I don't know what you have come to do, but I have come to praise the Lord. I praise for keeping me thru the night and waking me this morning. I praise Him for bringing the village called First Baptist Church of Park Forest together to celebrate Barbara Williams' 75<sup>th</sup> birthday. I praise Him for just being God all by Himself. If you need to praise Him then make some noise for Jesus.

This morning we return to the 43<sup>rd</sup> chapter of Ezekiel and pick-up where we left off with the 13<sup>th</sup> -21<sup>st</sup> verses. I would imagine as you read the passage during the week, in Adult Sunday School and then again for the responsive reading you might have been asking yourself where is the application for the 21<sup>st</sup> century church. Don't feel bad, because that is the same question I asked God. God allowed me to hear two possible applications and so I will share them both with you this morning.

Would you pray with me and for me as I wrestle with this theme?

### **WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?**

**SHALL WE PRAY!**

God of heaven and earth we are a consumer driven people. We have grown up wanting immediate gratification. We want to know the outcome before we begin. We don't want to do it until we are clear about how it will benefit us. But we thank you this morning that you continue to give us opportunities to learn that all we do is designed to bring you glory and what's in it for us ought not be the first question out of mouths. Hear our prayer this morning and helps us to hear the Word prepared for us before the foundation of the world. In the name of Jesus the Christ we pray. AMEN and AMEN.

### **WHAT'S IN IT FOR ME?**

As we join the biblical story this morning we realize that God is providing Ezekiel with instructions on how to build the altar when the Children of Israel return from their captivity in Babylon. The instructions are very clear and specific just as the instructions for the temple that Solomon built and the instructions given to Moses for the building of the tabernacle. Yet as we view these instructions for the building of altars, temple and tabernacles we cannot lose sight of the fact that in the 21<sup>st</sup> century we do not need to be concerned with the physical structure for with the death,

resurrection and ascension of the Lord Jesus **we now are the temple** and the Holy Spirit dwells within us.

*<sup>19</sup>Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; <sup>20</sup>you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.<sup>1</sup>*

Well, if we are now the temple what can we learn from these very specific instructions. First of all the three things I am going to suggest that we can learn do not have a priority – not one before the other – but all at the same time.

### **Teaching Point #1**

#### **God wants to be involved in the details.**

Often we say “I got this” “this is just not big enough to worry God about it” “God does not have time for my stuff”

- God cared about a baby in a basket on the Nile
- God heard the cries of a motherless child and sent her a son
- God considered the plight of a widow and her daughter-in-law who was also a widow

God wants to be involved in the details because God made the details.

### **Teaching Point #2**

#### **God wants some space that is His and His alone.**

- Often we pray **while we are doing other things**: driving to work, standing in line, folding laundry
- Often we pray **when something is going on**: the brakes are failing; the kids are late getting home; the money is funny and the cabinets are bare
- Often we pray because **it is the time to pray**: before a journey, before a meal, when it is time to go to bed

God does not object to these kinds of prayers. But God wants us to have a place and a time that is reserved for Him. Consider what Jesus did while He was here on earth with us.

Jesus told us **how** to pray.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=1+Corinthians+6%3A19-20&version=NIV>

*<sup>6</sup>But when you pray, go into your room, close the door and pray to your Father, who is unseen. Then your Father, who sees what is done in secret, will reward you. <sup>2</sup>*

Jesus provided examples on prayer:

*<sup>16</sup>But Jesus **often** withdrew to lonely places and prayed.  
<sup>12</sup>One of those days Jesus went out to a **mountainside** to pray, and spent the night praying to God.  
<sup>23</sup>After he had dismissed them, he went up on a mountainside **by himself** to pray. Later that night, he was there alone,<sup>3</sup>*

*who – pray to God the Father*

*where – alone, on a mountainside, in a closet*

*when - often*

*what- prayed about His mission – His work – His assignment*

### **Teaching Point #3**

God requires that you do all that He has commanded.

God commanded them to build an altar

God commanded them to create sacred spaces

God commanded them to follow a process

Sometimes we are guilty of trying to take short cuts.

We don't come to church and say – God knows my heart

We don't help in areas where we can help – God will send someone

We don't give of talent, tithes or time – God understands

I stopped to tell you this morning that God wants to be in the details, God wants you to spend time alone with Him, God wants you to obey His commands.

The second thing I heard from God is that the specifics have value. God provided specifics – a blue print – for the altar. God has also provided us with a blue print in the words and deeds of His Son Jesus the Christ.

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<sup>2</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=matthew+6&version=NIV>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=luke+5%3A16%3Bluke+6%3A12%3Bmatthew+14%3A23&version=NIV>

<sup>36</sup> “Teacher, which is the greatest commandment in the Law?”

<sup>37</sup> Jesus replied: “Love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind.’ <sup>38</sup> This is the first and greatest commandment. <sup>39</sup> And the second is like it: ‘Love your neighbor as yourself.’ <sup>40</sup> All the Law and the Prophets hang on these two commandments.”<sup>4</sup>

<sup>18</sup> Then Jesus came to them and said, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. <sup>19</sup> Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, <sup>20</sup> and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age.”<sup>5</sup>

### WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

**14** “Do not let your hearts be troubled. You believe in God; believe also in me. <sup>2</sup> My Father’s house has many rooms; if that were not so, would I have told you that I am going there to prepare a place for you? <sup>3</sup> And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come back and take you to be with me that you also may be where I am. <sup>4</sup> You know the way to the place where I am going.”

### Jesus the Way to the Father

<sup>5</sup> Thomas said to him, “Lord, we don’t know where you are going, so how can we know the way?”

<sup>6</sup> Jesus answered, “I am the way and the truth and the life. No one comes to the Father except through me. <sup>7</sup> If you really know me, you will know my Father as well. From now on, you do know him and have seen him.”<sup>6</sup>

### WHAT’S IN IT FOR ME?

#### HEAVEN!

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+22:36-40&version=NIV>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Matthew+28&version=NIV>

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=john+14&version=NIV>