

Promises- the Power to Change Ezekiel 36:25-27

Note: This is a simple but effective message I wrote in 2000. It works brilliantly in prisons, but can be adapted for use in rehabs and youth facilities. I have even used it for healing meetings. It already deals with sin, idols and addictions. After you've dealt with peoples souls say, 'the one who forgives our sin also heals our bodies' then simply quote Psalm 103:3 "He forgives all my sins and heals all my diseases" ...now call up the sick up for prayer.

You're probably not here by choice; you're here because you have to be. Perhaps you've tried to change. Maybe you've even made promises to yourself about changing your ways. Maybe you've made promises to your wife or partner, or your children, your father or mother perhaps. When you made those promises you probably meant them but it can be one thing to make a promise and another thing to keep it.

The Problem is your Sin Nature. We have a sinful nature. Sin is transgressing God's Law and includes such things as lying, stealing, fighting, cursing and so much more. It is part of who we are. For example, did you notice as you were growing up, no one had to teach you to be naughty; you just did it, that's because you have a sinful nature. And some of us just naturally want to misbehave.

If you've lived in an environment where taking drugs, getting drunk, violence and crime was the way of life, then you probably don't need much convincing of that. And it is almost impossible to get out of that cycle.

When I was younger and got sick of getting drunk and sick of the drugs and the violence I would change who I was hanging out with. Once or twice I even changed my location. But it wasn't long before I went back to my old ways. Changing my friends and location did not change who I was inside, it just took temptation out of my way for a little while. And maybe this has been your experience too.

....So can we truly change our nature? And is there an answer to the problem of our sinful nature? ...The answer is NO and YES. No we can't change ourselves. But yes, there is an answer, God can change us!!! In Ezekiel 36:25-27 God makes 5 I will statements.

- ✓ First God says, *"I will sprinkle clean water on you, and you shall be clean;* (short testimony 1-3 minutes)
- ✓ Next God says, *"I will cleanse you from all your filthiness and from all your idols"...* (1st & 2nd Command-includes addictions and wrong patterns of living including gang affiliations)
- ✓ Next God says, *"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you"...*
- ✓ Then God Says, *"I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh" ...* (our hearts need to be softened) (Mark 7:21-23 is good to but will take you in a slightly different direction)
- ✓ Lastly God says, *"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them"...*

Look how often God says "I will". God wants to do for you what you've tried so hard to do yourself but could not do yourself- Change!!! But God's not just talking about tweaking your motor but giving you a complete overhaul.

The power to change comes through what Jesus did on the cross 2000 years ago. Right now Because of your sin you can't change, you can't get into Heaven and you can't get to know God, because God is holy and just and can't stand the sight of sin, in-fact He must punish it. That's why the Bible says, *"The wages of sin is death"* and *"The soul who sins shall die"* both these verses are speaking of eternal judgement in hell. But God, because He loves us sent His Son Jesus to die in our place. The wages (or punishment) of sin is death but it was Jesus that died. He took the punishment we deserved and dealt with sin 2000 years ago so that we could be forgiven and transformed. And what makes that even more amazing is what the Bible says about Jesus true identity, it says He is *"the visible image of the invisible God"*. One of His own followers a guy called Thomas called Him, *"My Lord and my God"* and even worshipped Him as God - Jesus is God.

From any view point and by anyone's standard Jesus life was awesome, not only did He live a sinless life but thru His life He made God known to all of us. He healed the sick; raised the dead and cast out demons. He even claimed Himself to be the way the truth and the life.

God's Law required a sacrifice for sin so Jesus died willingly on the cross for you and me so we can be forgiven, but He didn't stay dead. He rose from the dead three later three days later to prove that He is God and has **the power to change us from the inside out. What must we do?**

Repent: God's word says, *"Repent now and turn to God that your sin may wipe out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord"* (Acts 3:19,20) Repent means to change your mind or turn around. You must turn from your sin-If you lie, lie no more. If steal still no more. If have a problem with alcohol make a decision to turn away from that-Jesus will help you. If you take drugs make a decision here and now to turn away from it and Jesus supernatural power will be there to help you. Turn to Jesus; in Him is the power to change. Turn your life over to his control.

Believe: Jesus said, *"He who believes in the Son has everlasting life; and he who does not believe the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abides on him."* John 3:36

Receive: God word says, *"Yet to all who did receive him, to those who believed in his name, he gave the right to become children of God."* John 1:12- This truly is the difference between being a religious person and being someone who is truly changed by God. Jesus says to you right now, *"See! I stand at the door and knock. If anyone hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him"*

Invite your hearer's to bow their heads and follow you in prayer.