

The Backsliding Righteous and The Repentant Sinner

Scripture: Ezekiel 33:12-16 NIV

Introduction

Here is a message from God to two groups of people: those who have been obeying his commands and those who have not. It is a message of both life and death, mercy and judgement. It conveys God's love of right living and hatred of sin.

There are essentially two messages: one for the righteous not to forsake their right living, and one for the sinner to repent and begin to live to please God.

I. The backsliding righteous

Ezekiel 33:12b-13 NIV The righteous man, if he sins, will not be allowed to live because of his former righteousness. If I tell the righteous man that he will surely live, but then he trusts in his righteousness and does evil, none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered; he will die for the evil he has done.

- A. God still expects right living
 - 1. His commandments have not been amended
 - 2. His attitude toward compromise has not moderated
- B. God's Word remains unchanged
- C. God will punish sin wherever he finds it
- D. Our past record will not save us from God's wrath

Ezekiel 33:12 ... none of the righteous things he has done will be remembered

II. The repentant sinner

Ezekiel 33:14, 15b NIV And if I say to the wicked man, 'You will surely die,' but he then turns away from his sin and does what is just and right -- if he ... follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil, he will surely live; he will not die.

- A. The power of repentance
 - 1. To change eternal destiny
 - 2. To bring right relationship with God
 - 3. To preserve life
- B. The path of repentance

Ezekiel 33:15b If he follows the decrees that give life, and does no evil.
- C. The magnitude of forgiveness

Ezekiel 33:16 None of the sins he has committed will be remembered against him. He has done what is just and right, he will surely live.

 - 1. God removes his remembrance of sin
 - 2. God gives full privileges of sonship
 - 3. God revokes the penalty of sin