

The Watchman #8
A Love Story Gone Wrong

Word

Scripture Reference

Ezekiel 15-17

Discussion Questions

1. What usually makes a love story go wrong?
2. This parable of an unwanted and unloved baby growing up to be a mature and beautiful woman who prostituted herself depicts how Jerusalem has turned from God and betrayed Him in spite of how God raised her up from a lowly state to great glory as His bride. Read Ezekiel 16. This passage gives an account of how the beautiful love story between God and Israel had gone wrong.
 - a. ***From absolutely unwanted to unconditionally loved (ch. 16:1-14).*** What makes the baby in this parable unwanted and unloved (v. 1-5)? No one seemed to care if this baby dies, until someone came along (v. 6-9). What did that person do to save the baby? How does this parable describe how much God loves Israel? How is Israel described in verses 13-14?
 - b. ***From unconditionally loved to unashamed betrayal (ch. 16:15-34).*** Israel had perfect beauty because of the splendor that God had given her. Just like Israel, God had shown you His great love by picking you up and saving you from your sin through Jesus Christ who died for you. However, this beautiful love story between God and Israel did not end how it should. God cared for and loved her but she turned away to false gods of other nations. Israel had grown and became well-known, but had forgotten who had given her life. How was this spiritual adultery described in this passage? How far did Israel go in her defiance and rebelliousness to her God (v. 20-21)? Are you shocked of how Israel acted? Discuss how

every one of us could identify with Israel. How are Christians guilty of spiritual adultery?

- c. ***From unashamed betrayal to purposed punishment (ch. 16:35-43).*** The behavior of the Jews was so revolting that even their enemy, the Philistines who were loyal to their false gods, was shocked by the Jews' lewd conduct. It would shock you, too, how Israel could be so vile in paying other nations to prostitute her! However, you are as guilty as they are. Christians betray their Lord everyday by offering themselves to a world that gives them either short-lived pleasures or nothing, and by paying the world with their time, energy, and resources so that they will be accepted and adored. Because of this unashamed betrayal, God purposely punished the guilty. How did God punish Israel? Discuss why God doesn't always give you what you ask for. How could getting everything you want in life be a form of discipline? Why should the consequences of sin keep you from temptations that will sink you in sin?
- d. ***From purposed discipline to loving restoration (ch. 16:53-63).*** Losing something we value is a wake up call. God punished Israel to get her attention. When His people turn back to Him, He would forgive and renew His covenant. This covenant was put into effect when Jesus died on the cross to pay for the sins of mankind. Would any one who trusted in the Lord as his Savior lose his salvation when he commits sin? Is God's forgiveness a license to sin more? Are you, as a Christian, exempted from the punishment of sin? Share how God has restored you into a beautiful relationship with Him after turning away from sin back to God.

Walk

Man's relationship with God is a love story gone wrong, but made right by the Savior. It started with being absolutely unwanted to unconditionally loved, from unconditionally loved to unashamed betrayal, from an unashamed betrayal to purposed punishment, and from purposed punishment to loving restoration. How do you want your story to be written (or how do you want it to end)? No one ends after the first phase; most people end after phase 2 and 2, and very few end after

phase 4. What steps should you take so that your story ends with loving restoration?

Worship & Prayer

Heavenly Father, we acknowledge that we often sin against You. We betray You in our behavior and attitude. Please forgive us. Thank You so much that through our Savior Jesus Christ, there is great hope in our condition, because when we humbly acknowledge our shortcomings, You are willing to forgive and restore us. Thank You that your discipline is a call to get our attention to turn around and get back to You. Help us to be sensitive to Your voice and listen when You are calling our attention. May our story end with loving restoration because of Your grace. In Jesus' name. Amen.