



“Stuck, But Not Forgotten” | Ezekiel 11:12-20

February 16, 2025

By Pastor Leah Knight Breton

Group Leader Notes

This is our first week in our new series *The Me We Want to Be* as we examine a set of passages from the prophetic book of Ezekiel. The nation of Israel has been invaded by the Babylonians and thousands of citizens have been taken captive to Babylon. Now living in exile, the Israelites are experiencing defeat and abandonment ... but God is not finished with them yet. In fact, God has a vision for the restoration of Israel and provides prophetic teaching through the ministry of Ezekiel – who started his ministry at 30 years old and spends his lifetime calling Israel to turn their attention back to the Lord. It’s a challenging ministry but faith, hope, and God’s presence guide Ezekiel over his lifetime.

Take Home Message: “Imaginative Gridlock Needs Prophetic Imagination.”

Main Scripture Reading: Ezekiel 11:12-20

Group Discussion

Begin in prayer before reading and discussing the text.

1. Pastor Leah began by telling a story of she and her new husband Andrew traveling to Kenya for their honeymoon that began with lost luggage, catching flights, and getting stuck in gridlock traffic. Similarly, in the book *Failure of Nerve*, author Edwin Friedman outlines what he calls “Imaginative Gridlock” and describes the following characteristics: See which ones you can relate to:

- A. An unending treadmill of trying harder
- B. Looking for answers rather than reframing questions
- C. Either/or thinking that creates false dichotomies. In other words: intense polarizations, or “all or nothing”

Question: Which ones do you relate to? Describe the feelings that come along with the “Imaginative Gridlocks” in your life.

2. Recalling the context given in the beginning regarding Ezekiel and as we read this passage, what gridlocks are you seeing in these verses?

(Leader Help: Vs. 12 describes Israelites’ failure to follow God’s laws and their conformity to culture. Vs. 16 states the exile and all that comes with being in exile. Vs. 18 calls out the idolatry and vile images).

3. Leah quoted Old Testament scholar, Walter Brueggemann, points out:
“Ezekiel did not blame the king, the government, the military or the war planners for this terrible death to come. He blamed the religious community, the clergy, the prophets: Ez 13: 9 says ‘my hands will be against the prophets who see false visions and utter lying messages’ who proclaim, ‘Peace where this is no peace’. Who whitewash over cracks and cover up the flaws in the walls of Israelite society.’ Ezekiel blamed the religious community because that community is responsible for truth-telling.”

Question: We, the Church, serve as the “religious community” and are responsible for truth-telling in our own lives and on the spiritual condition of our community. It’s tempting to begin the finger-pointing but what are areas in our own lives that we can grow in our obedience. (Leah demonstrated this vulnerability by sharing about the idol of security brought from material possessions, or the need for her home to be in exact order to present an ordered, successful life, etc.). Describe an area of brokenness, struggle, or temptation that you are praying that Jesus redeems.

4. Leah quoted an anonymous writer stating that “In the prophetic imagination, idolatry wasn’t evil solely because it was idolatry. Idolatry was evil because of what it led to. And what it led to, without fail, was: economic injustice, violence, and oppression against marginalized people (often women, children, and immigrants, what the Scriptures call ‘widows, orphans and strangers’).”

Question: And then asked: “If Ezekiel were preaching today, what would have to say to the American church? What have we made an idol out of? What are the injustices we are responsible for? Where is our heart divided?”

5. Amongst the encouraging truths that we can live in is that God is always at work redeeming all the gridlocks and is inviting His people to be part of the work of redemption. Let’s take a minute and prophetically imagine this question:

“Where do you sense God inviting you to bring redemption into this broken world?”

Let’s Pray