

Small Group and Reflection Questions Ezekiel 18.1-4
February 3, 2013

1. Ken summarized the “saying” that was going around the exiles, in v. 2, as meaning that people were blaming their current predicament upon situations and the actions of others. Do you see how that follows? Would you make any refinements to that? (Ken also said that the sins of others do *really* affect us, but notice how the “saying” is stated almost as an equation or an incontrovertible consequence.) So how often do you see people blaming their problems on their situations and the actions of others, consider at work, with kids, in politics, business, etc.? How do you personally tend to do this? How helpful is this? Why is it so attractive?
2. In v.3-4, God calls an end to this “saying.” Why does God get to do that? What is implied by God’s declaration? What does it mean to be willing to take God’s view of our circumstances rather than insisting that we are “here” because of others’ actions? How will that be very hard? How can it be helpful?
3. In v.4, God gives a new statement of reality. Ken summarized it as “the good news is that my situation is not fixed, but the bad news is that ‘I am responsible for me.’” Do you see how that follows? What refinements to that would you make? The more you reflect on v.4, is this more good news or bad? Why? Talk about the weight of v.4 before a God who has the authority and power to speak v.3.
4. V.1-4, leave us in a dilemma, but 18.30-32 and Eze 36.25-27 show us God’s way forward from the dilemma: faith and repentance in His willing, able action on our behalf. Compare and contrast these passages in Eze with the Gospel of Christ in the New Testament. How much continuity is there between the two?
5. Which one of the “I will”s in Eze 36.25-27 is most attractive to you? How are the two quotes from the worship bulletin good summaries of this passage? At one point, Ken said, “It is easy to blame; it is hard to hope.” How does this help us to see our problem with sin and our call to faith in what God has promised to do?
"You stir man to take pleasure in praising you, because you have made us for yourself, and our heart is restless until it rests in you." —St. Augustine

"For most of us it takes years and years to exchange our dream world for the real world of grace and mercy, sacrifice and love, freedom and joy." —Eugene Peterson
6. Spend time praying for God to do the things that He “wills” to do in us (Eze 36.22-32).