

Chat with the Children: Pass it on!

- All heard of game **Chinese Whispers?**
 - how do you play?
- We are going to be thinking about Ezekiel this morning, and his call to pass on God's message
 - whether folk heard, or understood, or followed that message...
- Need four messengers to start off our whisper...
 - get four messengers, and explain each one will take a part of God's message to the four corners of the church, and start it off...
 - pass it on till it ends up at me in the middle...
 - see how well we do!
- 1. **Go now to your countrymen**
- 2. **and speak to them, saying:**
- 3. **"This is what the Sovereign Lord says"**
- 4. **whether the listen or fail to listen**
- *Our call is to pass on what we have heard as best we can. Will we do that?*

Introduction

- This is the story of **one particular man, Ezekiel**, a priest who lived nearly 2600 years ago
 - it is the story of how God spoke and revealed Himself to that **particular** man on one **particular** occasion
 - it is the story of the **unique call** God placed on his life
- Yet, even with that level of **particularity** it is still a story that speaks to **each one of us today**:
 - because the **God** who does the calling **has not changed**
 - because there are **principles** behind the particularities that reveal how God often works
 - because **God has a call on the life of each person he has redeemed** - each person who has said **"yes"** to Jesus as Lord has a call on their lives
- *Link to Summer Focus, God's call to people to come to him, and our call to communicate his call to others...*

Our call comes in response to meeting with him (chp.1)

- Chapter 1 is quite well known!
 - Ezekiel a priest, one of the elite, and as such taken into exile in the first wave of exile to Babylon - find him by the Kedar River
 - Ezekiel's vision of God on his throne, surrounded by the living creatures
 - strange symbolism, peculiar to our ears
 - yet a powerful encounter with the living, Holy, powerful God, sitting on the throne
 - *"This was the appearance of the likeness of the glory of the LORD. When I saw it, I fell facedown, and I heard the voice of one speaking." (Ezek 1:28b)*
 - *He said to me, "Son of man, stand up on your feet and I will speak to you." (2:1)*
- Our call comes in the context of a living relationship with him:
 - in general, as Christians
 - and when God has a particular call on our lives, we will be able to hear and discern that more clearly when in close relationship with him
- *(So if you are asking how you can know God's guidance, discern God's call, the first thing to do is spend time with him!)*

Our call is to speak for God (2:4b)

- "Say to them, 'This is what the Sovereign LORD says.'" (2:4b)
- Ezekiel's call was to verbally speak specific words from God to his contemporaries
 - he was the preacher of his day - a directly divinely inspired one
- We are all called to speak for God:
 - "But you will receive power when the Holy Spirit comes on you; and you will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the ends of the earth." (Acts 1:8)
 - now, we are not all called to preach!!
 - that would make for a long Sunday morning!!
 - but, though words are necessary, they aren't the only way of speaking...
- When someone behaves as a Christian, they speak:
 - time for church... time for prayer... time for integrity, over money or time... time for people, friends, family, rather than simply self... time for compassion...
 - of course, those things of themselves do not a Christian make!
 - but as a Christian person, at home, at work, everything we do speaks
 - it was Jesus himself who said: "By this all men will know that you are my disciples, if you love one another." (John 13:35)

Our call is founded in what he has said (3:1)

- And he said to me, "Son of man, eat what is before you, eat this scroll; then go and speak to the house of Israel." (3:1)
- Eat the scroll:
 - not just transmit God's Word, but inwardly digest...
 - God's word is for us too, and not just for others
- And it wasn't just Ezekiel's good ideas!
 - sometimes we get "hung up" on a particular thing...
 - if we are not careful, it can be our own prejudices that speak, not Scripture
- So we read, so we study, so we talk together about what the Bible says
 - any small groups, daily bible reading notes...

Our call may not be easy (3:7)

- "But the house of Israel is not willing to listen to you because they are not willing to listen to me, for the whole house of Israel is hardened and obstinate." (3:7)
- What a starting point!!
 - "on you go Ezekiel, but no one is going to listen to you!"
- My mum & dad....
 - if I could convince my mum, then I can convince anyone!
 - because she had seen over many years the impact of this particular calling on the family in a way that I, at the time single, no kids, could not comprehend!
- Our call is not easy!
 - to bear witness to Christ in this culture, with limited resources, with a world that rushes by, heedless of what we do or say!
 - just because it is hard does not make not from God!

Our call will not be under-equipped (3:8,9a)

- "But I will make you as unyielding and hardened as they are. I will make your forehead like the hardest stone, harder than flint." (3:8,9a)
- We won't be up to the God's call on our own
 - but he will equip us with what we need
 - whether it is an ability, to speak, or whatever
 - or whether it is with necessary character traits - perseverance, courage,

humility...

- I and many others would testify to the truth of this!

Conclusion

- Our call comes in response to meeting with him (1:28-2:1)
- Our call is to speak for God (2:4b)
- Our call is founded in what he has said (3:1)
- Our call may not be easy (3:7)
- Our call will not be under-equipped (3:8,9a)

- Our call comes from God himself, who, having chosen us, revealed himself to us in Jesus Christ, then opts to use us!!!
 - so lets listen for his call on our lives - general and particular