

Sixth Sunday after Pentecost

INDEPENDENCE BROUGHT FORTH BY THE WORD

Ezekiel 2:1-5

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Analysis by Mark Marius

1He said to me: O mortal, stand up on your feet, and I will speak with you. 2And when he spoke to me, a spirit entered into me and set me on my feet; and I heard him speaking to me. 3He said to me, Mortal, I am sending you to the people of Israel, to a nation of rebels who have rebelled against me; they and their ancestors have transgressed against me to this very day. 4The descendants are impudent and stubborn. I am sending you to them, and you shall say to them, "Thus says the Lord GOD." 5Whether they hear or refuse to hear (for they are a rebellious house), they shall know that there has been a prophet among them.

DIAGNOSIS: Mortal

Step 1: Initial Diagnosis (External Problem) : *We Can't Hear the Word of God*

We are mortal but are in denial. We long for independence and control of our lives. But in order to achieve that we depend on anything that promises our independence, or in the case of Israel, demands it. But the only way we can truly stand on our own two feet is by the Spirit of God.

Step 2: Advanced Diagnosis (Internal Problem) : *We Rebel against the Word of God*

We rebel against God when our hearts trust things and powers of

this world over God. We become stubborn with our idea of independence and no longer recognize that we depend on God. We believe that we can work out whatever we need on our own; protection, security, economy, relationships.

Step 3: Final Diagnosis (Eternal Problem) : *Cut off from the Word of God*

We are exiled from God. As we run away from God we have not protected the things that God gave us—the temple, the land, the nation. We cut ourselves off from God and refuse to listen to God's Word. And if we no longer have ears for what the Lord God says, things will get awfully dry.

PROGNOSIS: God's Spirit Enters

Step 4: Initial Prognosis (Eternal Solution) : *God Sends Us the Word*

God sends us a prophet. God sends us a mortal filled with the Spirit to give us his Word, regardless of whether we listen or not. This Word is given to reclaim us. Not only does God send Ezekiel and the other prophets of the Old Testament, but also Jesus who was both mortal and divine, and as says the Gospel of John, who was the Word. And so, more than a prophet of Old, the Word had the power to make new—through death and resurrection. This Prophet is for our profit.

Step 5: Advanced Prognosis (Internal Solution) : *The Word is Received*

The Holy Spirit now gets us all on our feet and by entering our lives (through baptism) give us an appetite for God's Word. We can't help but eat it up (see Ezek. 3). Through Holy Communion we feast on the Word, through reading the Gospel we now listen for God's Word, both Law and Gospel.

Step 6: Final Prognosis (External Solution) : *The Word is Shared*
And when the Word becomes a part of us we can't help but go and

share it with everyone, whether they listen or refuse. We have been freed and empowered by this Word to speak regardless of the outcome. It is not ours to determine. As mortals we recognize that our independence can only be through dependence (listening) to the Lord God.