**You Will Know that I Am the Lord**

**The Word**

Read together Ezekiel 6

**The Big Picture**

God’s justice and wrath is a consistent part of his character throughout Scripture. His judgment is appropriate and right, and yet he doesn’t take pleasure in judgment but rather in the repentance of people. We are called to turn from our self-centered ways and turn towards God to experience his grace and mercy.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. God’s wrath and judgment is a fairly consistent theme in the Bible. How would you define God’s wrath?

2. Consider the comments made about our 21st century western culture and how that makes the idea of God’s judgment particularly offensive to us. How do you respond to those comments? What would you like to add to those comments?

3. While God desires repentance, sometimes we have other strategies for dealing with our sin. When you are caught in some sin and consider God in the midst of that, what are your go-to strategies? For example, do you try to ignore God for a while, do you try to stay busy, do you try to feel really badly about your sin to make up for it, do you try to make up for your sin by being good in some other area, etc.?

4. Sunday’s message ended by stressing the joy God finds when his children repent. If you’re willing to share, can you personally testify to the joy God finds in our repentance? That is, can you share a time when you turned back to God and experienced his grace, love, and affirmation in a significant way?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. The reality of God’s wrath and judgment

A. God’s wrath is his steady and consistent opposition to evil, sin, and wickedness. As such it is an inherent part of his goodness.

B. Notice the hard words God gives to Israel in Ezekiel 5-7

“I myself am against you.” “I will unleash my anger against you.” “I will not look on you with pity or spare you”

C. God is provoked by the willful and consistent disobedience of the people

1. Idolatry (Ezekiel 6:4-7)

2. Social evils (Ezekiel 22:9-12, 19)

D. God’s wrath will take the form of sword, plague, and famine at the hands of the Babylonian army

II. God’s judgment is entirely fitting and appropriate

A. His judgment is utterly fair based on Israel’s conduct (see Ezekiel 7:3-4, 8-9, 27)

B. His judgment is not so simply actively initiating something new, but rather God is letting go of his actively restraining judgment on account of his mercy and compassion (Ezekiel 6:4)

C. God is actually glorified in judgment. Judgment is one of the ways that God demonstrates the greatness of who he is (his holiness and his opposition to evil)

D. Our culture today has a particularly hard time coming to terms with God’s judgment because of some of the assumptions and starting points we have about life.

E. Every single book of the Bible portrays God both as a God of love, mercy and compassion and also a God of holiness and justice.

III. God does not find joy and pleasure in judgment but rather in repentance

A. See Ezekiel 33:11 and 18:31-32

B. Repentance = changing our mind about how we’re living, turning from a life of sin and independence and turning towards God in confession and dependence.

C. Consider the stories Jesus tells about the joy God finds in the repentance of his people

-the lost coin, the lost sheep, the prodigal Son

D. Parents, consider that we find no joy in disciplining our children but rather when our children repent

IV. There is no refuge from the judge, but there is refuge in the judge

A. Often in our sin, we experience God as judge and stay away from him.

B. But we need to do the exact opposite; turn to him in our sin, and we will find a loving and compassionate father

C. Stop running from God, turn around, and run to him, no matter what you’ve done.

D. Jesus took on himself the judgment of God on the cross so we wouldn’t have to.

E. Consider David’s experience of sin and confession in Psalm 33

F. Consider his prayer that God search him and lead him in his way in Psalm 139