**I Entered into a Covenant with You**

**The Word**

Read together Ezekiel 16

**The Big Picture**

Willful and consistent idolatry triggers God’s holy jealousy for his covenant people. In his jealous anger he brings judgment, but because of his covenant commitments he ultimately brings restoration. Knowing God’s passion and jealousy for our hearts should motivate us to turn from our idols and turn back to our God.

**Questions for Discussion**

1. Ezekiel 16 is a very raw and provocative passage. What stands out to you most and why?

2. Consider the jealousy of God for his people’s hearts displayed in Ezekiel 16. How does that square with the way you typically think about how God thinks and feels about you?

3. How are you feeling led to repent of your idol(s) in the coming weeks? What specifically do you plan to do, and how can the group be praying for you in that?

4. Consider our conversation on idols over the past three weeks. What idea stands out most to you from this conversation?

**Digging Deeper: Sermon Outline**

I. Introduction

Ezekiel 16 reads like a high school break up song with God displaying all of the emotions of a lover who has been betrayed yet still loves his beloved.

II. The stages of God’s relationship with Jerusalem

A. Jerusalem was nothing special before God chose her: just another pagan city (v. 1-5)

B. God passed by and gave her life (v. 6-7) and was like a father to her

C. Later God entered a covenant with her and became her husband (v. 8-14)

1. He generously spoiled her with gifts of food, clothing, and jewelry

2. Her beauty and fame grew

D. Jerusalem cheated on God and acted like a prostitute (v. 15-34)

1. She trusted in her own beauty and fame and used the very gifts God gave her to pursue other gods/idols

2. She practiced religious idolatry with pagan gods

3. She practiced political idolatry and pursued alliances with other nations rather than trusting in God’s provision and protection

4. She is forgetful, weak-willed, and insatiable

E. God promises judgment (v. 35-41)

1. That judgment will take the form of handing her over to her lovers

2. The punishment will fit the crime: she stripped herself before her lovers, so they will strip her and take advantage of her

F. God promises mercy and restoration (v. 42, 59-63)

 Despite her adultery, God will never abandon the covenant he made with his bride

III. Acknowledging our idolatry today

A. God is jealous for our hearts

1. Our pursuit of other idols is a really big deal to him

2. Our God is not some distant deity; he really cares about us and wants the full devotion of our hearts

B. We are called to repent of our idols (Ezekiel 14:6)

 1. Repentance = turning from an idol and turning to God

2. Some ways to repent

a. Practice fasting from your idol during Lent (social media, alcohol, etc.)

b. If you can’t fast from your idols (such as work or children), find ways to turn them into “windows” through which you experience God’s grace and through which you serve God

c. In the moment: when you experience the tug of an idol on your heart, practice detaching from the idol by speaking the truth that it won’t satisfy like it promises, and then invite God into that moment and ask him to be your satisfaction, security, and significance

3. A prayer for Lent: “Lord, help me want you more than anything else today.  Fill my heart and mind with your grace and goodness. Free me from the hold ------- has on my heart so that I might enjoy you more fully and serve you more faithfully.”