

August 20

Ezekiel 23

If you would have asked me at the beginning of project 4:4 which passages I was least looking forward to talking about, I would have mentioned the passage about skin disease in Leviticus, the psalms about "please destroy my enemies", and this passage today.

Yow. Did you read that stuff? OHMYGOSH! How did they let that stay in the Bible? It is because Ezekiel's audience wasn't getting his current illustrations. So he ups the shock value. But the whoredom that is portrayed here is perfectly acceptable because it is exactly what they are doing!

Oholah and Oholibah are sisters -- the root meanings of those two names go back to the Hebrew word for "tent." Oholah probably means "her tent" and Oholibah, "my tent is in her." The tent, then, probably points to a tent of meeting, like the tabernacle, which figured so heavily in Israel's history. Oholah is Samaria and Oholibah is Jerusalem.

Now this all makes sense. God's relationship to Israel, and later the church, is like a marriage. They have a covenant relationship of faithfulness. God cares for Israel and the church. But Jerusalem and Samaria are like cheatin' wives.

They are cheating with Assyria, Babylonia, and Egypt. They are trusting nations instead of God. They are worshipping foreign gods. And they are worse than prostitutes... because they are not getting paid for their bodies, they are actually the one's paying. Now that hurts!

Now, what lessons can we take from the "tale of two sisters?"

First... God is a Jealous God. God wants our faithfulness and notices when we are being unfaithful. It makes me wonder how he must feel as we, the nation of the U.S.A. become more secular, church attendance drops, and people determine morality independent of God. God tends to give people over to their immorality. I think we are observing that.

Second... God wants to be desired. A husband wants to be desired by his wife. More than just about anything, the husband desires... desire. I think God feels that way about his church. How passionate is your worship. How much do you want God's presence in your life? How strongly do you want everything to be wrapped around him?

God is not looking for formulas or methods, but for men and women who are passionate about Him. God does not need smart people or well educated people or people who are rich or beautiful. He wants people who love him and are passionate about him. He will be faithful. He has proven he is good. Now the ball is in our court. Let's be passionate for him!