

A Renewed Heart

Ezekiel 36:26,27

MEMORY VERSE

EZEKIEL 36:26

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

WHAT YOU WILL NEED:

Several heart shapes cut out from poster board (various sizes, all smaller than and 8 1/2 "x 11" paper), crayons, and a paper with the scripture verse written on the bottom (one for each child).

Construction paper, scissors, a pen and tape.

ATTENTION GETTER!

Stony Heart Race

Today we are going to learn about stony hearts and brand new hearts. To get started let's have a "Stony Heart Race." Divide the class into two groups of an equal number of children. If the numbers are not even have the first child in one of the groups go a second time. Once the teams have been chosen, divide the children in half again and have one group on one side of the room and the other group on the other side of the room. When you say, "go" the first child will drop to the ground and roll across the class (like a boulder would roll) to the other side. Once at the other side the first child in that group will roll back. Then the next child, etc. will go until all of the children have gone.

Declare a winner and explain to the children that they rolled like a boulder or a stone. The Bible talks about our hearts before we come to know Jesus that they are like stone. But as we will learn today, when we come to Jesus we get a brand new heart.

LESSON TIME!

Today's Bible verses are a promise for us. They are a beautiful promise in the book of Ezekiel, coming as it does in the middle of telling Israel about the judgment to come because of their stubbornness and disobedience. It is a wonderful promise about the Holy Spirit and his work in Israel's lives. And now how many years down the road are we? 2,500 years! We who love Jesus and fear God have this same promise to cling to forever. The promise is that God wants to put His Spirit in us and have fellowship with us for the rest of our lives. **God will give us a brand new heart!**

There's something really wonderful about Ezekiel chapter 36. It is recorded for us that the Lord said, "I will" 15 times just in verses 24-38! He has shown us over and over again that He is a God of His Word, and He is the God of the Word. That means He can be trusted and it means He wrote this book and every word is true. In today's verses alone He says, "I will" three times. Let's read them and see what we can learn from them.

Did you notice He did not say, "If you...I will..."? He does not say, "If you are good...I will give you a new heart." He does not say, "If you give me your heart of stone, I will give you a heart of flesh..." He does not say, "If you follow my decrees, I will put my Spirit in you." You see God's faithfulness does not change based on our softness or hardness of heart. His character does not change based on our obedience or disobedience. Our God knows our weaknesses. He knows when we are discouraged or dismayed, but the work that He wants to do in us who love Him is amazing. He wants to put His Spirit in us and have fellowship with us for the rest of our lives. **God will give us a brand new heart!**

EZEKIEL 36:26

"I will give you a new heart and put a new spirit within you; I will take the heart of stone out of your flesh and give you a heart of flesh."

Let's look at verse 26. We will get a new heart. The Word says our old heart is made of stone; He wants to give us a heart of flesh. What does that mean? Why do we need a new heart? My heart doesn't feel like stone. In Jeremiah 17:9 it says, "The heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked; who can know it?" Before we come to know Jesus as Savior we might not care if we lie a little bit now and then or use bad language or be mean to our brothers and sisters. We think those things are not a big deal because everyone else is doing it, but all of those things belong to people of disobedience. People who do not know any better because they have not heard or do not want to follow a better way. They have a heart of stone towards God and the things of God. **God will give us a brand new heart!**

Sometimes people as they grow older they get more and more distant from the things of God. Their hearts become harder and they don't want anything to do with God. It is very sad to see people who have lived their whole lives in rebellion to God only to have a hard heart and to die in misery. What a hopeless life it is apart from Jesus. How do we get a new, soft heart? Let's take a look.

A new heart, which is softer, is the first thing God does for us when we ask Jesus to come into our lives. He gives us a softer heart that is willing to listen to the Lord and do what He wants, that wants to be nice to those around us, a heart that's learning to love God more and more every day. That's the picture of stone vs. flesh. Stone is dead and flesh is alive. When we know Jesus our hearts come alive to the things of God. **God will give us a brand new heart!**

Along with that new heart comes a new spirit. Those of us who ask Jesus into our lives don't have a dead spirit or a heart of stone anymore. The Holy Spirit come to live in us and gives life to our spirits.

Getting a New Heart

You will need several heart shapes cut out from poster board (various sizes, all smaller than and 8 1/2 "x 11" paper), crayons, and a paper with the scripture verse written on the bottom (one for each child). Give each child a copy of the paper with the scripture verse. Explain that before we come to know Jesus our hearts are like stone. They can be hard and not very open to the things of God. But when we come to Jesus we receive a brand new heart. Have the children close their eyes (No Peeking!) and quickly have your aide and yourself place the poster board hearts under the paper.

Have them open their eyes and take a crayon (red is preferable) and hold down their paper and color over it. What do they see? They should be able to color and find a heart. God wants to give each of us a brand new heart and replace that heart of stone.

EZEKIEL 36:27

"I will put My Spirit within you and cause you to walk in My statutes, and you will keep My judgments and do them.

Now that we have salvation from God, the Bible promises that we have fellowship with God. He will put His Spirit in us. In the Old Testament men did not have the Holy Spirit in them, rather He came upon them to do specific things that the Lord wanted them to do. God's Holy Spirit came to rest on men for certain reasons at certain times.

It was when Jesus came that He began to teach the disciples more about the work of the Holy Spirit (See John chapters 14-16). He taught the disciples that the Holy Spirit was going to come to them and come live in them. The Holy Spirit would lead the new church in truth (John 16:13), and help His people to pray (Romans 8:26) and teach us about God when we ask Him (John 14:26).

How wonderful it is to have a helper right inside of us to help us to follow God's plans for our lives and to help us to live for Him. (John 14:17; 2 Corinthians 1:22, 3:17). The Holy Spirit teaches us, guides us, and convicts us.

He comforts us and points us to Jesus when we need help in this life to make good and right and pure and noble choices. How blessed we are in this life when we ask Jesus to come into our lives. God puts His Spirit into our lives and has fellowship with us for the rest of our lives. **God will give us a brand new heart!**

Hidden Heart

Use this game to work with the children on their memory verse. You will need construction paper, scissors, a pen and tape. Cut out several small hearts out of the red construction paper. Write one or two words from today's memory verse on each heart. Before class hide the hearts throughout the room. Then after all of the hearts are found, have the older ages see if they can put together the memory verse by taping the hearts in order on the chalkboard. For the younger ages you can help out by showing the children where to tape and then read the memory verse to them.

PRAYER

Lead the children in a prayer of commitment to follow Jesus no matter what. To thank the Lord for a brand new heart and the gift of His Holy Spirit who helps us to live for Him. If there are any children who have not yet responded to the gospel, give them opportunity to do so.