

INTRODUCTION: On Sunday Paul spoke on the 'gravity of sin' and its effect on our lives. As we read the Ezekiel passage from which he sourced his key verse, we learn not just about sin but our responsibilities towards one another.

### Ezekiel 33:1-11 New International Version (NIV)

#### *Renewal of Ezekiel's Call as Watchman*

33 The word of the LORD came to me: <sup>2</sup> "Son of man, speak to your people and say to them: 'When I bring the sword against a land, and the people of the land choose one of their men and make him their watchman, <sup>3</sup> and he sees the sword coming against the land and blows the trumpet to warn the people, <sup>4</sup> then if anyone hears the trumpet but does not heed the warning and the sword comes and takes their life, their blood will be on their own head. <sup>5</sup> Since they heard the sound of the trumpet but did not heed the warning, their blood will be on their own head. If they had heeded the warning, they would have saved themselves. <sup>6</sup> But if the watchman sees the sword coming and does not blow the trumpet to warn the people and the sword comes and takes someone's life, that person's life will be taken because of their sin, but I will hold the watchman accountable for their blood.'

<sup>7</sup> "Son of man, I have made you a watchman for the people of Israel; so hear the word I speak and give them warning from me. <sup>8</sup> When I say to the wicked, 'You wicked person, you will surely die,' and you do not speak out to dissuade them from their ways, that wicked person will die for their sin, and I will hold you accountable for their blood. <sup>9</sup> But if you do warn the wicked person to turn from their ways and they do not do so, they will die for their sin, though you yourself will be saved.

<sup>10</sup> "Son of man, say to the Israelites, 'This is what you are saying: "Our offenses and sins weigh us down, and we are wasting away because of them. How then can we live?"' <sup>11</sup> Say to them, 'As surely as I live, declares the Sovereign LORD, I take no pleasure in the death of the wicked, but rather that they turn from their ways and live. Turn! Turn from your evil ways! Why will you die, people of Israel?'

#### LAUNCH

- When was the last time you read (on a sign for example ) or received a warning that may have helped protect you in some way?  
How did you feel about the warning and with what attitude did you follow it?

#### DISCOVERY

- What does this passage say about sin?
- What does it say about the character of God?
- What does it say about our responsibility towards one another?

#### UNDERSTANDING

- Why do you think our society no longer considers sin to be either relevant or serious?
- Which parts of this passage suggest that it is?
- Why personally are you convinced that it is? (if indeed you are)
- What factors make us reluctant to talk to people about the seriousness of sin?
- Do you think that just as Ezekiel was held responsible as a watchman for warning the nation of Israel, we are held responsible for warning our local communities?
- How does Acts 20: 26-27 shed light on the discussion?

#### APPLICATION

- Pray for strong, long term, profound relationships that are so significant you have permission to talk about sin, faith and eternity.
- Pray for particular people by name.