

Sermon by The Rev. Dr. Nathan Weaver | Ezekiel 36:25-27

GOING DOWN to the **Water**

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Today's sermon explores the struggle and beauty of true spiritual transformation. The message explores the transformation of St. Augustine, highlighting his resistance to surrendering fully to God despite his longing for change. It draws a parallel between Augustine's battle with sin and the universal human tendency to cling to idols—comfort, control, approval—while resisting the deep, inward renewal God offers. Ezekiel 36 proclaims God's promise to give us new hearts and spirits, made possible through the power of the Holy Spirit and sealed in baptism. Ultimately, it calls believers to embrace the costly grace of surrender, trusting that God's work in us leads not to restriction but to real freedom and lasting peace.

Discussion Questions:

1. Augustine's Story and Ours

Augustine lived with deep restlessness until he encountered God's grace. In what ways do you relate to his story of running from God or resisting change? Can you identify a moment when God broke through your resistance?

2. The Struggle of Surrender

The sermon says, “Augustine wanted the benefits of transformation without the cost of surrender.” What are some areas of your life where you find it difficult to surrender to God’s will? What keeps you from trusting Him fully?

3. Modern Idolatry

Idolatry today is often more subtle—things like success, comfort, approval, or control. What are some potential idols in your own life? How might these be hardening your heart or distracting you from God's voice?

4. The Promise of a New Heart

Ezekiel 36 promises a new heart and a new spirit. What might a “tender, responsive heart” look like in your life? Where do you need the Spirit’s renewing work most right now?

5. Baptism and Transformation

Whether you were baptized recently or long ago, how does your baptism shape the way you understand your identity, purpose, and spiritual growth today? How are you continuing to live into the “new life” baptism signifies?

