NEW HOME

"I will take you out of the nations; I will gather you from all the countries and bring you back into your own land." (Ezekiel 36:24)

" So you are no longer a slave, but God's child; and since you are his child, God has made you also an heir." (Galatians 4:7)

"While he was still a long way off, his father saw him and was filled with compassion for him; he ran to his son, threw his arms around him and kissed him." (Luke 15:20)

Ezekiel, Exile, and Homecoming (Ezekiel 36:22-24; 10:18-19)

- Ezekiel the priest, prophet, and exile
- Exiles looking to return to the Holy Land
- Holy Land inhabitants looking for the return of God's glory

Jesus, Exile, and Homecoming to God (Galatians 4:4-7)

- Jesus is God coming home to humanity, and humanity coming home to God
- Jesus sets us free from our exile
- Jesus brings us into God's household as heirs

The Father, Two Lost Sons, and Homecoming (Luke 15:11-32)

- The younger son lost in running far from home
- The older son lost while still at home
- The father seeking to bring his children home

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. Have you ever been lost? What did that feel like? How did you find your way home or to your destination?
2. This week we begin our journey of Advent with a new series that connects words from the prophet Ezekiel with New Testament teaching about Jesus the Messiah. Our entire series builds upon Ezekiel's words in Ezekiel 36:22-38. Whether on your own or with a group, begin your study in prayer asking God to speak to you through Scripture, and then read those verses aloud.
3. *Background: Ezekiel was a priest and prophet while God's people were exiled in Babylon. He spoke hopeful words of their eventual return to the Holy Land by God's powerful and gracious intervention.*
4. What stands out to you most from Ezekiel's words in these verses?
5. In what way do themes of exile and homecoming arise in this text?
6. If you were in exile in Babylon, like Ezekiel and his hearers, what might Ezekiel's words mean to you?
7. Each week of this series also explores New Testament passages that connect with Ezekiel's themes. Read Galatians 4:1-7. From these verses, how would you say Jesus brings us home?
8. What are the benefits of coming home to God from these verses?
9. What is one thing you sense God is bringing to your attention through this week's study? If you are with a small group, discuss that with one another and then pray about what you shared. If you are on your own, write it down, pray about it, and consider sharing your thoughts with someone this week.

DIG DEEPER:

- ***Exploring Faith***—Would you describe yourself as at home or restless in your life? What might it mean to find your home with God?
- ***Growing in Faith***—Read the parable of the father and the two sons in Luke 15:11-32 slowly. Which character in this story do you most resonate with? Why? How might you experience the father care of God wherever you are right now?
- ***Centered in Faith***—As we prepare for the Advent and Christmas seasons, it is a meaningful time to share our faith in Jesus with others. This week's advent theme is "Hope" - who in your life could use some more hope? Pray about how God could use you to bring hope to them. Consider having a conversation, inviting someone over for a meal or Christmas cookies, or more.