



Ezra 1

Looking back:

Care

We have had a sabbatical as we experienced Holy Week, Easter, and baptisms. Have each person share how they are doing personally.

Loving Accountability

Sanctus church is in a growing season. To build discipleship, we'll take some time each week to have each person give a brief report on their spiritual growth.

Looking up:

Practice

With the prompting of the Holy Spirit, have someone in the group practice retelling the story of Ezra in their own words.

Learning to obey Jesus

1. **Read Ezra 1:1-4, Jeremiah 25:11-12, 29:10-14, Zechariah 1:12-16.** What decree does Cyrus make? What prophecy did this fulfill?
 - What do we learn about God through this? What do we learn about His prophets? What do we learn about worldly leaders? Is this relevant today? Explain.
2. **Read Ezra 1:1,5-6, Exodus 35:20-22, 2 Chronicles 36:22, Haggai 1:14.** What does it mean when God moves someone's heart? Have you ever experienced this?
 - How do the people respond upon God's stirring of their hearts? What gets done and with what attitude when God instigates the action? How can you apply this lesson the next time you feel God stirring your heart?
3. **Read Ezra 1:7-11, Daniel 5:1-6, 2 Kings 24:13, 2 Chronicles 36:7, 10, Jeremiah 52:17-19.** What did Nebuchadnezzar take from the Temple 70 years prior, and why should the Jewish people care so much to gain them back?
 - What does the return of the articles tell us about God? Is there a promise to God's people here?

Looking forward:***Spiritual Growth Assignment***

God stirred the heart of Cyrus to write a decree to release the Jews from captivity and return the sacred articles that had been carried off, and He stirred the hearts of Ezra, Nehemiah, the priests, the Levites, and the leaders of Israel to rebuild the Lord's Temple in Jerusalem.

Spiritual Discipline: Time alone with Jesus

To begin to understand what the Lord is saying to us, we need to get alone with Jesus and let Him stir our heart.

Consider watching the recordings on the attached sheet about Centering Prayer and Listening Prayer to allow room to hear from the Holy Spirit. As God spoke to the people of Israel about the specific instructions on rebuilding the Temple, so He will surely speak to His church today.

Try to make time to spend alone with the Lord each day this week and keep a prayer journal. Next week, we'll check in with each other to be accountable for our spiritual growth.

Prayer

Heavenly Father, we thank you and praise you for this season of rebuilding. Thank you for the book of Ezra, Lord. Allow it to stir our hearts. Teach us to listen to you God, for we know there is sure encounter when we read your Word and gather together in fellowship. Jesus, you can have my heart, my life, and my future. We dedicate ourselves and Sanctus church to you oh God, and look to you to fulfill your promises. We love you, Jesus. Amen.

Have questions about the sermon?
Email us: sermonquestions@sanctuschurch.com

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