



Week 4 - Ezra 7, Nehemiah 8.

Looking back:

Care

How is everyone doing this week? What impact is the theme of Rebuilding having on your life as we progress through this series?

Loving Accountability

How did God speak to you as you sought connection with Him through the spiritual disciplines of confession and surrender? Did it come naturally to practice the spiritual breathing as you exhaled burdens and sin before the Lord, and inhaled what is fresh and alive in Him? Share with your group what you experienced this week.

Looking up:

Practice

With the prompting of the Spirit, have someone share the highlights of what they recall from Ezra 7 and/or Nehemiah 8.

Learning to obey Jesus

1. Read Ezra 7:6-10.

- How is Ezra described in these passages? What does it mean that Ezra *had the hand of God upon him*? Have you ever experienced this?
- What favour did Ezra receive from the king because the hand of God was upon him?
- Where does renewal start and why? What lesson can we draw from this as we seek renewal in our own lives, in our church, and in our city?

2. Read Ezra 7:12-17, Exodus 12: 35-36

- What similarities do you note between these two passages?
- Who gave the Israelites favour in each case? What were the offerings used for in each case?

- How does the King Artaxerxes describe himself in Ezra 7:12? Who is really the King of kings and how is he showing it here?
- 3. Read Nehemiah 8:1-8, 13-14, 17-18, Leviticus 23:33-36.**
- In Nehemiah 7, it was detailed that the rebuilding of the wall was completed. In Nehemiah 8, what was the first thing the people did as a group after the wall was rebuilt? Why was this important to Ezra and the people?
 - Leviticus 23 describes the feast of Booths or tabernacles, a feast of thanksgiving to God for his provision. The Feast of Booths was reinstated in Ezra 8. Why do you think it was reinstated after the reading of the law by Ezra?
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Looking forward:

Spiritual Growth Assignment

The lessons in Nehemiah 8 remind us where our joy comes from. Focusing on God, remembering and celebrating what He has done helps us move forward.

Spiritual Discipline: Reading the Word and Celebrating God.

This week, let's formally remember and celebrate what God has done. Write down something God has done for you in the past that demonstrated His faithfulness and loving kindness towards you. Then, find a bible passage that can be attached to that experience of God's faithfulness. Share with your group how reading, remembering, and celebrating has brought you closer to God and given you hope.

Prayer

God the Father, God the Son, God the Holy Spirit, we are so thankful to know You and celebrate You. We revere Your Word, Your lessons and Your presence in our lives. You were with the Israelites during the rebuilding of the Temple, and You are with us today. Please Lord continue to grant us Your favour, Your wisdom and Your grace. May Your presence in our lives give us much joy as we celebrate You individually and as a church. We ask all of this in the Holy name of our Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ. Amen.

Have questions about the sermon?
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