



WEDNESDAY EVENING

AT BETHANY BAPTIST CHURCH

Title: God's Character

Passage: Ezra 1:1-4

Speaker: Associate Pastor David Wood

Introduction: Just as God gave Israel a fresh start after years of captivity, He still offers renewal and restoration today. No matter our past failures or struggles, God's character remains merciful, faithful, and powerful. He is still able to stir hearts, open doors, and rebuild what sin or time has broken. He alone can give us a true fresh start.

"That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." (Isaiah 44:28)

"Thus saith the LORD to his anointed, to Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, to subdue nations before him; and I will loose the loins of kings, to open before him the two leaved gates; and the gates shall not be shut; I will go before thee, and make the crooked places straight: I will break in pieces the gates of brass, and cut in sunder the bars of iron: And I will give thee the treasures of darkness, and hidden riches of secret places, that thou mayest know that I, the LORD, which call thee by thy name, am the God of Israel. For Jacob my servant's sake, and Israel mine elect, I have even called thee by thy name: I have surnamed thee, though thou hast not known me. I am the LORD, and there is none else, there is no God beside me: I girded thee, though thou hast not known me: That they may know from the rising of the sun, and from the west, that there is none beside me. I am the LORD, and there is none else. I form the light, and create darkness: I make peace, and create evil: I the LORD do all these things." (Isaiah 45:1-7)

"I have raised him up in righteousness, and I will direct all his ways: he shall build my city, and he shall let go my captives, not for price nor reward, saith the LORD of hosts." (Isaiah 45:13)



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I. God's Mercy (Verse 1)

Even though Israel had broken God's covenant and faced judgment, God's mercy extended beyond their failure and brought them home.

A. God's mercy is greater than our failures.

"It is of the LORD'S mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not. They are new every morning: great is thy faithfulness." (Lamentations 3:22-23)

"For thus saith the LORD, That after seventy years be accomplished at Babylon I will visit you, and perform my good word toward you, in causing you to return to this place." (Jeremiah 29:10)

God didn't wait for them to earn restoration. He initiated it. Their return was not a reward; it was mercy. No failure is final when God's mercy is involved. Even when we've wasted years, God can still stir hearts, open doors, and rebuild what sin has ruined.

B. God's mercy is greater than our inadequacies.

"For as the heaven is high above the earth, so great is his mercy toward them that fear him." (Psalm 103:11)

"But God hath chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and God hath chosen the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty." (1 Corinthians 1:27)

God doesn't look for perfect people to give a fresh start. He looks for willing hearts. His mercy is not hindered by our weakness, our situation, or our shortcomings. His glory can shine through all of it!

II. God's Faithfulness (Verse 1)

The return from exile wasn't a coincidence. It was a fulfillment of God's Word. What He promised through Jeremiah and Isaiah came to pass precisely as He said.



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A. God's love never fails.

"For whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth, and scourgeth every son whom he receiveth." (Hebrews 12:6)

God's faithfulness is fueled by His love. When your heart begins to wonder if God really cares, remember that His love for you will never fail.

B. God's plan never fails.

"That saith of Cyrus, He is my shepherd, and shall perform all my pleasure: even saying to Jerusalem, Thou shalt be built; and to the temple, Thy foundation shall be laid." (Isaiah 44:28)

"If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself." (2 Timothy 2:13)

God's plans for your life are never delayed beyond His purpose. His faithfulness ensures that every promise is kept, every prophecy is fulfilled, and every fresh start begins right on time.

III. God's Power (Verses 2-4)

Cyrus recognized that the victories and authority he held were from "the LORD God of heaven." God's power not only ruled over Israel's return but over the empires themselves.

A. God's power is infinite.

"I know that thou canst do every thing, and that no thought can be withholden from thee." (Job 42:2)

"The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will." (Proverbs 21:1)

His power is infinite to overcome any obstacle. No situation is too far gone for God's power to intervene. What looks impossible to you is effortless for Him.

"Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you, and learn of me; for I am meek and

lowly in heart: and ye shall find rest unto your souls. For my yoke is easy, and my burden is light.” (Matthew 11:28-30)

B. God's power is precise.

“He hath made every thing beautiful in his time.” (Ecclesiastes 3:11)

“If we believe not, yet he abideth faithful: he cannot deny himself.” (2 Timothy 2:13)

God's power is not just infinite; it is precise. He knows where to move, when to move, and whom to move to accomplish His will. You can trust His timing and you can trust that He has all the details figured out.

Conclusion: When Israel returned home, their story was really about the greatness of their God. His mercy gives us new beginnings we don't deserve, His faithfulness proves that every promise can be trusted, and His power ensures that nothing can stand in the way of His plan. In the same way, God still offers us a fresh start today. If you need renewal or a new direction, come to Him in faith and let Him work in your life.



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