

# EZRA

## Week 2 - Living Generously in the Face of Uncertainty

### Description

The Old Testament book of Ezra tells the story of God's people rebuilding their broken world. The work of rebuilding begins by recognizing and responding to the stirring of the Lord. What has the Lord been stirring in your life? Are you open to hearing him? This week Pastor Dave Ripper continues our series on Ezra by exploring why God stirs his people to live generously—even in the face of uncertainty.

**October 23, 2022**

### Small Group Questions

1. In this series on Ezra, we are tracing the theme of *the stirring of the Lord*. The Lord stirred up King Cyrus to send the Israelites back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. He stirs the hearts of 50,000 people to go and rebuild. Take a moment to reflect back on your life recently. What do you sense the Lord has been stirring in you? What about our church?
2. Read Ezra 2:68-69. Upon their return to Jerusalem, what appears to be one of the first things God's people do?
3. Scholar Derek Kidner suggests that this phrase from Ezra, "they gave according their ability," inspired Paul's teaching in 1 Corinthians 16:2. Read this verse along with Paul's teachings from 2 Corinthians 8:1-9. What do these New Testament texts teach about why generosity—even in the face of uncertainty—is so important.
4. While we are called to give generously of our time, talents and treasures to the Lord to honor him, God gives us these commands for our good, not to limit us. Read Luke 12:13-21. How does generosity help us guard against the deadly sin of greed?
5. In the book we gave out this week, *The Genius of Generosity* by Chip Ingram, Ingram contends, "If I could sum up what the Bible teaches about giving in one statement, it would be this: generous living produces emotional happiness." What do you think the Bible teaches about giving? Has his contention—generous living produces emotional happiness—proven to be true in your life or not?
6. When it comes to generosity, what next step might God be stirring you to take? Close by praying for one another. Ask God that he would give us the courage to trust him, and to live faithfully and generously.