

Ezra 9 – 13 March 2016 – Growing intimacy with God thru water-skiing

Introduction –

We met Ezra in chapter 7-8. He did great things for the Lord b/c

- 1) Planned his life around pleasing God
- 2) He wanted to spiritually enlighten God's people.
- 3) He talked ANG walked by faith.

Ezra really prospered. How do we use our prosperity?

- 4) Prosperity of money
- 5) Prosperity of time
- 6) Prosperity of relationships

In great wealth, advancement and popularity comes great opportunity to indulge the flesh. (We don't want to do this...we want intimacy with God)

Set up analogy of a stream; don't want to drift downstream with the world, but want to go up-stream to heaven. (Heb 2:1) (Persuade why we should want to

go up-stream with Christ) This is akin to our intimacy with our Maker and Redeemer!!

How to water-ski upstream....with the Lord

Chapter 9:1-7

- 1. 1st thing we need to do is: Take the safety rules seriously**
 - a. Can't have skis of different length (Don't be unequally yoked)**
 1. Read II Cor 6:14;18
 2. Can you imagine having 2 different types of skis?
 - b. Be w/ people that will help you to ski (Stay in fellowship w/ likeminded Christians)**
 1. Read Amos 3:1-3
 2. In a physical endeavor, need to be on the same page physically. (Building a championship football team) **You have to discriminate!**

3. In a mental endeavor, need to be on the same page mentally. (Building a rocket)
 4. In a spiritual endeavor, need to be on the same page spiritually. (Building the kingdom of God)
- c. Safety rules are for our protection, not to limit us.
- i. God's commands to keep your distance from the unbelievers are designed to aid us in raising Godly children and having a Godly legacy to come.

Chapter 9:8-9

2. **2nd thing we need to do is: Take our lead from the driver & go w/ the flow.**
 - a. Accept this gracious power given to you (We've been bought w/ a price to go His way)
 1. Many see our service to Christ to be as limited slaves. Yet in reality we've been given power beyond our ability.

2. “Silver and gold have I none, but what I do have...”
 3. We been given the power to forgive and love...we didn't have this before.
- b. Go where He leads (Work on spiritual tasks, not fleshly)
1. If you try to turn to left or right, will fail.
 2. We need to follow after holiness not happiness, after character not comfort.

Chapter 9:10-15

3. **3rd thing we need to do is: Accept our helplessness & the driver's ability.**
 - a. Accept that you can do nothing, if you don't hold on.
 1. In the spirit we can accomplish great things. But if we let go of the rope, even our best efforts will still see us get swept down-stream.

2. Ask the Lord if He's leading every effort of our lives. If no, then it's a totally worthless endeavor.
- b. Accept that the driver is perfect.
 1. Jesus will never lead us into something without cause.

Conclusion –

How to water-ski upstream....with the Lord (Growing intimacy w/ God)

1. **1st thing we need to do is: Take the safety rules seriously**
2. **2nd thing we need to do is: Take our lead from the driver & go w/ the flow.**
3. **3rd thing we need to do is: Accept our helplessness & the driver's ability.**

“Who can mind the journey, when the road leads home.”

The need to raise a godly seed (Save this for Chap 10)