

The book of Ezra tells of a period of spiritual renewal and growth in the shared life of God's people. If we look closely, we can discover how spiritual renewal happens . . .

I. God's _____ must _____

- The hearts of His _____ (1:5) and _____. (1:1, 6:22, 7:27-28)
- In the _____ of Ezra, his servant. (7:6, 7:9, 7:28, 8:18)
- God's hand must move, but can we move God's hand? (8:22)

II. God's WORD must GUIDE

- God is orchestrating _____ to fulfill His Word. (1:1)
- God _____ His people by His Word. (5:1-2, 6:14)
- God appoints a man to lead who _____ His Word. (7:6, 11)
- God _____ & _____ His people with His Word. (9:4-10:3)

III. God's PEOPLE must ACT

- When faced with _____ obstacles, God's people . . .
_____ (1:5) _____ (2:68) _____ (3:10, 6:13-14)
- When faced with _____ obstacles, God's people . . .
_____ (10:2-13) _____ (10:16)

TODAY'S MESSAGE

EZRA
ROUTE 66: A ROAD TRIP ACROSS THE BIBLE
JUNE 1, 2014

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STUFF FOR GROWTH GROUPS

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CONNECTING & CARING Together (20 minutes or so)

Share life together. We need one another. Be a vulnerable, risk-taking, open, caring community of God's people, like He calls us to be.

STUDYING God's Word Together (20 minutes or so)

1. Can you summarize the story of Ezra briefly in your own words? What jumped out for you in the message/text this week?
2. Ezra 1 is extraordinary. Read it and discuss why. Where do you see the sovereign hand of God in this chapter?
3. Ezra's prayer in Ezra 9 is amazing. Read it and discuss why. What does Ezra realize that gives rise to this prayer? The points of our message are made by Ezra in his prayer. So . . .

How does Ezra recognize the hand of God moving?

How does Ezra recognize God's Word as a guide?

How does Ezra recognize the necessity of and failure of God's people to act?

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4. In chapter 9, the people repent and obey the Lord by putting away their foreign, idolatrous wives. Based on Deuteronomy 7:1-6, why does God prohibit intermarriage with the nations that surround Israel during this period of redemption history? Is it because God is racist? Does God prohibit interracial marriage today? If not, is there an ongoing principle here?
5. The life and worship of God's people centered around the temple. That is no longer the case. . . or is it? What does Ephesians 2:19-22 and 1 Peter 2:4-10 tell us about that? In light of this truth, how should WE be acting?
6. As we think about the spiritual renewal of our lives, our families, our church, our community and nation, how can we apply the 3 principles of this message? How can we bring our lives into alignment with these principles?

PRAYER Together (20 minutes or so)

In light of our study of Ezra, seek the Lord together and pray for one another's lives and families. Pray for our church. Pray for our nation.