

Series Title: Spiritual Renewal

Focus Text: Ezra 1-6

- Ezra is broken up into 2 sections.
- Ezra 1-6 – the rebuilding of the temple.
- Ezra 7-10 – reformation of the people.

Theme of Series:

- We are now rebuilding America – restoring our economy and our way of life. The same goes for our lives spiritually...specifically when it comes to worship. We should use the next 4 weeks to get us ready for our reopening of the building for worship together.

Lessons:

- Chapter 1 – Renewing – Spiritual Renewal
- Chapter 2 – Returning – It's time to go Home
- Chapter 3 – Rebuilding – It starts with the foundation
- Chapter 4 – Resisting – The devil will always try to stop God's people
- Chapter 5 – Reviving – We not only want to return – we want to be better / stronger.

Lesson 1: Renewing – It's time for Spiritual Renewal

Spiritual Renewal will happen most effectively when we believe in God's:

******Basic Points from Truth of Today – just introduced differently******

- Power
- Promises
- Purposes
- Providence

Current Challenges for this lesson:

- Application – how to challenge our audience? Most listening to us know these points, but how to convert them to applicable points.
- Interaction – what questions can we ask to drive responses from the audience?

Game Plan – Aaron and Beau

- **Basic philosophy**
 - Aaron – Play by Play
 - Beau – Personality – Color Commentator
- **Lesson – Basic Flow**
 - Attention Getter with Question – Aaron
 - Welcome / Short Prayer - Beau

- Series Explanation - Aaron
- Introduction to Ezra – historical review - Aaron
- Reading of the Text - Beau
- Ezra 1 – Context Review - Aaron
- Lesson / Points – Beau with Support from Aaron
- Application - Both
- Conclusion - Both
- Prayer Requests - Beau
- Announcements - Beau
- Closing Prayer – Aaron
- **Schedule**
 - Monday – define outline – potential subject and points
 - Tuesday night – Meet with Jeremy at the building to outline set up
 - Tuesday night – Finalize – lesson 1 main points
 - Especially application
 - Audience participation
 - Tuesday night – Finalize Power Point – Aaron
 - How to combine Context with Lesson?
 - Wednesday – Practice / Prepare
 - 6pm at the building.
 - We may can cancel this – it’s just in case.

Basic Lesson Outline

Aaron – Attention Getter

- On April 16th, 2020 – President Trump laid out his plan to rebuild or restore America.
- Soon after that – Governor Reeves came out with his plan to “Restart MS” – which he has amended this week with more plans.
- Around 539 B.C. – King Cyrus of Persia laid out his plan to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem. This was after the Jews had been in Babylonian captivity for 70 years.
- All of this is found in Ezra 1-6.
- As the world works toward restoring what we had, rebuilding our economy, renewing our way of life – and as the church does the exact same thing (including our worship) – I want us to study another time rebuilding and restoration was needed – this one was so important that God had it recorded in our sacred scriptures.
- I hope you will stay with us as start this study tonight.

Aaron – Introduction of Beau and our New Format

- Explain background.
- Be sure to thank Jeremy.
- Introduce Beau.
- Turn it over to Beau for the Welcome.

Beau – Welcome and Prayer

- Welcome Visitors
- Intro Prayer
- As we remember and reflect on a few of God’s attributes this evening let us never forget
- Malachi 3:6 For I the Lord do not change;
- James 1:17 Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights with whom there is no variation or shadow due to change.
- The same God that created the world and we studying in the book of Ezra is same God we serve today!!

Aaron – Explain the Series and Into to Ezra

- Completed Last Series – “Where is Your Faith”
 - It was a focus on how to grow during these trying times.
 - It seems now – that our current condition is trying to change – so I wanted to change our devotional thoughts as well.
- Series Title – Spiritual Renewal – and the first lesson is entitled that as well.
 - Lesson 1 – Ezra 1 – Renewing – Spiritual Renewal
 - Lesson 2 – Ezra 2 – Returning – It’s Time to Go Home
 - Lesson 3 – Ezra 3 – Rebuilding – The Foundation is Critical
 - Lesson 4 – Ezra 4 – Resisting – There will Always be Obstacles
 - Lesson 5 – Ezra 5/6 – Reviving – Better / Stronger / Closer

Beau – Scripture Reading – Ezra 1

Aaron – Ezra 1

- Ezra in Context to the Old Testament
- Ezra in Context to the Years surrounding the time.
- Ezra in Context to the Book Itself – 2 key parts to the book.

Aaron – Transition to the Lesson

- Tonight's Lesson is about the process of Spiritual Renewal (Rebuilding).
- And with any and all other aspects of our lives – especially during this time – as we are in this transition stage of renewal – it's important that we trust and rely in the Sovereignty of God.

Beau – Lesson

- Power of God
- Promises of God
- Purposes of God
- Providence of God

1. God is all Powerful!!!!

During your lifetime what are some times or moment that you felt the Power of God?

Example in Biblical times... here in Ezra 1... God uses Cyrus....

Cyrus was the most powerful man in the world at his time ... (But he could not resist God's will and power)

Look at this "Pagan" Kings Statement after God "Stirred his spirit"

God has **given** me the kingdoms of the earth – sign of humility from a Pagan king

He has charged me to build him a house in Jerusalem..

Daniel 4:17 That the Most High rules in the kingdom of men,
Gives it to whomever He will,

Romans **13** Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God.

In context of Spiritual Renewal doesn't it encourage us to know that the all Powerful God is the one we serve and glorify!!!

I pray we too will have our spirits "stirred" by our all-powerful heavenly father!!!!

During your lifetime what are some times or moment that you felt the Power of God?

2. God keeps his promises

Question 2 what are some of God's promises that give you comfort?

Jeremiah 29:10 For thus says the LORD: After seventy years are completed at Babylon, I will visit you and perform My good word toward you, and cause you to return to this place.

God through Cyrus fulfilled Jeremiah's prophesy.

What a comforting feeling to know our God keep his promises

Titus 1:2 in hope of eternal life which **God**, who **cannot lie**, promised before time began,

As we renew our Spirits one way of accomplishing that is to always remember our heavenly father (who cannot lie) keeps his promises.

Some examples of those promises

I Corinthian 10:13 No temptation has overtaken you except such as is common to man; but God *is* faithful, who will not allow you to be tempted beyond what you are able, but with the temptation will also make the way of escape, that you may be able to [d](#)bear it.

James 4:8 Draw near to God and He will draw near to you

The only promise from God that hasn't happened yet should truly help us to renew our spirit daily?

John 14:3 And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and receive you to Myself; that where I am, *there* you may be also.

Question 2 what are some of God's promises that give you comfort?

3. God has a purpose

Question 3 what is God's purpose for us?

God wanted his people back in the Promised Land so the messiah could come into that land. When Jesus came his purpose was accomplished. ■

Do we always understand God's ways and reasons? Absolutely not

"Great is our Lord, and abundant in power; his understanding is beyond measure." Psalm 147:5

"For my thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, declares the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways and my thoughts than your thoughts." Isaiah 55:9

God knows what we need better than we know ourselves

Roman 11:33-35 Oh, the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God! How unsearchable *are* His judgments and His ways past finding out!

34"For who has known the mind of the LORD?

Or who has become His counselor?"

35"Or who has first given to Him

And it shall be repaid to him?"

36For of Him and through Him and to Him *are* all things, to whom *be* glory forever. Amen.

Question 3 what is God's purpose for us?

Ecclesiastes 12:13–14 (ESV)

13 The end of the matter; all has been heard. Fear God and keep his commandments, for this is the whole duty of man. 14 For God will bring every deed into judgment, with every secret thing, whether good or evil.

Matthew 22:37–38 (ESV)

37 And he said to him, “You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. 38 This is the great and first commandment.

Our purpose is to love God and keep his commandments

Our Goal is to be with him one day and to take as many people as we can with us

2. God's Providence or God worked in Biblical times like he did in Ezra's day and he still works in our lives today!!!

Question we say we believe in God's providence but why do we struggle with relinquishing control?

Truth is control is an illusion, the only one in control is God.

James 4:13 Come now, you who say, “Today or tomorrow [h]we will go to such and such a city, spend a year there, buy and sell, and make a profit”; **14** whereas you do not know what *will happen* tomorrow. For what *is* your life? It is even a vapor that appears for a little time and then vanishes away. **15** Instead you *ought* to say, “If the Lord wills, we shall live and do this or that.” **16** But now you boast in your arrogance. All such boasting is evil.

I like to think I am in control.... But to think I am is being foolish...

God is still in control and is still actively working in our lives today!!!

As we strive for a spiritual renewal let us not forget God has always and will always be working in our lives and in his church!!!

So what can we do?

Pray James 5:16 New King James Version (NKJV)

¹⁶ [a] Confess *your* trespasses to one another, and pray for one another, that you may be healed. The effective, [b] fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much.

STUDY!! 2 Timothy 2:15 King James Version (KJV)

¹⁵ Study to shew thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.

Why do we struggle to relinquish control? Truth is so often we have more faith in ourselves than we do the Creator of All!!!

Spiritual renewal by realizing

God is all powerful

God keeps his promises

God has a purpose

God works providentially every day in our lives

Aaron – Conclusion

- Purpose is to support driving home Beau's lesson and application.
- As we move through this process of rebuilding our country, our state, our community – then as we consider the rebuilding of our worship – back together as it should be – how will you utilize the Sovereignty of God to help you and us?

Beau – Announcements

Aaron – Prayer

- Remind them of Sunday.
- Remind them of Next Week.
- So much more to come.