

Built for Worship

Ezra 10 – Putting things right

Deadly sin has to be radically dealt with (v.1-8)

Shekariah: “We have been unfaithful to our God by marrying foreign women from the peoples around us. But in spite of this, there is still hope for Israel. Now let us make a covenant before our God to send away all these women and their children.” (v.2-3)

Jesus: “If your right eye causes you to stumble, gouge it out and throw it away. It is better for you to lose one part of your body than for your whole body to be thrown into hell.” (Matthew 5:29)

Individual sin needs collective responsibility (v.9-15)

“Within the three days, all the men of Judah and Benjamin had gathered in Jerusalem.” (v.9)

“‘Separate yourselves from the peoples around you and from your foreign wives.’ The whole assembly responded with a loud voice: ‘You are right! We must do as you say.’” (v.11-12)

Joyful obedience is the mark of true worshippers (v.16-44)

“They all gave their hands in pledge to put away their wives, and for their guilt they each presented a ram from the flock as a guilt offering.” (v.19)

“Therefore, I urge you, brothers and sisters, in view of God’s mercy, to offer your bodies as a living sacrifice, holy and pleasing to God—this is your true and proper worship.” (Romans 12:1)

Digging Deeper questions for personal reflection & discussion

Deadly sin has to be radically dealt with (v.1-8)

Why is true repentance more than simply saying sorry to God?

Why then, do we often struggle to make any significant changes to sinful patterns in our lives?

How do Jesus' words in Matthew 5:27-30 ramp up the seriousness of sin, and is there anything radical you need to do to combat sin in your life?

Individual sin needs collective responsibility (v.9-15)

In what ways has God given you a new conscience since you became a follower of Jesus?

Why should there be a shared responsibility in the church for other people's sins? Who are we, and what is our aim together?

Have there been occasions when other Christians have pointed out something in your life that needed to fall more in line with Christ? Was it done in love? Did you respond in repentance and faith?

Joyful obedience is the mark of true worshippers (v.16-44)

Even when it's hard to obey Jesus, why is it worth it? Have you ever felt joy when Jesus has helped you claim some sort of victory over sin?

Do you long for the day when you will meet Jesus face to face and victory will be permanent? How might your life now be an expression of worship that anticipates that day?

Ezra – final reflections

How has God spoken to you through Ezra over these past few months?

What does He tell us about worship, priorities, sin, and grace?

What is important here for our church?