



Week 3 | Ezra | July 10

Key Focus: We need our previous God stories to inform our present story.

Opening Up:

- What year in school was the most challenging for you?
- If you could time travel and visit yourself in 7th grade, what would you say?
- If your 7th grade self were able to articulate what it feels like to be in 7th grade, what you say? How are those feelings different or the same today?
- What “God story” from your life between 7th grade and now would give the most encouragement to your 7th grade self?

Reference: Ezra 5 and 6

Discuss:

1. God’s story shows us how to live in a broken place and that everything is going to be all right. How is this true? How has God’s story helped you to live in a broken place?
2. What God story from the Bible or your own life helps you to have faith in God’s restorative plan?
3. In Ezra 5:2 the prophets supported the restorative work of the temple re-construction and prospered through the prophecy (6:14). How has God’s words supported you and helped you prosper in your life?
4. In Ezra 5:5 we read that God was watching over the elders. How does it help you to know that God sees you? How does that affect the way you pray?
5. God used the opposition against the Temple reconstruction for his purposes. Darius was unaware of Cyrus’s decree prior to the challenge against God’s people. That opposition led to blessing, and the reconstruction was paid for by the royal treasury. How has God used opposition and turned it into blessing in your life?
6. Why should Christians never meet opposition with pessimism?
7. When the people celebrated what God did in rebuilding the temple, they offered sin offerings and celebrated Passover. Both of the symbols point to Jesus. Jesus died for our sins once and for all (Hebrews 10:12), and Jesus is our Passover Lamb sacrificed for freedom (1 Corinthians 5:7). How does the sacrifice of Jesus for your sins and your freedom inform your story?
8. How does the Jesus story help us to engage the brokenness of the world? How does it affect our dialogue? How we talk about race? How we talk about justice? How we talk about violence? Or how we feel about these things?
9. How would our national narrative be different if we believed that sinful people need grace? (A grace that comes from the sacrifice of the innocent for the guilty.)
10. Pray.