
Getting Practical:

Rabbinic Literature (**A Story**) = One day a rabbi was reciting the text while walking down a long road. He was so entrenched in the text that he missed his turn to go home. He kept walking down the path and didn't realize that it was heading toward a hostile Roman city. Without noticing it, the rabbi came upon the city gate and all of a sudden he hears a soldier's voice yelling from the tower, "Hey You!, **who are you and what are you doing here?**" The rabbi was astonished and answered the soldier, "Whatever you are currently being paid I will double it if you come home with me and stand outside of my door and ask me that question each morning."

So...Who are you?

- "You are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people belonging to God."
- *How does our identity change the world?

So...What are you doing here?

- "We are to proclaim the praises and excellencies of Him who called us out of darkness, into His wonderful light."
- *In what ways do we proclaim this message in our work, neighborhoods, recreation, family?

Do you have people in your life who will constantly stand outside your door and ask you these questions?

Don't Miss

- Look at the "Love Your Neighbor" section in the weekly bulletin
- The Four Corners Offering during June is for Kids Food Basket.
- Ask the Spirit to open your heart to the opportunities to recreate this week

Ezra 1 "Hope Fulfilled"



EverGreen
Ministries
June 27, 2010

message notes:

- God's Plan

- God's Call

- God's Challenge

Explore the Story, Discover Your Life ***A Study for Small Groups and Individuals***

Remembering – “Hope Fulfilled”

- Look at your message notes. What part of the message made you wonder, want to know more, held particular meaning for your life, or just caught your attention?

Being Shaped by the Text: Ezra 1

God’s people have failed...miserably. There is little hope that they will ever be a people/nation again. They are defeated, disbursed, and most of them have been integrated into the life of a different culture.

- Read Isaiah 44:21-28 & 45:1-7: What do we learn about Cyrus in this predictive prophecy? Isn’t this amazing?!
- Cyrus was one of God’s instruments used to rebuild a people and restore them back to God. What does this say about our God?
- Why do you think we continue questioning God’s providence in our lives when God has clearly gone before His people throughout history? Where are we questioning him in our own lives? What assurance can be gained from the truths in these passages?
- What does John 19:11 tells us about God’s providence & authority? Do our lives reflect that we believe this?

Do You Accept the Challenge?

*Only a few (remnant-trace) heeded God’s call through Cyrus to go back to being a people and to rebuilding the Temple. Many of them had become integrated into the Persian society and weren’t willing to give up the luxuries and comfort that came along with this...returning would be hard/tough work.

EXPLORE!

Read Luke 14:26-30 to help explain this section:

*“Hating” is Semitic hyperbole for saying “loving less.” Jesus is basically saying that our love for our parents, children, and others better not bind us down from His calling. This echoes the OT idea of being God’s people/slaves. We are not “free,” for we are His people...He must be our first love. If we don’t love Him first, we will not answer His call.

- How do you know if Jesus is your first love? Is it evident to the world that this is true? Why, or why not?
- Have you ever answered a difficult call from Jesus that was difficult to explain or for people to grasp? Were you ridiculed by family, friends, and others? How? / Were you encouraged by people? How?
- Why does Jesus insert verses 28-30 in this passage? What connection is there to verses 26-27? What effects does half-heartedly answering Jesus’ call have on the people of the world?

*We are told that many will not answer the call and persevere. Many times this can discourage us, but God’s call is to continue His work no matter how many people join in. However, God knows we can’t do this work alone and has gathered and empowered us in one Spirit as a people who have answered this call.

- Are we living with people who have answered this call more than one day out of the week?
- Do we encourage, and do these people encourage us to continue struggling through what it means to be a passionate follower of Jesus?

Thought = We see in Ezra, that answering God’s call will be difficult. Will EverGreen Ministries be a people that choose to live in the comfort and security that the world offers, or will we count the cost, accept the call, and trust God to provide for His mission?