

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of January 25, 2015

This Week's Focus: How God enabled His people to finish the work on the temple in the midst of opposition.

This Week's Text: Ezra 5 and 6

"We must allow the Word of God to confront us, to disturb our security, to undermine our complacency and to overthrow our patterns of thought and behavior." **John R.W. Stott**

For the word of God is living and active, sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing to the division of soul and of spirit, of joints and of marrow, and discerning the thoughts and intentions of the heart.

Hebrews 4:12

Related Texts: Haggai 1, 2 Peter 1:16-21, 2 Timothy 4:2, 1 Timothy 4:13

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- What in the text/sermon was most illuminating or helpful? Why?
- What is the context of Ezra 5 and 6?
- Why did Israel cease building the temple?
 - How do these reasons differ from the time they ceased building the walls? Reference Ezra 4:7-23.
- How did the Lord bring encouragement to the Israelites?
 - How can we avoid mission-ceasing discouragement?
 - How does God provide us with encouragement?
- How had the temporal taken priority over the eternal for Israel?
 - Define "worldliness."
 - How do we avoid being worldly?
- Discuss the importance of God's revealed word (Scripture) in the life and mission of His people.
 - How does God's word shape God's people in Ezra and in our community?

- What was the appropriate response to God's confrontation of Israel's sin?
 - What should our response be to God's confrontation of our sin?
- Why was it important to complete the building of the temple? What does it represent?
- What was King Darius' response to the letter? Reference Ezra 6:1-12.
- Why do we often fail to confess our faults and sin?
- What was the leaders' (Zerubbabel and Jeshua) position toward the King?
 - As citizens of the Kingdom of God, what should be our position to governing authorities?
- The opposition caused the rebuilding of the temple to be funded by the opponents. In your life, have you seen the Lord turn bad circumstances to good like this?
- Ezra 5:8 and 6:14 describe the work prospering, and 6:14 also mentions the ministry of Haggai and Zechariah. What does Psalm 1 teach about what makes people prosper?
- Discuss the significance of the first Passover celebrated after temple building was completed.
- How do Ezra 5 and 6 point to Jesus and the gospel?

Gospel Celebration:

- Jesus is the ultimate Passover-Lamb of God!
- Jesus is the ultimate Deliverer!
- Jesus is the ultimate Exodus!

Next Week's Text: Ezra 7 and 8