

## **The Centrality of God's Word in Restoration**

If each of us shared the area of restoration for which we are trusting God, there would be all sorts of things shared. There would also most likely be a variety of things that God is using to bring about this restoration. In addition to these things, if we are seeking restoration from God's perspective then His word will be a part of the process because God's word is central in restoration. As we come to Ezra 7 today, we are introduced to the man for whom this book is named and we see the centrality of God's word in the Jew's restoration.

### **Read Ezra 7:1-10**

1. What do we learn about Ezra from these verses? And specifically what insights do we gain about Ezra's relationship to God's word?
2. Verse 10 says that Ezra set his heart to study and to practice and to teach God's statutes and ordinances. What do you think it means that he "set his heart" to do these things?
3. What is significant about the order in which Ezra did what he did with the law of the LORD? Why does that matter?

### **Read Ezra 7:11-28**

4. What kind of authority does the king give to Ezra? And specifically, related to the law of God, what kind of authority does he give to him?
5. Though this passage doesn't tell us, what do you think would have been the likely outcome of the Jews' process of restoration if God did not send someone like Ezra to Jerusalem with the law of God?

### **Read Nehemiah 8:1-3, 13; 9:3, 38; 10:28-29**

6. How do you see the centrality of God's word in restoration illustrated in these verses?

Brian said:

If you are seeking restoration in any area of your life, but you are not engaging God's Word in that process, you are going to miss restoration. We need the truth that God's Word provides – truth about our situation, truth about ourselves, truth about what God desires. As well, we need the motivation and the convicting power that God's Word provides. It is so clear in Nehemiah that the Word of God is the power that moves them to conviction and to confession and to commitments that honor God. Hebrews 4:12 tells us that God's Word is "*living and active*." There is a power in God's Word that transforms us.

7. Can you give any examples of how the Word has been powerful in your life in any area of restoration in the past (i.e. helping you come to a right relationship with God)?

Brian said:

**Your life with the Word might make a difference in other people's restoration.** Without someone like Ezra the Jews most likely would not have found their way back to full restoration. God raises up Ezra to go to the people and uses him to help bring about their restoration. . . . As I think back on different times where I was seeking some kind of restoration, I have often been drawn to people who have this kind of life with God's Word – people who understand God's Word and who live it. These are the people to whom I'm drawn to go for wisdom. I've found that God has spoken to me through such people in ways that help me move towards restoration. He has motivated me through such people. Their life with the Word has made a difference in my path to restoration.

8. Have you ever thought that God might want to use you to help others in their journey towards restoration . . . that your life with God's word matters for more than just yourself?

Brian said:

How great would it be to have a church full of people like Ezra – people who set their hearts to know and to do God's Word and who can then influence others out of that experience. Maybe there would be less need for restoration if this was true. But certainly it would help others move towards restoration. Let me encourage you to spend some time reflecting on this passage this week. Ask God if you have this kind of life with His Word. And if you sense that you don't, ask Him to help you come to the point where you do. It will be good for you. And it will be good for others because God might want to use you in other people's restoration.

9. How would you evaluate your life with the word based on Ezra 7:10?

10. What is one practical application that might help you move towards a life with the word that is more like Ezra's?