

TOGETHER

EZRA 3

Text: Ezra 3:1, 9, 11

Ezra 3:1

And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem.

Ezra 3:9

Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites.

Ezra 3:11

And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

Introduction:

Today we have two extremes in church. We have those who say I don't care what the Bible says or the pastor preaches or the Sunday School teacher teaches, I'm going to do what I want and going to believe how I want, while the other extreme attempts to get along at any cost, replacing content for a crowd.

In Bible colleges we are now training preachers with educators instead of preachers who know how to pray and how to preach.

Men build churches but don't attend them, print Bibles, but don't read them, talk about God but don't believe Him, speak of Christ but don't trust Him, sing our hymns and then forget them.

We have replaced the power of God with programs and promotions.

Many gather in building called churches each week not to meet with God but to meet with one another. Many are only interested in the social status of church and not the Savior of the church.

Note in our text that those who chose to return back to their homeland, did what they had been ask to do and had determined to do in a unified way.

The Bible has much to say about unity.

- Good and Pleasant

Psalm 133:1

Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

- Dead to self

Acts 4:32

And the multitude of them that believed were of one heart and of one soul: neither said any of them that ought of the things which he possessed was his own; but they had all things common.

1 Cor. 1:10

Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.

Philip. 1:27

Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;

Philip. 2:2

Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

Too many today have their own agenda and are trying to do whatever it is they are attempting by themselves.

But think what could be accomplished today if people would work together for the cause of Christ.

Notice with me as we consider this thought of together.

1. UNIFIED IN WORSHIP

Ezra 3:1-6

And when the seventh month was come, and the children of Israel were in the cities, the people gathered themselves together as one man to Jerusalem. [2] Then stood up Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and his brethren the priests, and Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and his brethren, and builded the altar of the God of Israel, to offer burnt offerings thereon, as it is written in the law of Moses the man of God. [3] And they set the altar upon his bases; for fear was upon them because of the people of those countries: and they offered burnt offerings thereon unto the Lord, even burnt offerings morning and evening. [4] They kept also the feast of tabernacles, as it is written, and offered the daily burnt offerings by

number, according to the custom, as the duty of every day required; [5] And afterward offered the continual burnt offering, both of the new moons, and of all the set feasts of the Lord that were consecrated, and of every one that willingly offered a freewill offering unto the Lord. [6] From the first day of the seventh month began they to offer burnt offerings unto the Lord. But the foundation of the temple of the Lord was not yet laid.

Ezra 3:11

And they sang together by course in praising and giving thanks unto the Lord; because he is good, for his mercy endureth for ever toward Israel. And all the people shouted with a great shout, when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid.

May we be reminded that unity is really only possible as we meet personally with God. Note the very first thing that they set out to do.

- Built the altar. (vs 2-3) To meet with the Lord

Too often people gather themselves on Sundays and Wednesdays not to meet with God but to meet with one another, to be entertained, or to be made to feel good about themselves.

Too often preachers have become comedians instead of preacher of God's word.

Too often the only thing people remember from the service is the joke the preacher told instead of the message from God's word.

Oh that we would once again have a desire for God to meet with us and we with Him together.

2. UNIFIED IN WORK

Two years have passed all the while they were worshipping the Lord together.

Ezra 3:7-10

They gave money also unto the masons, and to the carpenters; and meat, and drink, and oil, unto them of Zidon, and to them of Tyre, to bring cedar trees from Lebanon to the sea of Joppa, according to the grant that they had of Cyrus king of Persia.

[8] Now in the second year of their coming unto the house of God at Jerusalem, in the second month, began Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua the son of Jozadak, and the remnant of their brethren the priests and the Levites, and all they that were come out of the captivity unto Jerusalem; and appointed the Levites, from twenty years old and upward, to set forward the work of the house of the Lord. [9] Then stood Jeshua with his sons and his brethren, Kadmiel

and his sons, the sons of Judah, together, to set forward the workmen in the house of God: the sons of Henadad, with their sons and their brethren the Levites. [10] And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, they set the priests in their apparel with trumpets, and the Levites the sons of Asaph with cymbals, to praise the Lord, after the ordinance of David king of Israel.

Sacrifice and Labor is needed.

Close:

The sad truth today is that the altar fires are either out or burning very low. Prayer meeting is dead or dying. By our attitude to prayer we tell God that what was begun in the Spirit we can finish in the flesh.

As we read in Isaiah, Isaiah had a vision of God.

Isaiah 6:1-9

In the year that king Uzziah died I saw also the Lord sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up, and his train filled the temple. [2] Above it stood the seraphims: each one had six wings; with twain he covered his face, and with twain he covered his feet, and with twain he did fly. [3] And one cried unto another, and said, Holy, holy, holy, is the Lord of hosts: the whole earth is full of his glory. [4] And the posts of the door moved at the

voice of him that cried, and the house was filled with smoke.

[5] Then said I, Woe is me! for I am undone; because I am a man of unclean lips, and I dwell in the midst of a people of unclean lips: for mine eyes have seen the King, the Lord of hosts. [6] Then flew one of the seraphims unto me, having a live coal in his hand, which he had taken with the tongs from off the altar: [7] And he laid it upon my mouth, and said, Lo, this hath touched thy lips; and thine iniquity is taken away, and thy sin purged. [8] Also I heard the voice of the Lord, saying, Whom shall I send, and who will go for us? Then said I, Here am I; send me.

[9] And he said, Go, and tell this people, Hear ye indeed, but understand not; and see ye indeed, but perceive not.

Woe is a word of confession.

Lo is a word of cleansing.

Go is a word of commission.

This was an upward vision - he saw God, and inward vision - he saw himself, and an outward vision - he saw the world.

In this hour when the average church knows more about promotion than prayer and has forgotten consecration by encouraging competition we need a

renewed vision of God, and a moving of God in our hearts.

No man can live beyond his vision.