

Living Water Fellowship

5TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY

7TH FEBRUARY 2021

COME TO JESUS

WELCOME:

PRAYER OF THE DAY:

Loving and Gracious God, we praise & thank you for your presence among us each day in your Word and by your Spirit. Thank you for choosing to dwell among us. We stand in awe of your calling us to be your faithful people.

Bless this time of worship that those who need comfort may be comforted, those who need challenge may be challenged, and that all of us may grow closer together as your children—as members of the body of Christ Jesus our Risen Lord, in whose name we pray. Amen.

SONG: Come Now is the Time to worship (P&W 900)

GROW IN HIS GRACE

BIBLE READING: Ezra 3:1-13

FAITH CHAT:

THE MESSAGE: RE-SET WORSHIP

SONG: Shout to the Lord (AT 369)

PRAYERS:

COMMUNION:

Words of Institution & The Lord's Prayer:

Our Father in heaven, hallowed be your name. Your kingdom come, your will be done on earth as in heaven. Give us today our daily bread. Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us. Lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil. For the kingdom, the power, & the glory are yours now and forever. Amen.

Worship Video during Communion:

GO IN HIS POWER

BLESSING:

**(Name) † child of God,
God's faithful love for you endures forever. Amen.**

ANNOUNCEMENTS:

SONG: How Great thou Art (LHS 881)

SHOW HIS LOVE

EZRA 3:1-13

In early autumn, when the Israelites had settled in their towns, all the people assembled in Jerusalem with a unified purpose. ² Then Jeshua son of Jehozadak joined his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel with his family in rebuilding the altar of the God of Israel. They wanted to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, as instructed in the Law of Moses, the man of God. ³ Even though the people were afraid of the local residents, they rebuilt the altar at its old site. Then they began to sacrifice burnt offerings on the altar to the Lord each morning and evening.

⁴ They celebrated the Festival of Shelters as prescribed in the Law, sacrificing the number of burnt offerings specified for each day of the festival. ⁵ They also offered the regular burnt offerings and the offerings required for the new moon celebrations and the annual festivals as prescribed by the Lord. The people also gave voluntary offerings to the Lord. ⁶ Fifteen days before the Festival of Shelters began, the priests had begun to sacrifice burnt offerings to the Lord. This was even before they had started to lay the foundation of the Lord's Temple.

⁷ Then the people hired masons and carpenters and bought cedar logs from the people of Tyre and Sidon, paying them with food, wine, and olive oil. The logs were brought down from the Lebanon mountains and floated along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to Joppa, for King Cyrus had given permission for this.

⁸ The construction of the Temple of God began in midspring, during the second year after they arrived in Jerusalem. The work force was made up of everyone who had returned from exile, including Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jehozadak and his fellow priests, and all the Levites. The Levites who were twenty years old or older were put in charge of rebuilding the Lord's Temple. ⁹ The workers at the Temple of God were supervised by Jeshua with his sons and relatives, and Kadmiel and his sons, all descendants of Hodaviah. They were helped in this task by the Levites of the family of Henadad.

¹⁰ When the builders completed the foundation of the Lord's Temple, the priests put on their robes and took their places to blow their trumpets. And the Levites, descendants of Asaph, clashed their cymbals to praise the Lord, just as King David had prescribed. ¹¹ With praise and thanks, they sang this song to the Lord:

"He is so good! His faithful love for Israel endures forever!"

Then all the people gave a great shout, praising the Lord because the foundation of the Lord's Temple had been laid. ¹² But many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders who had seen the first Temple wept aloud when they saw the new Temple's foundation. The others, however, were shouting for joy. ¹³ The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud noise that could be heard far in the distance.

Group Bible Study/Discussion:

1. Read Ezra 3:1-13. What questions immediately come to mind? What purpose of God is Ezra called to pursue? What is significant about that calling?
2. What can we learn from verse 1 about the spirit of the people? Why was it important for them to be unified in the work? What was their top priority as a people? Is that your top priority? If you need to make some changes, what would they involve?
3. Why are they "afraid of the local residents?" How do they respond to their fear? What do you learn from that?
4. What do all of these things show about the people's heart & relationship to God? Why were they exiled in the first place? Based on this passage, what have they learned?
5. Note that worship (sacrifices) begin before the Temple is rebuilt or even the foundation is properly laid. What does that tell you about the essential nature of worshipping as part of the faith community? How is on-line worship a lesser experience than worshipping in person?
6. What did the people start doing the next time they gathered? Who helped with this task? Do you think everyone did the same thing? What sorts of different tasks would have been necessary? What principle can we learn here?
7. Ezra rebuilds on the foundation laid by Solomon. How is this historical detail an important one? What is the significance of their acting in accord with both Moses & David? Every spiritual renewal begins by recalling what God has done to bring his people to this point in history AND what God's Word says about His people. How do you see that reflected here?
8. Why did those who remembered the "old" Temple weep? Why were the people who were born in captivity rejoicing? How is a connection to the past sometimes an obstacle to fully serving & praising God in the present?
9. As a group, read the following verses: Isaiah 28:16; Luke 6:47-49; Ephesians 2:19-22 & 1 Peter 2:4-11 and reflect on their connection to Ezra 3:1-13.