

Week of June 25, 2023
Series: The Story, Ch. 5, Pt. 6
Sermon: The Source of Renewal
Text: Ezra 1-10

Sermon Outline:

1. Renewal comes from God's Hand. (chs1-6)
2. Renewal comes from God's Word. (chs7-9)
3. Renewal comes from repentance. (chs10)

Discussion Questions:

1. Read Ezra 1:1-5. If you were on trial for believing in the power of God... and your prayer lists, prayer journals, and time spent in prayer was submitted as evidence, would you be declared guilty or innocent?

If innocent, what needs to change for you to be found guilty?

2. Read Ezra 7:10. Knowing God's Word does not necessarily renew you. Satan knows the Scriptures!

The real question is: What's the posture of your heart towards God's Word?

- Do you trust it can bring renewal to your life? Your marriage? Your joy? Your family? Your school, or workplace, or nation? Our city, our church, our culture?
- Do you see the God's Word as relevant to your life? As actually helpful day-to-day?
- As a lamp to your feet and a light to your path (Ps 119:105), as sweeter than honey and more precious than gold (Ps 19:10)?
- Or do you see it as just one more collection of pithy quotes, of ancient wisdom, of inspiring stories that might help you be the captain of your own ship?
- When you come across biblical teaching you don't like... how do you respond? Are you dismissive? Defensive?
- If the Word of God is in conflict with your desires, your habits, your preferences... does it initiate change, or do you skip those parts and really focus on the parts that confirm what you already believe to be true?
- Has God's Word shaped your worldview? How often does the word of God make its way into your answers to friends' questions, or into your parenting, or into hard conversations at work?

3. Read Ezra 9-10. Renewal comes from repentance: conviction, confession, and actual change. Repentance brings your heart and your mind into line with God's heart and mind. Repentance is you agreeing with God.

- Is repentance a regular part of your life?
- Are you convicted by the Word of God?
- Does that conviction drive you to confession?
- And are you humble enough to be specific?

Repentance could be defined as reactive. Repentance is a right reaction to conviction from the Holy Spirit.

- Read Psalm 139:23-24. How can you be proactive when it comes to repentance?