

Together We Build: The Call for Revival and Renewal | Ezra 1:5-11

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[0 : 00] Welcome to Ontario Community Church, where we're dedicated to encouraging, equipping, and engaging lives for Christ. Located in Ontario, Oregon, Pastor Patrick Daly preaches insightful sermons from the Word of God, offering practical applications for modern living.

We're delighted to share this sermon with you. Well, good morning, everyone. It is great to be here with you as we are continuing.

This thing's all over the place. Today, we're continuing our biblical exposition of the book of Ezra. You know, we began this series with the congregational reading of Scripture, whereas the body of Christ we read and we responded to God's Word.

All of God's Word is of great importance for us to read and to study and to know the Lord. We come to know the Lord. We come to grow in Him.

And through all of this, we are moved to do good in the name of Jesus Christ. And this last week, we began our exposition with a message that it set the scene for the book of Ezra.

[1 : 14] It was this understanding that Ezra is part of the history that's found within Scripture. You have the ending of the 70-year exile of God's people.

You have the fulfillment of prophecy, right? The ending of those 70 years, the prophecy of the Gentile King Cyrus, and the fulfillment of that.

And in all of this, we find the connections that are within Scripture. You see, the fulfillment of prophecy and seeing all the interconnectedness of Scripture, it demonstrates the power of the God that we love, that we worship and we serve.

And today, we will see how God stirred the spirit of Cyrus, the Gentile King, and now the Holy Spirit stirs the hearts of people to action.

And as we learn from this book that's just in the Old Testament, it doesn't mean that it's not relevant. The Word of God still speaks to us today, and we are encouraged to see how God worked in the past, as well as how God works today.

[2 : 29] God fulfills His promise, and God continues to speak to us today. And although the Bible is thousands of years old, it is living and it is active.

God not only speaks to us, but He gives us this call, this invitation to have a relationship with Him, and through belief, not only are we saved by grace through faith, but there's inner transformation that comes in knowing the Lord by trusting and obeying Him.

Let us be encouraged today as we are going through finishing this first chapter of the book of Ezra. And the title of today's sermon is, Together We Build, The Call for Revival and Renewal.

Let's pray together before we go any further. Let's bow our heads and pray. Gracious Father, we thank You for giving us Your Word. Your Word, this Scripture, is living and active.

And it is full of how You, God, You keep Your promises, how You are sovereign in how You are in control, how You are strong and You are mighty and how You are light.

[3 : 42] You are a good God and You give us truth and wisdom and insight and You provide salvation through faith in Jesus Christ. Father, we pray that in the same way You stirred the heart of the King, the Spirit of the King, and You stirred these people in Ezra to action, that in the same way You will stir our lives by the Holy Spirit to have a relationship with You, to grow in faith and to be stirred, to have this spiritual awakening to action.

We pray that we can do all of this in Your mighty name. We pray that this message will be an encouragement for us to see that how You are not a dead God.

You are living and active. You are the living God. And You still speak to us today. And we say all of this in the name of Jesus Christ, the Son of the living God.

We say together, amen. Now, feel free to have Your Bibles open, maybe have it by in Your lap or by Your side. And don't forget, we have our notes here.

And or you can use your mobile device or Bible of choice. That'll be found if you are opening your Pew Bible.

[5 : 10] It's on page 450, 58, if you want to have that nearby. And so as we're turning to Scripture here, we begin our sermon by continuing after the decree of Cyrus, the Persian king.

He is in power and He made this decree, a call for all survivors to go to Jerusalem and to rebuild the temple. And now in your notes here, I want to show you for a moment, you'll see that there's this, my sad attempt at making a little chart here.

But it's a map of the modern day Middle East where you see Babylonia to Jerusalem. And the distance from there, if you were to go in a straight line, which you wouldn't do back then, of course not, is at least 500 miles.

It goes and further, just to add some more thoughts to your mind, imagine about 40 plus thousand people who are traveling in the desert, in the hot sun, traveling with thousands of vessels.

And it's this great migration as it were because there's the Holy Spirit who is stirring the spirits, the hearts of these people to return and to rebuild the temple.

[6 : 43] If that's not a move from God, then I don't know what is. Can you imagine for a moment the scene that's happening here? So you have Cyrus that made a decree, the call for the survivors to go to Jerusalem, to rebuild the temple.

And Cyrus made this call and there was a tremendous amount of response. We go to Ezra chapter 1 verse 5. It's on the slide here as well, which says, then rose up the heads of the fathers' houses of Judah and Benjamin and the priests and the Levites.

Pay attention to this part. Everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild the house of the Lord that is where in Jerusalem.

We see that Cyrus made a proclamation. Those in authority in the houses of Judah and Benjamin, the priests, the Levites, they had responded, but it did not stop there.

It extended. The verse further mentions that everyone whose spirit had stirred went up to go rebuild the temple.

[7 : 49] And quite a journey that must be. I mean, we already know with how the heat is right now and how hot it can be. Just spending an hour in the heat, you get kind of thirsty.

Imagine traveling with so many people on a single mission to go and rebuild the temple. That's just an amazing thought to think about. And there's a connection with the beginning of chapter 1 verse 1 where we see that the Lord, if you have your Bibles open, it'll say, the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus, the king of Persia.

And then it goes down to verse 5 here, right? Everyone whose spirit God had stirred to go up to rebuild. And this stirring that we see is what we would call a spiritual awakening.

It doesn't mean you're waking up from a nap, although sometimes we like our naps, don't we? But we're talking about a spiritual awakening that is happening.

It's not like, again, waking up for a nap or waking up from going to bed at night. Isn't this, doesn't this go to show you the inner working of the Holy Spirit?

[8 : 59] I am fully convinced of the nature of the Holy Spirit that this is the Holy Spirit at work. And verses 1 through 5 mention that the Spirit was awakened, which indicates the nature of the Holy Spirit.

The Holy Spirit, it's always amazing when we see how the triune God is at work, not only in the New Testament, but also the Old Testament.

And in any case, it is the power of the triune God and the inner workings among people. God provided the vision, and that vision was to rebuild the house of the Lord in Jerusalem.

And just as people were given a vision by God, we too, as Christians today, we have been given a vision for building the church and doing the work of Christ.

And there are two things that you'll see in your notes that come to mind. There are two things that stand out when we think of this part of Ezra. And number one is that vision comes from the Lord.

[10 : 01] It is divine direction on where to go. God will lead and guide you in your life, much like how he has led other people. And secondly, the Holy Spirit stirs leaders and people to follow God's vision.

Have you ever reflected before and thought about, what does God want me to do in my life? How is God working in your own life?

Have you thought about that recently? Sometimes we think about it immediately when we become a believer. And other times we just forget about it. It's always important to be in tune with the Lord and consider how God is speaking to you today.

Have you ever felt that tug at your shirt, so to speak? That pull for God wanting you to maybe converse with a specific person or speak life to people, sharing in the gospel.

It could be a variety of different things. We go into Ezra, this next verse, verse six. And it says, and all who were about them aided them with vessels.

[11 : 13] And I want you to pay attention to that word, vessels. We'll get into that. Excuse me, vessels of silver with gold, with goods, and with beasts and costly wares. And I kind of wonder what kind of beasts we're talking about and what other kinds of goods that were not listed here.

And besides all of that, that was freely offered. And to pay attention to this is understanding that it is the community who is working together, even those people that might not have had the Spirit stir, right?

The Holy Spirit working in their heart and in their mind. You see here that the community is coming together, helping support God's vision.

And this is a great encouragement for us today. If you don't feel the Holy Spirit leading and guiding you specifically, that's okay.

You can still help and contribute your time, your talent, and your treasure to the workings and the mission of God. Still support those who have heard God's call and contributed in your own way.

[12 : 24] And for us believers, let us be encouraged to pray for revival in this land. You know, it doesn't take much time to turn on the news or to go on social media to see all the crazy things like the Microsoft Outage or the attempted former president assassination that's happening or that happened.

That's just two things. Of course, there are the fires that are happening around in our own community and there's so many we can go on and on about all of the tragedies and all of the terrible things that are happening.

But in all of this, we should pray for our leaders, for our nation, for the world, for our community, for revival that the Holy Spirit will stir the heart of the King, the spirit of the King, right?

Those who are in leadership, those who serve in the community, those who are in positions of authority, but also for revival, restoration, and renewal in our own land.

So pray for the stirring of hearts and support the local church. And for you, find a way in which you can help in the mission of God.

[13 : 42] I cannot emphasize enough its time, talent, and treasure. It can be any of those and how you answer that is up to you. And this is a wonderful and direct link for what we find with Ezra and Christ's mission for us, right?

We have the great commandment to love God and to love others, the great commission to make disciples of all nations, right? And to baptize believers.

And so there's this wonderful connection. God provided the mission and the vision to Cyrus and to the people, and in the same way, God gives us mission and vision.

We go to verse 7, which says that, Cyrus the King also brought out vessels of the house of the Lord that Nebuchadnezzar had carried away from Jerusalem and placed in the house of his gods.

Uh-oh. What happened, right? You have vessels, right? I want you to imagine for a moment my little water bottle, right? Imagine it got stolen and it was put in the wrong house, right?

[14 : 48] That's a very children's story, right? It gets placed into the wrong hands. But in this analogy, it's not one vessel but many vessels.

That which was stolen is being returned. It is being restored. And that's a wonderful connection that we can see. Cyrus is returning the vessels that were once stolen.

He took the treasures from the temple and placed them, right? He's placing them where they rightfully belong. And you'll see in your notes, there's references to Second Kings and Daniels 1, 1, 2.

We won't go into that but just for your own reference. What was stolen and what was taken for evil by evil is now placed in the rightful place.

And this is a parallel, my friends. A spiritual truth just like parables, right? There's a lot of spiritual truth that we can find in Scripture with Cyrus and Christ.

[15 : 47] I mentioned last time before that Cyrus is a prefiguration. He is a representation of who Christ will be. And I want you to listen to me closely when I say this.

That just as Cyrus, he rightfully took the vessels from the wrong place and returned them. Jesus Christ does the same for us when we are saved by grace through faith.

And I say this because very often in Scripture, right? You find that vessels are referred to as people.

So not only are you having the physical object, right? But you have the spiritual person, the spiritual representation here. Isn't that interesting how God works in His Word?

It's part of the symbolism or the deeper meanings that we find within Scripture. And in your notes, you'll see that again, you have mentioning of the physical object, the vessels, but also the spiritual person, the one who ends up getting saved, right?

[16 : 55] How we are human vessels. So it's a nice representation here. Because Jesus Christ takes us human vessels from the domain of darkness into the kingdom of light as mentioned in Colossians chapter 1 verse 13.

I'll read the verse for you. It's not on a slide here, but it says that Christ has delivered us from the domain of darkness and transferred us into the kingdom of His beloved Son, right?

As believers, we are filled with the indwelling of the Holy Spirit, new life and treasures, right? Some of you may know the verses that talk about being a vessel of honor, right?

It's having life in you as opposed to not having life in you. So therefore, this physical representation that we find in Cyrus, it speaks a spiritual truth.

It's just a nice little connection with Christ. Let's go to verse 8 here. Cyrus the king of Persia brought these out in charge of Mithredeth, the treasurer, who counted them to Shespazar.

[18 : 06] Imagine having a name like that, Shespazar. That's kind of a unique one. The Prince of Judah. And what we see here are key leaders. They are contributing, right?

They're contributing during the reign of King Cyrus of Persia. They are helping with the restoration, the counting of the vessels, right? We have the stewardship and the counting of these vessels.

And you'll see that both of these people appear in Scripture again. Mithredeth later opposes the building of the temple and Shespazar continues in the mission by receiving and helping transport the vessels and also laying the foundations of the temple.

Let's go to verses 9 through 11. Now, a lot of math here. A lot that's going on, but this is the counting, right?

30 basins of silver, 1,000 basins of silver, right? 29 censers, 30 bowls of gold, 410 bowls of silver and 1,000 other vessels and all these vessels, right?

[19 : 09] 5400 is quite a lot. If you think of a ceremonial bowl, imagine having a lot of them. Having a lot of these vessels.

And all these Shespazar brought up when the exiles were brought up from Babylonia to Jerusalem. And that map again is that representation of that.

What a journey that must have been to have over 40,000 people. All of these items accounted for, right?

And it says even earlier in the verses there were beasts, right? So there had to have been animals and other things that were not mentioned as the counting of all of these temple vessels.

That's also something to factor in. So how many of you think of the Oregon Trail, right? Or the traveling of the expansion of America when they're going west, right?

[20 : 09] Now, for some of us who know history or maybe you don't, there was a lot of traveling by wagon that was happening. And how treacherous it must have been just for a few families.

Just imagine that amount of people, that amount of items to be accounted for in something in a vision that God had provided.

And these basins, these bowls, and these sensors were all used for the rebuilding of the temple. Again, a 500 plus mile journey. 40,000 people.

I'm not even going on about the weights or the monetary value about this, but that's quite a journey. And so in all of this, we can see that God worked, let's go to that next slide.

God worked his divine plan for his people to come out of exile and to come together to rebuild the temple. We see that it is God who works in the king's spirit.

[21 : 10] Cyrus made that proclamation and from this proclamation came a spiritual awakening, a renewal, and a revival, so to speak, in the hearts of so many people.

You know this next week? We're going to go over those 40,000 people who embarked on this 500 mile journey. It's the power of families coming together, but that'll be for next week.

Just as God had provided the vision for Cyrus the king and the people of God, God provides us new life. He provides us direction and clarity and he transforms us from the inside out.

Not only in our individual lives, but God is the God of renewal. There is transformation that will happen when you believe in him and you trust and obey in the Lord.

And you'll also see revival and renewal. Let us pray for this to happen in our church and in our community. And I want you to consider how has God shown the transformative power in your own life?

[22 : 18] Maybe you know someone that has come to the Lord and you've seen a complete transformation in their life. That is the God that we worship. That is the God that we serve. God continues to speak to us today and his power still works through so many lives.

Let's go to that next slide. It says growing in faith. These are part of the lessons on the second page here, right? Because there's lessons here and there's application action steps that we can have for what we're learning here in Ezra.

Grow in Christ from milk to solid food. Be encouraged to live out your faith every day. And just a little side note, these are not in order. Okay? Someone's like, oh, you got a step by step process.

These are things for you to consider to reflect on. I encourage for you to pray for clarity and guidance from the Lord. Begin first and foremost if you are not a Christian to have that relationship with Jesus Christ and to be on a path of becoming the man or the woman that God wants you to be.

Be open, open the Scriptures and listen to the call that God has for your life. Do you really think that God would want this Bible to be on a shelf collecting dust?

[23 : 37] I think it's Charles Spurgeon that once said that those, I'm paraphrasing it, if those my Spurgeon friends that really love that theologian.

If you have a beaten up Bible, very often you have someone who's really taken care of by the Lord, right? Means the idea is that continually opening the word of God and studying it and reading it and allowing for God to transform your life, the wear and tear of Scripture, right?

How many of you have an old Bible that might be falling apart? That you've read it and you've studied it and you've seen how God, when you remember when it was brand new or maybe when it was given to you.

I have a Bible that was from the 1940s and the cover came off and I had to have it rebound because I didn't want the rest of it to fall apart.

But it goes to show you that there was that wear and tear in that Bible. And I love it because there's just a lot of reference verses and cross connections and maps on there.

[24 : 47] I love those kind of study Bibles. But again, be open and listen to the call that God has for your life. God wants you to open his word, learn and grow, right?

It's trusting in God. That's the most important, but obeying as well. Listen to the word of God, grow and move from milk to solid food of the word.

And as you grow in your faith, there is a call for you to act upon your faith, to be a doer and not just a hearer of the word, right? Sharing in your faith with other.

Let people know about your testimony. Serve in the local church and be a voice in the community for Christ. One thing I appreciate about this church is how so many people are active in the community.

Being a light of Christ for others through leadership. And how you serve that is uniquely up to you and how God has called and equipped you.

[25 : 46] We go to that next slide. The role of the Holy Spirit, the spirit stirs hearts for revival. Pray for his work in leaders and in believers. Let us remember that it is the Holy Spirit who stirred the spirit, right?

The heart of the King to make a proclamation. Consider that this was a Gentile King. He was not Jewish, but yet he was still prophesied about in Scripture.

And he did so much good in the eyes of God. Can you imagine if someone who wasn't a believer made a proclamation?

I'm trying to think of a modern day connection, right? If a, I don't know, let's say an atheist leader made a call to build a church and you're like, Why? Why?

But yet that's happening. God can still work through the Gentile. That's the lesson there, right? God can work through the Gentile and the Jew. God can work through whoever he wishes.

[26 : 45] If we're going through a dry season in our life or if there's moral decline that's happening in our culture, that doesn't happen to us, does it? We should still pray that just as Daniel prayed to the Lord for renewal and restoration of God's people, we should be in constant prayer.

And by the way, that was sarcasm. Of course, there is moral decline that's happening. Okay. We too should pray that the Holy Spirit will stir the spirit, the hearts, the minds of those leaders, the politicians, those who serve on school boards, whatever it is, the chief of police, those who serve in the fire department, whatever it is to make a greater impact for Christ, those who serve in government positions in Oregon, in Idaho, and in this nation.

Let us pray for renewal in this land, for restoration, for repentance, right? The changing of the mind, metanoia, to change your mind and revival to happen in this land.

And this stirring of the Holy Spirit is crucial because it allows for God to work through the hearts of leaders and everyday people.

Because at the end of the day, what matters is that God works in and through your life. Let us never forget that God uses everyday people, ordinary people, for extraordinary purposes.

[28 : 11] It is God's intention that all will be saved by believing in Him. Believe in the Lord and be saved. And let us be on fire for the Lord in His Word.

Let us follow in the footsteps of Christ by being a beacon of hope for others. We go to that next slide. You have the support of the church and the community.

We are stronger when we are together, united in Christ. We learned today that in Ezra, that the community came together.

There were some people whose spirits were stirred and some that may not have been. It may be discouraging to hear about those who might not have had that awakening.

But there was still the coming together and contributing for the rebuilding of the temple. Much like how we, we may not have that spiritual awakening, but we can still contribute to the cause of Christ.

[29 : 11] If your heart hasn't been stirred, you can pray that God will stir your heart. But also for all of us, let us think about the idea of our time and our talent and our treasure.

There is great importance in the collaboration, right? Us working together as the body of Christ for greater impact. There is collaboration and community support.

We see that in Ezra, the community came together and provided the resources for the building of the temple. And in the same way, when it comes to the local body and the church, we should do the same.

Be encouraged to find ways to connect with those in the community. And hear God's call to support the mission and the vision of the local church. And here at Ontario Community Church, our mission is encouraging, equipping and engaging lives for Christ.

That first point encouraging is to encourage people to first and foremost have a relationship with the Lord. And a place where they belong in the local body of Christ.

[30 : 20] Where they're a part of something bigger than themselves. We equip people to read and study the Bible and learn what it means to be a Christian. And thirdly, we engage the community through serving both the local church and the community.

It is a balance between what happens in the church walls, but also what happens within the community. That's why in your notes, you'll always see our mission statement encouraging, equipping and engaging lives for Christ.

And I encourage you, encourage you that you should ask yourself, how can you support your brothers and sisters in Christ, the local body, and how can you serve the community?

We certainly are stronger when we are together, when we work together. Because we can do such great things together in the name of Jesus Christ.

And then go to that next slide, restoration and renewal, that Christ restores us just like the vessels in Ezra. The transferring from being in a temple of gods and goddesses and being transferred over into the right kingdom.

[31 : 31] What a great representation of being in the domain of darkness. That's so, oh, I don't like that word, right? Into the kingdom of light. We learned about restoration and renewal and we see that Cyrus returned the stolen vessels.

There was this going from this awful place where it didn't belong to its rightful place. It is a powerful representation of the gospel, right?

That how Christ works with us human vessels. It's almost, it sounds terrible to be called a vessel, but scripture does show that we are filled with something, right?

Are you filled with the Holy Spirit? And I want you to further think about another verse that scripture talks a great deal about how God is the potter.

And we are the clay. How many of you have done pottery before? Right? You're literally molding something together. And there's constantly work that's being done to shape the vessel, so to speak.

[32 : 36] And that's how God works in our lives. We may not always see all of the movements that are happening in our own lives. You have to think God continues to work in our lives.

He doesn't stop. For our entire lives, we continue to be molded by him. That's just a wonderful thing for us to keep in mind. Going from that domain of darkness to being transferred into the kingdom of light.

And how do we do this? Well, let us go to that next, the simple gospel message. It's to believe in the Lord and be saved. Believe in the death, the burial, and the resurrection.

This is what you call the simple gospel message. That is why it's so important to believe in Jesus Christ first as the savior of the world. And in being a believer, that is the beginning of your new life in Christ.

It is critical to understand that when it comes to salvation, again, believe in the death, burial, and resurrection according to the Scriptures. You'll hear me say many times, and I put it on these notes, believe in the Lord and be saved.

[33 : 50] If you want to understand the simplicity of the gospel, go to the 1 Corinthians 15, 1-4. If you ever wish to share the gospel message in a simple manner, turn to those verses.

Explain how Jesus died for our sins, right? That he was buried in on the third day. He rose again to fulfill the Scriptures. And that our God is powerful.

I mean, thinking about the idea, who do you know has been resurrected from the dead? Do you know anybody? Because when we talk about Jesus Christ, we're talking about something that is remarkable, a miracle happening.

That Jesus Christ conquered death itself. And so God keeps his promises and he fulfills the prophecies of his word. This is just as what we've seen with Cyrus being prophesied about.

Our foundation is in Christ. Our God is constant. He doesn't change. Our God is light. And our God is good. And again, God desires that everyone is saved.

[34 : 59] That is why it is our responsibility to share in the gospel message with others. God has entrusted us to share in the gospel and the words of our testimony, to share the truth about Jesus Christ and to be that light of the darkness.

I encourage for all of you to embrace the restoration, right? And the salvation that comes from Jesus Christ. Believe in the Lord first and be saved.

Let God work in and through your life. Let God heal you and restore you and renew you. It's a process. It doesn't happen. Salvation happens like that.

But when we're talking restoration and renewal, growing in Christ, it's a lifelong thing. If you're a new believer, make a commitment today to allow God to continue to work in your life.

And consider how we are like those vessels that God is the potter and we are the clay. Then we have on the next slide biblical stewardship. It is recognizing that everything is a gift from God.

[36 : 07] And just as there is this counting of all the vessels, take inventory of your time and your talent and your treasure. Manage it all for the glory of God.

We've learned from this wonderful set of verses in Ezra about the meticulous counting and the preparation for the transporting of the vessels. This demonstrates the importance. It's one of the many examples of stewardship.

God has given us everything. And it's not unfortunately look, it's not all about money.

It's about taking an inventory of all that you have been given and asking yourself the question, what can I give to the Lord? How you answer that question will vary from person to person.

For some, you may have a lot of time. For others, you may have a lot of talents. For some, you may have a lot of, you may have all three. It varies from person to person.

[37 : 13] It's managing all resources. Everything that God has given. Do you realize that every day that you have been given here on this earth is but a gift?

I mean, I always find it very hard to find that I'll never get today again. That is why we must live today for the glory of God.

However you do that, that is between you and the Lord. And I encourage you, follow what the word says. We must be intentional with managing all that God has given to us.

And I want to make it very clear. I'm not saying, let's give more money. No, I'm saying take inventory of all that you've been given. And perhaps this is a call for you.

Maybe you need to do a re-inventory and do another counting. We are to engage lives for Christ through service. Ask yourself that question.

[38 : 08] How can you give to the Lord? And we do this because God's given us everything. Maybe God is stirring your heart to give of your time.

Maybe it's to give of your talents. Maybe it's to give of your treasure. Only you can answer that. Every contribution no matter what it is though.

Just like how there was the rebuilding of the temple. When we're talking about the local body, the building up of the church. It all matters in the eyes of God.

It's not a salvation thing. It's after salvation, right? We're saved by grace through faith so that we do good in the name of Christ.

And so this comes with this next question, a famous question. What action steps can I take? What can I do knowing all of this information? Well the first thing is stewardship.

[39 : 07] Like I was saying, taking inventory. I can't emphasize that enough. Your time, your talent and your treasure decide where or how you can give to the Lord. Right? Consider the idea of stewardship and be faithful for everything that you've been given.

Sometimes when you take that inventory, you actually come to appreciate all that God's given to you. A good example that I like to think of is there's an activity that sometimes youth ministry does of writing a list that everything God has given to you.

Your friends, your family, the food that you have to eat. It could be something as simple as that. Starting there at least. And appreciating what God's given to you.

And then ask yourself, what can I do for the Lord? The second thing is, and these are not in order, is trusting in the Lord. That God is in control. Know that God is in control.

Know that God is faithful. And that God is constant and God is good. He is sovereign. When I say he is constant, it means that he is consistent.

[40 : 13] How often do we change? We change all the time. And I'm not just talking about the clothes that we wear. Are you the same person that you were a year ago? Are you the same person that you were 10 years ago?

And I'm not talking about like personality changes. I'm talking about how you are learning and growing. But God remains the same yesterday, today, and forever. God can even use non-believers or people whose spirit hasn't been stirred for his purpose.

And the next one is commit to Christ's mission. Love God, love others, make disciples, right? Baptize believers and ask God for your own specific direction.

And what your role is in the body of Christ, and that even extends to how you can be a voice to your family and to the community. It continues with that.

Love God and love others. We have the Great Commission. We have the Great Commandment. And dedicate yourself as a believer to God's mission. Maybe you feel a specific calling.

[41 : 20] Maybe God's pulling at your shirt, so to speak, to do something that is specific. And I'm convinced that every single one of us, right, God loves you first and foremost.

And he has a plan and a purpose for you. What God has called one person may be very different than the next person. Of course, God's calling is going to be in line with Scripture.

God's not going to call you to do something evil, but to do something that is good. So make a commitment to the mission of Christ, but also the mission and vision of the local church and the community.

And next we have relying or rely on the Holy Spirit. Seek the Spirit strength and guidance. Let him stir your heart for God's glory. It's the power of the Holy Spirit.

Have you felt the stirring of your spirit? Have you felt the Holy Spirit, the filling of the Holy Spirit? Maybe you need, maybe, I know that sounds kind of funny.

[42 : 22] Maybe we all need to be stirred up a little bit, right? But really, maybe we need to be reminded of who Christ is. Maybe we need that stirring in our life. I almost think of like mixing a fruit punch or something, right?

When you're stirring a drink together, right? Our spirits being stirred, right? And let there be an awakening. It is the Holy Spirit who stirs heart and is the source, right?

Part of the source to do great things for the glory of God. And the one thing that I want you to think about, let's go to that next slide. As we're coming to the close from today, I want you to think that it is the same God that brings restoration and revival at the time of Ezra.

He brings restoration, renewal, and revival to our own lives, to our own church, to our friends and to our families, to this nation and to marriages.

Let us be reminded that it is God. He continues to speak to us today through His Word. God is constantly at work. God continues to stir hearts.

[43 : 35] God continues to provide vision for our lives. And God calls for us to participate in the Great Commission and the Great Commandment, but also when it comes to the local body as well.

We are all parts of the body of Christ and together we function as a team, right? We may have...it's important for us. We are stronger together.

We are better when we are together. Let us respond with faithfulness, with unity in Christ, and let us be committed to God. Let us ask God that our hearts will be stirred, that there will be an awakening.

Let us be encouraged to take inventory and steward all that we have been given. Let us encourage one another and support one another. That's one of the beautiful things about being in a church is that you help one another.

You encourage one another. You know how many places you can go and experience discouragement? You don't have to go very far. Scroll on Facebook for like 10 minutes, maybe less than that.

[44 : 47] Turn on the news for a little bit. It's full of discouragement, but here we're talking about renewal and restoration and the inner working of the Holy Spirit.

That's something that the world does not have to offer, because not only is it us helping each other out, it's allowing for God to work in and through our lives.

There's something beautiful about the body of Christ, right? That we are coming together. We are encouraging people to make that decision for Christ. We are like a spiritual family, and that we're there for one another, that we are loving one another just as Christ has for us.

And it is together that we build up the church. It is through God that together we can see revival and restoration and renewal in our lives.

Let us pray that God will stir our hearts for transformation in our lives, but also in our marriages, also in our families, in our church, in our nation, and in the world.

[45 : 56] May we rise up, let there be a spiritual awakening, and let us fulfill the mission and vision that God has for us. Let's pray together.

And Heavenly Father, we thank you for the wisdom and truth that is found in your Word today. We're grateful for the lessons that we have learned. For this book of Ezra is full of wisdom and connectedness.

We're thankful for your faithfulness and how you stir our spirits, our hearts, and our minds to follow you. Lord, we ask that there will be an awakening and that there will be revival and restoration in our own lives, but also let it continue in our families, in our marriages, in our church, in our country, and throughout the world.

Let us be vessels of your love and your grace in the world. And as we close in this final song, may we take to heart the story of Ezra.

May we take to heart this message of how you worked in all of these people. May we be good stewards of our time, our talent, and our treasure. May we use it for your glory and even give back just a little bit.

[47 : 13] You give us everything and you encourage us to give a little. May we give a lot. May we be good stewards of our time and talent and treasure. Father, we pray for unity and love in our church and our community.

We pray for protection. We pray that instead of division within the church, that there will be unity. And that through unity, we can do great things in the name of Jesus Christ.

We ask, Father, that you will stir our hearts. You'll renew our minds and you'll transform our lives so that we can exhibit your love and truth to those around us.

We say all of this in the name of Jesus Christ, who is the way, the truth, and the life. And we all stay together. Amen. Thank you for tuning in to the Ontario Community Church sermon podcast.

For more about our church and how you can get involved or support our mission, please visit ontariocommunitychurch.org. May God's blessings be with you.