

# Rebuilding the people - confession & repentance

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[0:00] What could separate us now? What a wonderful name it is What a wonderful name it is The name of Jesus Christ my King What a wonderful name it is And nothing compares to this What a wonderful name it is The name of Jesus What a wonderful name it is The name of Jesus Tell them how faithful he is How wonderful he is So long

I count on you For death could not hold you The veil tore before you You silenced the boast of sin and grave Now the heavens are roaring The praise of your glory For you are raised to life again You have no rival You have no evil Now and forever God you will wait For yours is the kingdom Yours is the glory Yours is the glory Yours is the name

Of the Lord For your name What a powerful name it is What a powerful name it is The name of Jesus Christ my King What a powerful name it is Nothing can stand against What a powerful name it is The name of Jesus You have no rival You have no evil Now and forever Now and forever God you reign Yours is the kingdom Yours is the kingdom Yours is the glory Yours is the glory Yours is the name What a powerful name it is What a powerful name it is

What a powerful name it is The name of Jesus Christ my King What a powerful name it is Nothing can stand against What a powerful name it is Nothing can sympathize with this velocity, and to after a show He will waitatoon 4 Of the kingdom Genesis 1 Amen As it is COROT, in search, and to after a show paradise, and to after a show You have no licence Set to end Up to 4 Judges 2 16 0 13 37 36 37 38 39 38 39 40 40 40 The name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus.

[4:56] The name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. My sin. The name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus.

[6:32] The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus.

The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus.

Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus. The name of Jesus.

j Oakley. Ask the earth. The name of Jesus. If. Whatever may come. Or make.

I'm so brave. The page shall be side And the clouds be rolled back As a scroll The charm shall resound And the Lord shall descend Even so, it is well with my soul It is well, it is well With my soul It is well, it is well With my soul It is well

[8:25] With my soul It is well, it is well With my soul It is well, it is well With my soul It is well, it is well With my soul With my soul With my soul

With my soul With my soul Good morning everybody

Welcome to Union Baptist Church Welcome to our service today Our time to celebrate together It is so good to see you all And to be in this place To gather together To come to our Lord And to worship Well, it has been a really exciting week There has been lots going on Here in the church building I would like to draw your attention To our church bulletin The This Week Sheet With its new

look We send that out by email During the week So if you do not receive that And would like to Please talk to one of us afterwards And we will make sure That you get that We have a lot of people We have a lot of people We have had lots of things Starting and restarting In the last week You would have seen A little update there On the video Of our young people What they have been up to And what is coming up for them Also we have seen This week We have had a restart Of Cubs and Scouts and Beavers In our building on Mondays We have had Face to Faith That is a thing On Wednesday mornings For people to explore What the Christian faith is about As we look at Mark's Gospel together And the Babies and Toddlers group On Thursday mornings That restarted And that was really great

To see that again And WOW is restarting This afternoon That is really, really exciting Yay And that is this afternoon And also We have We have Joel with us Who is our ministry trainee Here he is He is playing guitar And we are going to hear A bit more from him Later So that is wonderful Our children and young people Are with us in the service For the first part of the service And we will pray for you Before you go out later on And we will let you know When that is And parents If you have not already Registered your children You can do so In the information room As you take your children Through later on We are continuing our series Today on rebuilding The church As we look at the books Of Ezra and Nehemiah And today our theme Is rebuilding the people As we prepare to worship Let's come to God In prayer Let's pray to him Lord we come To you And we welcome you To come and build Today Build among us Build us Your people

As we share together As your children Build our obedience To you As we study your word Build our passion For you As we worship We pray this In Jesus name Amen Well I invite you To stand As we sing to God Our praise From the highest of heights And our musicians Are going to lead us From the highest of heights To the depths of the sea Creations Revealing your majesty From the colors of fall

[14:09] To the fragrance of spring Every creature unique in the song that he sings All-exclaiming Indescribable, uncontainable You place the stars in the sky And you know that by name You are amazing God All-powerful, untamable All-struggly fall to our knees As we humbly proclaim You are amazing God Who has told every lightning bolt Where it should go Who has seen heavenly storehouses Layden with snow

Who imagined the sun And give source to its light Yet conceals it to bring us The coolness of night None can fathom Indescribable, uncontainable You place the stars in the sky And you know them by name You are amazing God All-powerful, untamable All-struggly fall to our knees As we humbly proclaim You are amazing God You are amazing God You are amazing God Incomparable, unchangeable

You are amazing God Incomparable, unchangeable You are amazing God Indescribable, uncontainable You place the stars in the sky You place the stars in the sky And you know them by name You are amazing God You are amazing God You are amazing God Incomparable, unchangeable You see the depths of my heart And you love me the same You are amazing God You are amazing God Cool, he wore that down Right, this is the all-age engagement

Now, normally I would say This is what we're going to talk about But today we've got a bit of a drama And I'm not going to spoil it for you I want you to figure out What we're talking about So, I'll pop this on here John, do you mind if I just Move this backwards a little bit Thank you I'm just leaving this cake here, okay It's for the light group Who are meeting here this evening So please don't touch it, okay Got it Cake Here Eat it No, no Don't eat it It's for later Oh, okay Sure thing, yeah Okay Hmm Sure is a good-looking cake But, you know I wonder It really would be a shame If it turned out to be A really disgusting cake You know what I think for the sake of the light group I'd better give it a taste What are you doing?

I literally just said Don't eat it It's for later Hmm I'm just testing it To make sure that it's okay to eat Of course it's going to be tasty It's not just any chocolate cake It's an M&S; chocolate cake Don't eat any more You've already done enough damage Sorry, of course Yep, you're right Yep, you're right Sorry Yep, sorry What happened again?

[18:44] Oh, that's good You've done it again Done what? You're eating the cake No, I'm not Yes, you are I can see fresh crumbs Around your mouth Don't you eat it?

Yes, I can It's in your beard No, it's not Look I'm putting this on the shelf I don't want you to have That cake anymore Okay? Alright Alright I'm sorry Alright I won't happen again Oops Uh Yeah, let's be Yeah Oli Yes, Sam?

It happened again You weren't sorry at all I was I did say sorry, didn't I? You said sorry But you didn't mean sorry Now look at the state of this There's no cake for the light group I'm sorry Really? Yeah, I am Really? Yeah Yeah I know I shouldn't have eaten Any of the cake And I pretty much ate it all Um I need to sort myself out I can't go around eating Other people's cakes anymore You mean you've done this before?

About two or three About two or three times? Two or three times? This week? This week? Oli This is not okay You really do need to sort yourself out Alright Okay Alright I know I'm sorry Alright First thing I'll buy a new cake for the light group Then I'll talk to Malcolm About my life around I think you're going to need More than Malcolm for this You're definitely going to need God's help Are you sure?

[20:45] I mean That sounds a bit unnecessary Look If God can get the nation of Israel To turn from their sinful ways And to come back to him He can certainly stop you From eating other people's cakes Brilliant Thank you very much Oli And Sam For helping us to To think about What true confession really is And we'll be thinking about that A bit more later on In the service So in the passage today The people of Israel Are reminded How God expected them to live And they saw that they failed So let's remind ourselves Of God's simple command To love him With all our heart And with all our soul And with all our mind And with all our strength now As we worship him With this action song Let's stand and sing together Love the Lord

Love the Lord Love the Lord your God With all your heart With all your heart With all your soul With all your mind And with all your strength Love the Lord your heart With all our heart With all your heart With all your heart With all your soul With all your mind With all your mind With all your strength Love the Lord Love the Lord Love the Lord your God With all your heart With all your heart With all your soul With all your mind And with all your strength I will serve the Lord Love the Lord Love the Lord With all my heart With all your heart With all your soul With all your mind And with all your strength I will serve the Lord Love the Lord hepat■■ with all your heart Hope the Lord With all my heart With all my soul With all your mind With all our mindute alone Love the Lord Love the Lord Love the Lord empresa

With all my heart With all my heart With all my soul With all my mind With all my mind With all my strength With all my heart With all my heart strength I will serve the Lord with all my heart, with all my soul, with all my mind and with all my strength I will love you, I will love you, I will praise you I will praise you I will serve you, I will serve you, I will trust you, Lord with all my soul with all my mind with all my strength with all my heart with all my soul with all my mind with all my strength I will love you, Lord with all my heart with all my soul with all my mind

And with all my strength I will love you Lord with all my heart With all my soul, with all my mind And with all my strength Thank you, do please sit down.

Now I'd like to welcome officially Joel, who started with us last week on Monday as our ministry trainee. It's been great to have him with us. So I've learned a few things about Joel in this last week.

[24:40] I've learned that Joel likes to eat raw runner beans. Which is a bit weird. But I've not tried it so I'm not really in a position to knock it yet I guess. Don't knock it until you try it. Fair enough, fair enough.

But Joel, can you tell us, I know many people here know you, but can you just introduce yourself, tell us a little bit about you and your strange dietary habits. Maybe not. So yeah, other than eating raw beans, my name is Joel.

I'm the new ministry trainee here. I'm a recent graduate from the University of Surrey in electronic engineering. So quite different to what I'm doing at the moment. But it's nice to have a bit of a change. I've grown up in a Christian household all my life with my lovely family over here.

Welcome to your family. Lovely family. And also my fiancée, Joanna. Welcome to Joanna. Yeah, I'm really looking forward to spending the year here with you this year and learning a bit about ministry, hopefully developing some skills.

Andrew asked me to sum up what I'm most excited about being here to do this year. And Malcolm suggested that I read this book. I think maybe the church is reading it or will be reading it.

[25:55] Yeah, I recommend it read. Yeah, thank you for the plug there. Yes, there you go. And I've only read the first chapter this week. But it's talking about belonging to a church. And I think that kind of sums up what I'm excited to do this year.

I'm excited to belong to the church, to get to know you all, and to serve as part of the church.

Brilliant. Well, we're really excited to have Joel here. He's going to be serving in lots and lots of different areas, getting experience and using the gifts that God has given him.

And growing in that time as well. So let's pray for him as we welcome him at the start of this year.

Father God, we thank you so much for calling Joel into this role and calling him to come and serve here.

And I thank you for his desire and his excitement to belong to this church as he serves. And I pray that you would help us in that as members of this church, that we would help Joel and his family to feel so welcome here, to support him, to encourage him, to build him up, Lord.

And we just really look forward to what you're going to do through Joel in this year. As he serves you, as he grows, as he studies, Lord, we pray that you would do great things through Joel and anoint him and fill him with your Holy Spirit to do this work for you.

[27:02] In Jesus' name, amen. Brilliant. Well, thank you, Joel. In a moment, the children and young people are going to go out to their groups. And I'd like to ask you to pray for them. But let's just have a recap, because last week we relaunched the children and young people's groups.

And maybe we can just test each other here. I don't know if anyone can remember what the new names of the groups are. The easy way to remember, think of an electronic ant. So E-A-N-T.

So E stands for? Explorers. Explorers. Well done. That's for noughts to threes. And then A stands for? Adventurers. Adventurers. Well done. That's for threes to fives.

N stands for? Navigators. Brilliant. Which is for fives to eights, roughly. And finally, T is for?

Trailblazers. Trailblazers. Oh, well done, Joel.

You've been studying this. Trailblazers for eights to elevens. And then we have the next group for secondary, age year seven to nine. It's called?

[28:00] Salt. And for year ten to thirteen, it's called? Blind. Well done. Joel, would you pray for those groups before they go out? Lord, we thank you for the young people and the children that we have to be a part of the church family here.

And we pray that as they go out for their groups, you'll be speaking to them, that you'll be equipping their leaders to communicate your love for them. And yeah, that we have a really good time, lots of fun and lots of learning.

Amen. Amen. Thank you very much. I'd like to invite the rest of the musicians up who are going to lead us in our next song. And as we sing this, I'm going to invite the leaders with the children, young people to go out to their groups.

If you haven't already registered for a group, bring your parents and you can get registered in the information room just here. Let's stand and we're going to sing about how much we need God to rebuild us.

Who, oh Lord, could save themselves? Who, oh Lord, could save themselves?

[29:21] Their own soul could heal? Their own soul could heal. Our shame was deeper than the sea.

Your grace is deep and still. Who, oh Lord, could save themselves?

Their own soul could heal. Our shame was deeper than the sea.

Your grace is deeper still. And you alone can rescue. You alone can save.

You alone can lift us from the grave. You came down to find us. Let us out of debt.

[30:17] To you alone belongs the highest place. To you alone belongs the highest place. To you alone belongs the highest place. war and drop.

And you alone is the highest place. Lord boom and see the highest place. To you alone comes in the highest place.

far away your love went further still yes your love goes further still and you alone can rescue you alone can save you alone can lift us from the grave you came down to find us let us out of death to you alone belongs the highest friend to you alone belongs the highest friend lift up our eyes lift up our eyes you're the giver of life lift up our eyes lift up our eyes you're the giver of life spirit lift up our eyes lift up our eyes You're the giver of life

We lift up our eyes Lift up our eyes You're the giver of life You alone can rescue You alone can save You alone can lift us From the grave You came down to find us Let us out of debt To you alone belongs The highest praise To you alone belongs The highest praise To you alone belongs The highest praise Thank you Lord Jesus You are so worthy

And to you belongs The highest praise Amen Do please sit down As we think about Rebuilding as people We're all aware At this time of the The strain that the pandemic And other pressures of life Has put on our mental health And at this point I'd like to invite Rachel and Dawn To share about our new course Which is going to be able To help us to think About struggles that most of us Face at some point With our mental health Thanks Thank you Andrew Well I really believe That God cares about Our mental wellbeing Just as much As every part of us So I'm really excited About the sanctuary course It's an eight week course For anyone who'd like To explore Some issues of Wellbeing Mental wellbeing Within the context of faith And the church It's not just for people Who are currently struggling With their mental wellbeing But also for people Who come alongside others And maybe want to be Better equipped Our hope is that It would lead to Greater honesty And openness

[33:44] About issues of Mental wellbeing And greater sensitivity And compassion To those who are struggling We are limiting it To ten kind of people So if we get lots of people We may sort of Run it more than once We're running the course In person Not on Zoom Here at the Hub On Tuesday afternoons 2.30 till 4 o'clock Starting on Tuesday The 5th of October We've opted for afternoons Because that was very much The preference Of those who've expressed An interest so far But if you're interested And you could only Manage an evening Do let us know Because then we can Try and schedule An evening course Sometime in the new year Hopefully the The film that's about To follow Should give you A flavour of the Sanctuary material But if you'd like To find out more Dawn and I will be Outside the front Of the church On the right hand side After the service And we'd love to Talk more about it To you Thanks Now if you would have

Looked at me In 1981 You would have said That was a wonderful year I'm married to A wonderful woman We've just adopted Our first son I'm pastoring A church in West Los Angeles That is growing Very fast But inside I'm dying It's getting darker And darker And darker Objectively There's no reason Why I'd want to die I didn't want to die So badly I should feel fulfilled I should feel like I'm living a life Of purpose I should feel happy Most of the time I felt nothing Instead of opening up And sharing my struggles I wore the mask I didn't want anyone To see that I was struggling When I would tell people No I definitely Have a problem I definitely struggle With bipolar People didn't believe me Even some of my best friends Thought no your life Looks good And you look really good And no I think that That's not the case So often there's stigma Around mental health issues Particularly in the church We've come up with a story About how it's something To carry shame about That we don't have enough faith We don't have enough Of the Holy Spirit in us If you have a mental health challenge People will say all sorts Of strange things about you Pull your socks up Get yourself together And you wouldn't say that To somebody who's dying of cancer As a pastor You feel the pressure From the congregation Let's keep things light Let's not ever have any lament Let's be happy clappy All the time And in fact 40% of the Psalms are lament We need a place for that In the life of the church My mom found me crying On the floor And she said Lisa are you okay I'm not okay Thoughts were going Through my mind Like why are you here What's the point I made a decision To take my life I was left in this Desolation of depression And darkness That lasted for years There were times When I'd be driving alone And just yelling at God Wondering why a loving God Would allow anything like this Why are we so surprised

When we find somebody In the church Who's suffering Because in truth We all suffer Every single one of us When you can't hope Then it's possible For other people To hope on your behalf It manifests itself Even in the darkness To at least have the possibility Of the knowledge That people

are with you We get to walk Toward Jesus And met in a gracious space Where people say I hear you And I'm willing To walk with you And we believe As we walk Toward Jesus together He will meet us In this stuff We can't tell you What that will look like But boy are we happy To journey with you I'm very grateful To Rachel and Dawn For facilitating that course And I do encourage you To go and talk to them About that after the service If you're at all interested In that I'd now like to invite Colin Who's going to lead us In our intercessions Thanks Colin 68 years ago

A 10 year old boy Realised That he needed To be forgiven And for that to happen He needed to be sorry For the things He had done wrong And in his own Simple way He confessed And repented of his sin And asked Jesus To be his saviour In some ways That was no big deal Because it was so simple Just to ask God Into his life But In other ways It was the biggest deal Of his young life 68 years on And God is still His closest friend There's an old song That used to be sung With the lines He walks with me He talks with me And he tells me I am his own Through the years And despite the ups and downs That life has thrown at him Often needing confession And repentance He looks back With gratitude That God has been With him all the way And will be with him Until the day He meets Jesus Face to face For he knows Who holds tomorrow And the blood of Jesus

[38:58] Saved me And his spirit Raised me to a new life Why have I said that Before I pray? Because if God Can do it for me He can do it For all of our young people That was just left us And he can do it For each and every one of you And everyone that's at home Listening to us So let's pray I want to carry on With that theme Lord so many of us here Are grateful That we've come to know you In a very real And a very personal way We thank you That we've known That our sins Have been forgiven And we've been cleansed And made whole And raised to a Completely new life And our desire Is that others Will not miss out On a life Live with you Father we think again Particularly of our young people Lord we thank you For every one of them We also thank you For those who are leading And teaching them today We ask that your spirit Will give to them Wisdom Inspiration Enthusiasm And the ability

To make your word live For the young people Lord again We ask that you will give them Receptive minds Open their eyes And minds To recognise What you can do for them We pray that you'll save them From wasting their lives On what this world offers Open their eyes To see the exciting life They can have With you On board And for those amongst Their young people Lord already know you We ask you To keep them strong Deal with their Every doubt That they may have And help them Through the many temptations That they will face We pray for Ben In his role As a young youth pastor We pray Lord That you'll give him The joy of leading Many young people To you And we pray that too Lord For each and every Of the leaders Of our young people We pray too Lord For the parents Here Who have young children We pray Lord That you'll help them As they bring up Their children

May your spirit Give them Also the wisdom Inspiration And enthusiasm That they need To talk about you As well as deal With those difficult Questions and situations That every parent faces For the parents here Lord Who have grown up children Help their homes To be a place Where their children To come Can come For help and advice And be a place Where children recognise This home is where God's presence is Lord we ask again For wisdom For those with children Grandchildren And great grandchildren Who don't know you Lord for Christian School teachers We pray That they too Will be given wisdom As they deal with So many difficult Situations and issues May your life Shine through them To every pupil And to their colleagues For Christian leaders Of organisations For young people

Such as Cubs Beavers Scouts Lord we pray For the leaders And young people In those scouts The ones that are here At Union Baptist Church We ask again That your spirit Will present Will be present Every time they meet Help the leaders To show the kind Of care and love That you have for them Just through the ordinary And perhaps The exciting activities That these young people do We pray they'll come To realise That you can be with them Again in every aspect Of their lives Lord there is so much To pray for That we as a church Would ask for your Continued guidance In all that we do As a church Today we ask For continued guidance Regarding what we have Called our Living Stones project Be with us As we seek Your way forward Be with the Contractor Beaks As they look at And develop And design the project And the cost Above all Help us not to forget That

it's not This building

Or anything that man Designs that are Living Stones Your living stones Are us Your people And all those In the future Who come to know you May your church The real living stones Continue to multiply And Lord we ask That we may be Part of that Again Lord we would pray For wow this afternoon We commend them to you The leaders And those who will attend We pray your blessing Upon them Again that your Spirit will be known And your spirit Will make himself Known to them For the sanctuary course That we've just been Talking We've just been hearing about From Dawn and Rachel We pray for them As they lead it And we pray Lord For all those who will attend We pray Lord That you will By your spirit Move upon these people Bless them and help them And Lord we know That mental health Can be such a problem And such an issue Lord we ask That anyone here In this church Anyone that we know Or associated with We pray Lord

[43:59] That you'll be with them And give us the wisdom And help Lord That we too may need To be of assistance Lord hear our prayers Because we ask them In that wonderful Wonderful name of Jesus And we pray again That many many Will find you As their Lord And their own Personal saviour May I say If there's someone Here today Who doesn't know Jesus as their saviour Or at home Listening to us You just don't know What you're missing God bless you Thank you very much Colin As part of our Regular worship When we gather together We think about How we give to God Out of all aspects Of our life Including our Financial resources That God has blessed us with And we do invite you To consider how you can Give as part of your Worship to the church That enables us To carry out our Ministry to young people And in the community And around the world And there's information On our website

About how you can do that As we think about Our whole life offerings To God And worship to him Let's pray And give thanks For the gifts That we present to God Father God We thank you That you have blessed us Abundantly In so many ways And Lord As we present Our gifts to you However they're given Electronically Throughout the week And throughout the month We commit these to you As part of our worship As part of our offering To you Out of gratitude To what you've done for us And we just pray That the resources That we present to you Could be used by you To build your kingdom And to do your work In Jesus name Amen I'd like to invite Mary Who's going to bring us Our Bible reading now Thanks Mary This morning's reading Is in two parts The first one Is from Ezra 9 1-7 And the second

Is Ezra 10 1-17 Ezra's prayer About intermarriage After these things Had been done The leaders came to me And said The people of Israel Including the priests And the leave lights Have not kept themselves Separate From the neighbouring peoples With their detestable practices Like those of the Canaanites Hittites Perizzites Jebusites Ammonites Moabites Egyptians And Amorites They have taken Some of their daughters As wives for themselves And their sons And have mingled The holy race With the people around them And the leaders And officials Have led the way In this unfaithfulness When I heard this I tore my tunic And cloak Pulled hair From my head And beard And sat down Appalled

Then everyone Who trembled At the words Of the God of Israel Gathered around me Because of this Unfaithfulness Of the exiles And I sat there Appalled Until the evening sacrifice Then at the evening sacrifice I rose from my self-abasement With my tunic And cloak torn And fell on my knees With my hands Spread out to the Lord My God And prayed I am too ashamed And disgraced My God To lift up my face To you Because our sins Are higher than our heads And our guilt Has reached to the heavens From the days Of our ancestors Until now Our guilt Has been great Because of our sins We and our kings And our priests Have been subjected To the sword And captivity To pillage And humiliation At the hand Of foreign kings As it is today Ezra 10

The people's confession Of sin While Ezra was praying And confessing Weeping And throwing himself down Before the house of God A large crowd of Israelites Men Women And children Gathered around him They too Wept bitterly Then Shekariah Son of Jehia One of the descendants Of Elam Said to Ezra We have been unfaithful To our God By marrying Marrying Foreign women From the peoples Around us But in spite of this There is still hope For Israel Now let us make a covenant Before our God To send away All these women And their children In accordance With the counsel Of my Lord And of those who fear The commands Of our God Let it be done According to

the law Rise up This matter

[49:04] Is in your hands We will support you So take courage And do it So Ezra Rose up And put the leading Priests And Levites And all Israel Under oath To do what Had been suggested And they took The oath Then Ezra Withdrew From before The house of God And went To the room Of Jehohanan Son of Eliashib While he was there He ate No food And drank No water Because he Continued to mourn Over the unfaithfulness Of the exiles A proclamation Was then issued Throughout Judah And Jerusalem For all the exiles To assemble In Jerusalem Anyone who failed To appear Within three days Would forfeit All his property In accordance With the decision Of the officials And elders And would himself Be expelled From the assembly Of the exiles

Within the three days All the men Of Judah And Benjamin Had gathered In Jerusalem And on the Twentieth day Of the nine month All the people Were sitting In the square Before the house Of God Greatly distressed By the occasion And because Of the rain Then Ezra The priest Stood up And said to them You have been Unfaithful You have married Foreign women Adding to Israel's Guilt Now honour The Lord The God Of your ancestors And do his will Separate yourselves From the people Around you And from your Foreign wives The whole assembly Responded with a Loud voice You are right We must do As you say But there are Many people here And it is the Rainy season So we cannot Stand outside Besides This matter Cannot be taken Care of In a day or two Because we have Sinned greatly In this thing Let our officials Act for the Whole assembly Then let everyone In our towns Who has married A foreign woman Come at a set time Along with the elders And judges Of each town Until the fierce Anger of our God In this matter Is turned away From us Only Jonathan Son of Asahel And Jehaziah Son of Tikvar Supported by Meshalom And Shabbatai The Levite Opposed this So the exiles Did as was Proposed Ezra the priest Selected men Who were family Heads One from each Family division And all of them Designated by name On the first day Of the tenth month They sat down To investigate The cases And by the first day Of the first month They finished dealing

With all the men Who had married Foreign women Thank you very much Mary So we're continuing Our series On rebuilding the church In the books In the books Of Nehemiah And Ezra And we'll see In these books How God Providentially Restores his people So that they can Worship and honour him Last week Malcolm shared On Ezra chapters One to four About the exiles The first of the exiles Returning to Jerusalem To start rebuilding The temple Many years after that In chapter seven Ezra arrives In Jerusalem And he's got three Tasks Firstly To ensure The proper use Of funding Provided by the Persian empire Secondly To manage The transfer Of gifts From the Persian treasury To the temple And thirdly To ensure That the law Of God Was correctly Taught And obeyed Throughout the region And this leads us To the start Of chapter nine And the message To the Lord And the message For today The people Let me pray As we come To God's word Father God We thank you For your word To us We pray That we would Recognise today What you're saying To us Lord And I pray That you would Give us the strength To respond to you I pray that you Would work among us As we study your word Together By the power Of your Holy Spirit In Jesus name Amen So in Ezra nine Verse one Ezra is informed That some of the people Of Israel Including some of the Leaders Some of the Levites Have started relationships With people From the surrounding nations And the background To why this was A serious issue Is in Deuteronomy Chapter seven This was before The Israelites Entered the promised land And they were given Strict instructions Not to marry With the other Various nations Who lived there Because those people [54:06] Would turn Them away from God Towards other idols Now it's important To note that There was actually No law that prohibits All intermarriage Some of the biggest names In the Old Testament Had racially mixed marriages Like Joseph and Moses And in fact The lineage of Jesus We read in the start Of Matthew's gospel He gives us a list Of all Jesus ancestors And amongst that There's mixed marriages Like Ruth and Boaz Where a foreigner Had married into Israel And had converted To the faith Of the Israelites So let's just be clear God is not against Mixed race marriages In fact The Bible shows us That history is moving Towards a day When every tribe And nation Will come together In the ultimate Mixed race

marriage Of Jesus To his church So it was nothing To do with racial purity But it was everything To do with spiritual purity The principle was Don't get involved With people That will draw you Away from God Now as explained

In the home group notes The language in this text Implies that these relationships Were actually likely To be cohabitation Not marriage But we need to be careful When we read this Old Testament text With this specific Issue on marriage To apply it In the light Of the New Testament As new covenant believers We are warned against Being yoked together With unbelievers As Paul says In 2 Corinthians 6 Verse 14 Christians are told Not to marry non-Christians Because there is A very big danger That your non-believing spouse Will draw you away From faithfulness to God That said Christians who find themselves Married to unbelievers Should stay with them Praying for them And serving them As it says In 1 Peter chapter 3 What we see In these chapters of Ezra Was a unique situation Israel had a calling To be a light To the nations And this sin Of intermarrying With idol worshippers Was in danger Of snuffing out That light So what was at stake Was the very survival Of a definable And distinct people

Of God Israel were called To be a distinct Community And to be different From the nations Around them Well as we Apply this passage I want us to focus On Ezra's response To sin And to think about How we respond To any sin Which can draw us Away from faithfulness To God Just cast your mind Back if you can To March 2020 As reports came in About this new Disease coronavirus In Wuhan in China We've been told For several weeks To wash our hands Regularly And everything Would be okay But a moment Came for our government Shortly before Announcing the national Lockdown When they woke up To the seriousness Of the problem And perhaps you may Well remember A time in that period When you woke up To the seriousness Of that problem And realised that Well coronavirus Is a really big deal Well Ezra had That moment In chapter 9 Verse 3 When he realised The gravity Of the situation So chapter 9

Verse 3 When I heard this I tore my tunic And cloak And pulled hair From my head And beard And sat down Appalled Ezra's response Is very dramatic It's one of Distress With the tearing Of his clothes It's one of grief With the pulling Of his hair This is exactly How people Of that culture Express their grief And bereavement I can neither imagine Pulling hair From my head Or from my beard But perhaps others Ollie, Ben Wilson Might be able to Imagine that A bit better But this was Terrible news If somebody Has ever told you Some terrible news They might well Have suggested to you That you sit down first And Ezra sits down Under the weight Of this terrible news About the extent Of the unfaithfulness Of God's people And then in verses 5 to 7 Ezra turns to God In prayer Ezra very powerfully Expressed his shame And disgrace to God And he paints A very graphic Picture of the extent

Of the nation's sin He says Our sins are higher Than our heads That's a picture Of drowning In sin Now Ezra Remember Has not been Personally involved In this disobedience And yet he confesses Using the word We And he corporately Describes our sin And our guilt He stands together With the whole people There's no such thing Actually as private sin Because all sin Has an impact On the community And therefore There must be A community response To sin Well in verses 8 to 9 Ezra acknowledges God's grace That despite Their disobedience He has shown Kindness to them He's not deserted His people Amazingly He has providentially Worked for their good Even by using Foreign kings He's enabled them To rebuild the temple And he's protected them In that In verse 10 Ezra acknowledges The disobedience Of the nation That they deserve To be punished That they need To change And then we move on

[59:11] To chapter 10 And in verse 1 As Ezra's praying The wake up moment Starts to happen To others Around him As they realise The gravity Of what's been happening And this is what Tends to happen With sin Whatever sin it is It seems great To begin with And we just carry on Gratifying ourselves But then we reach A moment And our eyes Are open To what's really Going on Like the prodigal son Who was having A great time Spending his father's Inheritance For him the lights Came on When he found himself Tempted by food He was feeding To the dirty pigs In verse 2 We see Shekariah Speaks up And he says We've been unfaithful To our God By marrying foreign women From the people around us But in spite of this There is still hope For Israel Now he also Acknowledges their sin And he

suggests The steps that should be Taken to address Their sin He says in verse 3 Let us make a covenant

Before our God To send away All these women And their children In accordance With the counsel Of my Lord And of those Who fear the commands Of our God Let it be done According to the law Rise up This matter is in your hands We will support you So take courage And do it He pledges support For Ezra here In verse 4 Now we don't know Exactly who Shekariah is To me it sounds like A good name for a pop star But it seems like He's some kind of Spokesman for the people But how great is it To have people Like Shekariah Who support leaders When they take on The really difficult task Of dealing with sin In the church He says Take courage And we need that Don't we We need to act With courage We need to act Courageously When it comes to Dealing with sin Because it's a very Difficult thing To do So we're told In verse 6 That Ezra Withdrawing with sin And had time By himself And fasted Before the next steps Were carried out Now this is partially Because he was Still mourning Deeply upset

By the sins Of the people But actually I wonder If part of the fasting Was in order to Draw strength From God For the difficult work Of rebuilding the people Which lay ahead In verse 7 Every citizen Was called to Jerusalem It's thought That there would have been About 40,000 people there There was a somber mood In people's hearts And that was reflected In the weather As it was raining We're told And then in verse 10 Ezra stood up And explained Very clearly The sin of the people And he didn't just Leave it there And kind of hope That it would go away He explained the action Required to deal with it That people had to leave That which was putting them Away from the Lord And turn back To him And the people On hearing this Felt convicted of their sin And they responded In verse 12 The whole assembly Responded with a loud voice You are right We must do As you say It's a very Powerful And transforming thing When people publicly

Repent And I'm actually Fascinated by the next verse Which shows The practical reality Of what they were Dealing with Verse 13 But there are many people here And it is the rainy season So we cannot stand outside Besides This matter Cannot be taken care of In a day or two Because we have sinned Greatly in this thing This was an acknowledgement That this can't be rushed It takes time It needs a careful process It can't be done When everyone stood outside Getting damp in the rain And they went on To set out a process Of carefully Dealing with this Now verse 15 Now verse 15 points out That only four people Opposed this action Now out of 40,000 people That's a tiny minority So the people were united In agreeing to put things right Verses 16 to 17 explains That the cases were all worked through And the whole process took About three months They didn't rush Real lives are complex

Repentance happens in a moment It's decisive But it takes time To unravel the complexities Of sin Beware of people Who are quick Or abrupt In pointing out sin But are not willing To spend time With people Lovingly supporting them And helping them To unravel the complex Implications There's always a journey To go on To get from where we are To where God wants us To be Here in Ezra 9 and 10 There was a particular situation With a particular journey To deal with that Which is tied up In the historical And cultural context But wherever we are There's a journey To go on To rid our lives Of sin As church Having acknowledged And confessed our sin We walk with each other Lovingly As brothers and sisters On that journey Verse 18 to 44 Gives a list of All those who had entered Forbidden relationships I'm sure Mary is grateful That that wasn't included In part of her Reading

[64:14] There's actually 110 Names there So 110 Cases Now that's actually A tiny proportion Tiny number in proportion To the population If you do the maths Out of 40,000 It's about 0.3% But the point is That this affected Everyone We've learned Through the COVID pandemic It's not just about How the virus affects me I can think that I'm okay But I could be passing On that virus To other people And that's why We've had to Take measures Wearing masks And social distancing In a similar way Sin is not A purely private thing Although our society Would like to think That it is It affects everyone In some way The implications Of unconfessed sin For the church Are serious Jesus says In his letter In Revelation 2 Verse 5 If you continue In your disobedience I'll remove the lampstand The implication is that The Holy Spirit Will depart Well what do we learn From Ezra's approach About what to do

About sin In these chapters I'd like to suggest That there's four stages To this The first one Is that we need To recognise sin For what it is And to call it out We need to wake up To the seriousness Of the problem What wakes us As with Ezra Was coming back To God's word And putting ourselves Under its authority Secondly We should grieve sin You know We fail to grasp The extent To which our disobedience Hurts God Instead we belittle Our sin Or we intellectualise it Or we try to ignore it The church doesn't Openly grieve sin As we should Instead we look For loopholes In God's words We find ways Not to take it seriously We think of our sin As trivial And inconsequential I recently heard A preacher say We've never committed A small sin Because we've never Offended a small God When we realise

How we've offended God We should mourn We should grieve We shouldn't mourn With worldly sorrow But we should mourn In the light of Matthew 5 verse 4 Which says Blessed are those Who mourn For they will be comforted Our sin Gives us Every reason To mourn But Jesus Gives us Every reason To trust That he will Help us Lead us Into light And bring us Comfort Thirdly We need to Confess our sin Without excuse To the God Of mercy We need to take Corporate responsibility For the sins Of the church So we don't Talk about them We say we And we say us And as we Do that We remember That we know One who Stands with us Who takes The weight Of our sin As Ezra Did But in a Greater way We think of The one who Stands with us Who grieved For our sins And took them On himself In his own Body When he died On a cross For us We need to Acknowledge our Sin and not Minimize it But we can

Call on the God who is Both just And merciful His justice Means that Sin against him Must be punished But his mercy Means that he Doesn't treat us As our sins Deserve And the place Where justice And mercy Meet is at The foot Of the cross Where Jesus Took the punishment For us all We have no Reason to boast When it comes To sin Because we're All guilty But we have Every reason To trust In Jesus Saving work Fourthly Is the step That most Often gets Missed It's radical Action Because repentance Is not just Saying sorry The word Translated repent In the New Testament Literally means Turn We need to Turn away From our Sinful actions And turn Towards Obedience In 1982 British Airways Flight 009 Flew into A cloud Of volcanic Ash En route From Australia To Indonesia All four Engines Of this Aeroplane

Caught fire And failed A man called Charles Capelwell And his son Were on that Flight And they first Knew that There was a Problem When they Smelled Smoke In the Cabin The son Looked out Of the Window And saw Flames Coming From the Engine He said To his Father Dad The Engine Is on Fire His Dad Replied You better Pull the Blind Down And pretend It's not Happening Pull the Blind Down And pretend It's not Happening And that's The temptation For us When it Comes to Sin To pull The blind Down And pretend It's not Happening And we Do that A lot Even Often Having Done the First Three Steps Having Woken Up to Sin And recognised The problem Having Grieved Over it And having Confessed There's a Huge temptation To pull The blind Down And ignore It And carry On We must Take radical Action To deal With sin Radical Action Takes Strong Leadership Please pray For your Church leaders In this It takes Courage It means

[69:18] Being decisive But being Willing To make The effort To work Through the Complex Implications As we Saw with Ezra Which Takes Time The good News is That we Don't have To do It Alone The Holy Spirit Gives us Power And courage To deal With our Sin And to Turn Around And we Do it With the Help of Our Christian Community So what About us Where do We need To wake Up What are The sins That we Need to Wake Up to How is The culture Around us Leading us To unfaithfulness To god Maybe the Culture around Us tells us To have an Individualistic Approach To life And that Spills over Into our Worship We seek Worship Which is Gratifying To us Rather than Wanting to Come together To serve Others And to Glorify god Do we Do we To satisfy To satisfy The desires Of our Eyes And fill Ourselves With food And drink And entertain Ourselves With things Which are Not good For us Do we Enter Into Relationships With others That draw Us away From loving God As our

Priority May god Help us To wake Up to Our sin To grieve To confess And to Change I'd like to Invite the Musicians Up now And they're Going to Pray quietly As we spend Some time Responding To god's Word And the Appropriate Response to God's word Is to Is to Confess To confess Where we've Been unfaithful To god Where we've Failed god Where we've Been drawn Away from Him

Let's just Spend a moment In quiet Now as the Musicians Play Lord open  
Our eyes To our Own lives And the Way we Fail to Live up To your Word Lord open Our eyes To  
our Sin We invite You holy Spirit to Speak to Us now Speak to Our hearts In the Quiet To show Us  
where We have Failed You Turn our Hearts to You Lord Let's just Spend this Moment with God  
Confessing in Our hearts Turning to Him Om Thank you.

Lord, we are grieved by the way that we have been unfaithful to you. We have not loved you with all  
our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, with all our mind.

We have committed spiritual adultery to you. We have been unfaithful. We have not taken sin  
seriously. And we recognise that we deserve nothing but punishment.

[73:30] But we're reminded of your mercy and grace. Lord, help us to  
respond correctly to our sin.

To turn to you, but to turn from our sin and to take radical action. Lord, give us courage. Give us  
strength.

Help us to help each other. Help us to walk with each other in this. Holy Spirit, would you change us  
from the inside out? We need you, Lord.

Amen. Let's stand. Let's stand as we sing together.

Let me be as gold.

[74:42] And precious silver. Purify my heart. Let me be as gold.

Pure gold. Pure gold. Divine as gold. My heart's one desire Is to be holy.  
Set apart for you, Lord. I choose to be holy. I choose to be holy. Set apart for you, my Master.  
Ready to do your will. Ready to do your will. Purify my heart.  
Let me be as gold. Let me be as gold. Let me be as gold. And make me holy. Purify my heart.

[76:01] Cleanse me from my sin. Deep within. Refine as fire.

My heart's one desire. My heart's one desire. Is to be holy.  
Set apart for you, Lord. I choose to be holy. Set apart for you, my Master.  
Ready to do your will. Ready to do your will.  
Enter apart for you, Lord. Yes, Lord. That is our desire. To be holy, Lord. To be made holy. Yeah,  
Lord. To be made holy. We recognize, Lord, that we can't do that by ourselves, Lord.

[77:04] We need you, and we thank you for the cross of Jesus where your  
justice and mercy meets. And we thank you for the mercy you poured out on  
us through the blood of Jesus. and we recognise that only that can free  
us from our sin and allow us to have that relationship with you where we  
are made pure and made holy, Lord.

We thank you for that, Lord, and we turn to you. We turn to the Lord Jesus and recognise his blood.  
Let's continue to worship. Let's continue to worship.  
Let's continue to worship.  
Let's continue to worship.

All other bount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Nothing can force in our soul, nothing but the  
blood of Jesus.

[79:25] Not all food that I have done, nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white as snow.

No other bount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
This is all my hope and peace, nothing but the blood of Jesus.  
This is all my righteousness, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow that makes me  
white as snow.

No other bount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Oh, precious is the flow that makes me white  
as snow.

[80:51] No other bount I know, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Nothing  
but the blood of Jesus.

Amen. Thank you, Lord. As we remain standing, let's pray. This is all my hope and peace, nothing  
but the blood of Jesus.  
This is all my righteousness, nothing but the blood of Jesus. Thank you, Jesus, for bringing us  
hope, peace and righteousness.  
Give us courage to walk in obedience this week. Bless us as we shine your light to those around us.  
May they see that we're different because of you.

In your precious name. Amen. Amen. Thank you. Do please sit down. I do hope that you'll be able to join us for an ice lolly at the Eastern Street entrance after the service.

[81:53] If you've got children, if you've got children, young people, do go and find them first. And I'm sure they'll want a nice lolly as well. God bless you. And please, if God has spoken to you, if you felt that God has done something in your heart, please talk to myself or Malcolm or anyone wearing a badge.

We'd love to pray with you. We'd love to pray with you about anything today. Do please stick around so we can support you in that. God bless you and see you soon. God bless you and see you soon.