

8-17-25

INTRO:

TAKE HOME: Revived marriages happen as we cooperate with God's Word & God's Spirit.

THE RESPONSE FROM THE PEOPLE: (10:1-9)

1-4) Ezra wept, confessed and bowed down (Heb - "kept throwing himself down on the ground") - this all hit him hard...

4 initial responses from the people:

Response #1 - they wept over their sin (1). They saw what Ezra did, heard his prayer of desperation and brokenness, and God used it to convict them. They **"...wept very bitterly"** (anguish of heart....their sin stung deep.)

"The sin that rightly troubles us will not ruin us" (Matthew Henry)

NOTE: we need sin to trouble us and hit home hard as well. Sometimes the Spirit convicts us through a message, other times through a prayer...but they all have the same goal - to bring men into cooperation with God! You see, when God wants something to change He will often hit home to one man before changing a whole group! Revival in a life or a marriage starts with one and goes out like a wildfire!

Response #2 - they confessed and owned their sin (2). No excuses. They called it out. Revival always has a confession of sin - to root it out of a life. And yet in that confession, they could still see **hope**. God had been good to them in spite of their own actions.

NOTE: God doesn't show you your sin to push you down in it, but ultimately to lift you up from it. We find hope from our great salvation (Rom. 5:1-2)... hope when we are underneath suffering (Rom. 5:3)... hope coming to us from the Word of God as we read it (Rom. 15:4)... and hope from the Spirit of God to us (Rom. 15:13)

The gospel is good news - it's hope for the hopeless and crushed by sin! Jesus made a way for us to be made new!

Response #3 - they set a new course away from sin (3). Weeping is good, but reform is better... **Shechaniah** put forth a plan, that there would be fruit from the brokenness over sin...a new path to follow..."Put away the sin and let's go back to God's Word as rule over our lives."

NOTE: Setting a new course requires courage, faith, and sacrifice. I can't keep things the same and expect different results. I must get radical with sin and root it out of my life. Then the fruits of godliness will be seen.

SIDE NOTE: divorce was permitted in Israel (Deut. 24:1). But at this time, the men were divorcing their wives for wrong and selfish reasons (Malachi 2:10-16)...they were divorcing their Jewish wives for a heathen one, and God wasn't happy with it!

so too, marriages that are not as God designed it (one man, one woman, for life) are not really marriages in God's eyes and should be annulled if I am following God's plan. (Ex. Father marries a daughter...a son marries a brother...a man marries a rock!)

Response #4 - they encouraged everyone in moving forward together (4). "This is your responsibility" (4). No one forced this, no one manipulated this...because it is my responsibility I must do something about it myself. But to have others **with** me, encouraging me as I move forward is a huge help.

NOTE: when convicted of sin, and confession is made...when a course is set out of it...it can be a scary thing to do. I need to hear from other believers: "I got your back in prayer." "We'll do this together." "God's got good things ahead as we obey His Word."

This is a good response from the people...how would Ezra respond to them?

5-8) Ezra says, "Let's put that in writing." Let's make an oath in front of these witnesses and the Lord that you, and all Israel, will all do what you suggest. And they did.

NOTE: For big changes, write it down. Have a history to go back to. Have witnesses with that oath made.

Now why in v. 6 would Ezra continue to mourn and fast and pray if they had confessed it and were ready to move away from it? Ezra did not know how the rest of the people in Israel would respond. And so he continued to fast and pray that all Israel would join in and truly change direction.

A proclamation from their leaders was put out throughout Israel: "People, drop everything. Emergency meeting in Jerusalem now! You got 3 days to be there or you'll lose your land and be kicked out!" This was serious business!

NOTE: Sometimes leaders encourage gently...other times because of the seriousness of the matter they have to speak firmly.

How would Israel respond?

9) rain or shine they had to be there and they did... "trembling" because of their inward sin & the outward cold. (Ninth month, 20th day = mid December)

NOTE: what a move of the Holy Spirit to Unify them, to Solidify their purpose and to convict all hearts of sin! When God moves good things happen!

THE DIRECTION FROM CORRECTION (10:10-44)

10-14) Ezra once again points out their sin and the direction to take. The people didn't argue about the sinful problem or the direction to take, but pointed out a few concerns and a sensible solution in dealing with things in a timely manner.

First - OBSERVATION:

1) there is a lot of people caught up in this sin (13) and it will take longer than a day or 2 to fix it.

2) it's a season of heavy rain and we are cold.

Second - SOLUTION:

3) Let's appoint a time where people can meet with the leaders of their cities to deal with this adequately & effectively. The leaders had to see if the wives were committed to serving the Lord or following their own pagan ways that they grew up in.

NOTE: the people saw the importance of it...they saw the "season" they were in... and set a time to fix it rightly.

And good leadership listens...

15) you will always have some resistance to change, even if it's Godward move. Why? Because the flesh doesn't want to obey God and take a loss. 2 men said, "Not me. Too radical!" And even 2 Levites (who should have known better) supported them in this.

NOTE: you may have support, but is it in the wrong direction?

16-17) in 10 days they got to it and within 2 months everyone who had done this was seen & questioned. This matter would be dealt with judicially, righteously, and individually - case by case.

18-44). Here is a list of all those who failed in this marriage aspect but upon conviction, did something about it. You see **it's one thing to be sorry for sin, and another to do something about it!** That's radical faith!

These 114 men divorced their pagan wives who refused to put faith in the Lord. It included priests, Levites, singers, and regular Israelites. Even some had children (44) making things even more complicated. (Kids were often put with their mothers in a divorce...and provisions was made for them by the father so that they weren't destitute)

19) 2 things they did in setting this new course back on track with God:

1) A PROMISE was made. "Today I am putting away the sin in my life."

2) A SACRIFICE was given. (Trespass offering - willful sin). "I'm looking to the sacrifice for my sin to clear my wrongdoing."

*NOTE: **when God moves on you about sin you confess it to Him.** You make that promise (vow) - "I have decided to follow Jesus. We are going God's Way in our marriage." ...then you look to the sacrifice for your sin (Jesus on the cross to pay for it all).*

...then you can be free to move forward in new life with Christ.

1 John 1:9. *"If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just and will forgive us our sins and purify us from all unrighteousness."*

Isaiah 1:18 *"Come now, let us settle the matter," says the Lord. "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow; though they are red as crimson, they shall be like wool."*

God longs for revived marriages and lives that walk in accordance with His Word. Marriages & lives that He can bless and use. But He won't force it on us. He wants us to respond by faith to His love, His Word, His work through the cross - then we find what living is all about!

May God revive our hearts, our worship, our walks, & our marriages. That we may see His glory revealed!

PRAY