

Ezra 3 - Excitement Must Turn Into Commitment

Remember they were like those who dreamed...Psa 126:1-6 --- laughter and joy in returning
People can be moved by excitement...But eventually **excitement must turn into commitment**
By Chapter 4 they will meet much **opposition**...only commitment would enable them to endure
Chapter 2 and 3 gives us a glimpse into some of the **commitments that sustained them** - AND US

A Commitment to God's Word

Ezr 2:61-63 NIV And from among the priests: The descendants of Hobaiah, Hakkoz and Barzillai (a man who had married a daughter of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by that name). **(62) These searched for their family records, but they could not find them and so were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. (63) The governor ordered them not to eat any of the most sacred food until there was a priest ministering with the Urim and Thummim.**

The Scripture taught that a man had to be from the tribe of Levi to be a priest

- In all their excitement they did NOT violate what they understood the word of the LORD to be
- They did not allow their personal preference or desire to dictate the outcome
- They gladly submitted to the word of God
- The word of God was held as highest authority

The Bible is unchangeable truth - though we live in a relativistic world

- Psa 33:4 NIV For the word of the LORD is right and true; he is faithful in all he does.
- Psa 119:89-90 NIV Your word, LORD, is eternal; it stands firm in the heavens. Your faithfulness **continues through all generations**; you established the earth, and it endures.

The church needs to be committed to the word of God - it is under attack in our day

- Jas 1:22 NIV Do not merely listen to the word, and so deceive yourselves. Do what it says
- That is your truth and this is my truth
- I know what it says but.....
- That's your interpretation

A Financial Commitment

Ezra 2:68-69 When they arrived at the house of the LORD in Jerusalem, **some of the heads of the families gave freewill offerings toward the rebuilding of the house of God on its site.** (69)

According to their ability they gave to the treasury for this work 61,000 darics of gold, 5,000 minas of silver and 100 priestly garments.

WHEN THEY ARRIVED [SOME] gave freewill offerings...This work would NOT be done without contributions...the same was for the tabernacle of Moses, the Temple of Solomon, and the Church in the book of ACTS - it is TRUE today...ACC is able to do what we do (build an addition, help the people of Guatemala, provide for needs of others, support various missionaries, pay our bills) because some people are Financially Committed...

- Giving was the FIRST order of business -- **WHEN they arrived**
- They gave **FREELY...**
- They gave **ACCORDING to what they had...**

61,000 darics of gold, 5,000 minas of silver

- 1,100 lbs of gold = \$1,323 per oz = \$23,284,800
- 6,000 lbs of silver = 20 per oz = \$1,920,000

Commitment of Unity

Ezr 3:1 NIV When the seventh month came and the Israelites had settled in their towns, the people **assembled together as one in Jerusalem.**

- Jesus' prayer was for unity
 - John 17:11 "that they may be one as we are one"
- Unity of the body - a commitment to work out your issues - to resolve conflict - to reconcile relationship
 - 1Co 1:10 KJV Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; **but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.**
- Unity of purpose - Why has He put you here at ACC? - Lock arms and work as a team to do what He has called us to do.
 - Act 4:32-35 NIV **All the believers were one in heart and mind.**
 - And the multitude of them that believed,... The Gospel, and in Christ, the substance of it; and a multitude they were, for they were now about eight thousand persons. And though their number was so great, they were of one heart and of one soul; there was an entire consent and agreement in doctrine, in matters of faith they were all of one mind and judgment, and there was a perfect harmony in their practice, they all performed the same duties, and observed the same commands and ordinances; and all pursued the same interest, and had the same ends and views; and there was a strict union of their affections to each other; their souls were knit to one another; so that there was, but as it were, one soul in this large body of Christians. Aristotle, being asked what a friend was, answered, one soul dwelling in two bodies (p): and so the Jews say, it is fit and proper that lovers or friends should be , "of one heart, as one man" (q); and such friends and hearty lovers were these.

Psa 133:1 KJV A Song of degrees of David. **Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!**

Commitment of Worship

Ezra 3:2 Then Joshua son of Jozadak and his fellow priests and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel and his associates **began to build the altar of the God of Israel** to sacrifice burnt offerings on it, in **accordance with what is written** in the Law of Moses the man of God. 3 **Despite their fear** of the peoples around them, **they built the altar** on its foundation and sacrificed burnt offerings on it to the LORD, both the morning and evening sacrifices. 4 Then **in accordance with what is written, they celebrated the Festival of Tabernacles** with the **required number of burnt offerings prescribed for**

each day. 5 After that, they presented the regular burnt offerings, the New Moon sacrifices and the sacrifices for all the appointed sacred festivals of the LORD, as well as those brought as freewill offerings to the LORD. 6 On the first day of the seventh month they began to offer burnt offerings to the LORD, though the foundation of the LORD's temple had not yet been laid.

- The worship of God was FIRST --- even before the foundation had been laid yet
- Reaffirming commitment to Word of God ***[In accordance with what is written]***
- Reaffirming a Financial Commitment ***[some brought freewill offerings]***

Commitment of Courage [Despite Their Fear]

- The crippling nature of fear.....**Courage is not the absence of fear**, but rather the judgement that something else is more important than fear.
- 2Co 7:5-6 NIV For when we came into Macedonia, we had no rest, but we were harassed at every turn--conflicts on the outside, ***fears within.*** (6) But God, who comforts the downcast, comforted us by the coming of Titus,
- Eph 6:19-20 NIV Pray also for me, that whenever I speak, ***words may be given me so that I will fearlessly*** make known the mystery of the gospel, (20) for which I am an ambassador in chains. Pray ***that I may declare it fearlessly,*** as I should.
- Joshua FEAR NOT
- Jeremiah FEAR NOT

Commitment to Foundations

7 Then they gave money to the masons and carpenters, and gave food and drink and olive oil to the people of Sidon and Tyre, so that they would bring cedar logs by sea from Lebanon to Joppa, as authorized by Cyrus king of Persia. 8 In the second month of the second year after their arrival at the house of God in Jerusalem, Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Joshua son of Jozadak and the rest of the people (the priests and the Levites and all who had returned from the captivity to Jerusalem) ***began the work.*** They appointed Levites twenty years old and older to supervise the building of the house of the LORD. 9 Joshua and his sons and brothers and Kadmiel and his sons (descendants of Hodaviah) and the sons of Henadad and their sons and brothers--all Levites--joined together in supervising those working on the house of God. 10 ***When the builders laid the foundation*** of the temple of the LORD, the priests in their vestments and with trumpets, and the Levites (the sons of Asaph) with cymbals, took their places to praise the LORD, as prescribed by David king of Israel. 11 With praise and thanksgiving they sang to the LORD: "He is good; his love toward Israel endures forever." ***And all the people gave a great shout of praise to the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid.***

- You can never stress too much importance on foundations
- If the foundations are destroyed what can the righteous do?

Priority of TODAY Living in the Present

12 But many of the older priests and Levites and family heads, who had seen the former temple, wept aloud when they saw the foundation of this temple being laid, while many others shouted for joy. 13 No one could distinguish the sound of the shouts of joy from the sound of weeping, because the people made so much noise. And the sound was heard far away.

Remember they gave \$23 Million for Zerubbabel's temple...by Comparison --- Just in GOLD to build Temple of Solomon they gave (171.5 Billion)

- if 1 block of gold = \$25,000,000 (Zerubbabel's Temple)
- Solomon's Temple had 6,859 blocks of Gold

The glory of the latter house is greater than the former - It is because of HIM not the resources of the people

- Ecc 7:10 NIV Do not say, "Why were the old days better than these?" For it is not wise to ask such questions.
- Hag 2:1-23 NIV (2) "Speak to Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, governor of Judah, to Joshua son of Jozadak, the high priest, and to the remnant of the people. Ask them, (3) 'Who of you is left who saw this house in its former glory? How does it look to you now? Does it not seem to you like nothing? ... (7) and I will fill this house with glory,' says the LORD Almighty. (8) 'The silver is mine and the gold is mine,' declares the LORD Almighty. (9) 'The glory of this present house will be greater than the glory of the former house,' says the LORD Almighty. 'And in this place I will grant peace,' declares the LORD Almighty."

No undertaking or no enterprise can be accomplished without commitment

- We fear commitment -- fear of wrong choice - **keep our options open**
- We fear we can't keep our obligations - **plate is too full**
- **We don't honor our** commitments or finish - John Mark Act 15:37-3
- **Over committed** - you will never have MORE time - are you committed to the right things?
 - I can't come to the cook out (maybe ok)
 - I can't fulfill my obligation to be a Dad - (not OK)
- Find out what we are called to be committed to and DO IT

"What kind of church would my church be, if everyone were just like me?"

Would we be a praying church? An evangelizing church? Would we have to cancel the service every other week? What would the offering be like? Would the church have to shut its doors? Would the missionaries we support be able to do their work? Would we be able to have youth meetings, or a worship team? Or a nursery or Sunday School?

The church cannot exist without commitment

- we are drifting into consumerism
- this cannot be the course of the church of Jesus Christ