

September 28

Zachariah 7 & 8

Ezra 6

All right, well thanks for joining me for the September 28th Accelerator. My name is Chad Reelfs. I serve as an Elder and a Board Member here at Christ Community. Just glad to be back with you for my last accelerator and as you can see, I'm bringing you the accelerator today from Paris. You can see the Eiffel Tower there in the back there – it's pretty amazing. It's really my house. I live here. It's my kitchen. Don't tell anybody.

So exciting to be home and be with you. Today, we are looking at Zachariah Chapter 7 and 8 and Ezra 6. As I thought about this, I know there's a lot of ways that people use these Accelerators. Some people watch the accelerator and then they read or they read and then they watch the accelerator or some people might just watch the accelerator. Regardless of what you do, we're glad that you're here. Hopefully yesterday you really dove in because there was a lot there to cover and to look at and discuss. Today, there are some things here that I just want to highlight some things that really stood out to me and challenged me and hopefully will challenge you.

What we see here, the temple is being rebuilt, and early on it's great because a lot of the leaders and even some of the elders are asking, "Hey, now that Jerusalem is being rebuilt, the temple is being rebuilt do we still have to fast like we did in August to fast about the destruction of Jerusalem?"

And it's interesting, Zachariah really doesn't answer them or God doesn't really answer them and Zachariah's message to them is, "You know what, you're doing the religious activities, but your hearts aren't right. You're still fasting, but you don't have the right attitude. This is so important for us, I think as we go to church and we read the Bible and we worship God, that our attitude is one of true worship. I know for me, it's easy just to go through the motions. And my challenge for you today and for me was, man, as I'm reading God's Word, as I'm going to church, am I really remembering Christ's sacrifice for me and how am I continuing to pursue and to run after Him and to be gracious and make sure that my religious duties don't just become religious duties, but they are ways that are helping me draw closer to God. And that was a great challenge that Zachariah was giving the people. I think it was an encouraging challenge for me as well.

I love as we talk about what true religion is or true religion, Zachariah really laid out for Israel four precepts. One was render true judgment – concern for the less fortunate – those less fortunate than us. And show mercy and compassion was the second one. Jesus told us to let people know that we are Christians by our love. Are we really loving, are we looking for opportunities to show compassion and to show mercy for those around us. Don't oppress the widows, the fatherless and the alien or the poor. I think that's huge for us. I think one of the things that this generation has done a good job on is social justice. And it's important for us to

make sure that we are taking care of the orphans and the widows. That's been a huge challenge for me over the last year. How God has worked me in my life and my wife's life going through the process of adoption. That was just from reading God's word of the importance that there are children out there who need a home and a loving family. That's been really neat how God has walked us through that, and I love how Zachariah is challenging the people of Israel to make sure that that is happening. But not only that – don't think evil of one another – and how are we encouraging one another and pursuing Christ in all that we do. I think even though that was in Zachariah's day, that governs us for how we live today, and it was a huge reminder and a challenge for me that it's not just about my religious duties and going to church and being a good person, but it's really how am I letting Christ live in and through me.

Then the other piece that jumped out to me today is the jealousy of God. When we think about God, we don't always think about God being a jealous God – it's not one of the things that come up, but its holy jealousy – He's so jealous for his people and for holiness. When you look over the years how the people of Israel and just the Jews have been treated. I think Satan stirred up a lot of hatred towards the Jews – we've seen it throughout the years, and God he defends His people. He runs after His people and He protects His people and when His people are attacked, God responds. I think that's a great reminder of the holiness of God in His justice and how He longs to protect us and watch over us and guide and direct us with His holy jealousy that He has for you and I to pursue Him. A great quote says, "When you attack the people of God, you invite a holy God to enter into a jealous rage." I think that is true and was sent out to me.

Another thing in Zachariah at the end of Chapter 8, "Let us go with you because we've have heard God is with you. This is an encouragement to the people because as they were exiles in Babylon coming to rebuild Jerusalem and the temple, and for them – all the pressures and intensity and a lot of times that they were being attacked in many ways to knock them off pace of what God had for them.

It made me think – how many of us out there know what God has called us to do. He's challenging us to do that. It's hard – there are pressures and maybe people telling us no – or we can't do it or it may seem like there are road blocks, but Zachariah in his day was encouraging the people to continue to pursue God because God would rebuild the temple and their city. And God would protect them and the vision that was coming. And it was seen that God was with them and may that be evident of our life today. As God does great things in our lives that God people look into our lives and they see that God is with us – God is with us - because of our love and our compassion in how we live our lives. That also was a huge challenge to me and it reminds me of Galatians 6:9 – "Do not become weary doing good for at the proper time; you will reap a harvest if you don't give up."

May I challenge you today that if you're willing to give up and throw in the towel – maybe in the ministries that you've been doing is bogging you down and just life in

general – not to give up. If you're doing what God has called you to do, continue with it – you will reap a harvest and that is an encouragement as well.

Then finally, we read in Ezra 6, we see the time of Darius, the projects were allowed to proceed and not only did he help the Jews, but he also helped the Egyptians in rebuilding. We read in Ezra 6, it was a time of celebration. The Passover begins again around April 21st 1515 BC and you begin to see the celebration that erupts as Ezra is challenging them to just enjoy God, be a part of the celebration and we begin to see at the end the work of Zerubbabel, Haggai and Zachariah – as the temple is completed in a great celebration.

So my encouragement to you today is that you would pursue God – that you would run after Him with all that you have and just be grateful that we have a God that loves you, pursues you and wants to use you to do great things.

Have a great day. Thanks for tuning in. Tune in tomorrow. Bye.