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**WHEN PROMISES COME TRUE,
BUT WE STILL ARE LONGING FOR MORE**

Ezra 3:13

July 28, 2024

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MESSAGE NOTES

When promises come true, but we still are longing for more.

Incline Your ear, O Lord, and answer me, for I am poor and needy. Preserve my life, for I am godly; save Your servant, who trusts in You—You are my God. — Psalm 86:1 – 2 (ESV)

For I know the plans I have for you, declares the Lord, plans for welfare and not for evil, to give you a future and a hope. Then you will call upon Me and come and pray to Me, and I will hear you. You will seek Me and find Me, when you seek Me with all your heart. — Jeremiah 29:11 – 13 (ESV)

"For thus says the Lord: When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will visit you, and I will fulfill to you My promise and bring you back to this place." — Jeremiah 29:10 (ESV)

And when the builders laid the foundation of the temple of the Lord, the priests in their vestments came forward with trumpets, and the Levites, the sons of Asaph, with cymbals, to praise the Lord, according to the directions of David king of Israel. And they sang responsively, praising and giving thanks to the Lord, "For He is good, for His steadfast love endures forever toward Israel." And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the Lord, because the foundation of the house of the Lord was laid. — Ezra 3:10 – 11 (ESV)

But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people's weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away. — Ezra 3:12 – 13 (ESV)

What do you do when the current reality seems bleak or frustrating, yet the future holds so much possibility?

When the unseen future will not be a reality for us, are we willing to work towards that reality for others?

And Ezra came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. For on the first day of the first month he began to go up from Babylonia, and on the first day of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, for the good hand of his God was on him. For Ezra had set his heart to study the Law of the Lord, and to do it and to teach his statutes and rules in Israel. — Ezra 7:8 – 10 (ESV)

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I make a decree that anyone of the people of Israel or their priests or Levites in my kingdom, who freely offers to go to Jerusalem, may go with you. For you are sent by the king and his seven counselors to make inquiries about Judah and Jerusalem according to the Law of your God, which is in your hand, ...

— Ezra 7:13 – 14 (ESV)

“And you, Ezra, according to the wisdom of your God that is in your hand, appoint magistrates and judges who may judge all the people in the province Beyond the River, all such as know the laws of your God. And those who do not know them, you shall teach. Whoever will not obey the law of your God and the law of the king, let judgment be strictly executed on him, whether for death or for banishment or for confiscation of his goods or for imprisonment.” Blessed be the Lord, the God of our fathers, who put such a thing as this into the heart of the king, to beautify the house of the Lord that is in Jerusalem, and who extended to me his steadfast love before the king and his counselors, and before all the king's mighty officers. I took courage, for the hand of the Lord my God was on me, and I gathered leading men from Israel to go up with me. — Ezra 7:25 – 28 (ESV)

When promises come true, but we are still left longing for more... are we longing for the Kingdom, or for our own desires?

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Chronology of Ezra

Event	Year	Reference
Cyrus king of Persia captures Babylon	539 B.C.	Dan. 5:30-31
First year of King Cyrus; issues proclamation freeing Jewish exiles to return	538-537	Ezra 1:1-4
Jewish exiles, led by Sheshbazzar, return from Babylon to Jerusalem	537?	Ezra 1:11
Altar rebuilt	537	Ezra 3:1-2
Temple rebuilding begins	536	Ezra 3:8
Adversaries oppose the rebuilding	536-530	Ezra 4:1-5
Temple rebuilding ceases	530-520	Ezra 4:24
Temple rebuilding resumes (2nd year of Darius)	520	Ezra 5:2 ; compare Hag. 1:14
Temple construction completed (6th year of Darius)	516	Ezra 6:15
Ezra departs from Babylon to Jerusalem (arrives in 7th year of Artaxerxes)	458	Ezra 7:6-9
Men of Judah and Benjamin assemble at Jerusalem	458	Ezra 10:9
Officials conduct three-month investigation	458-457	Ezra 10:16-17

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DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

- What is a promise you made to someone else and are so thankful you kept?
- Ezra 3 and Ezra 7 are two key chapters in this book. What do you notice about the leadership of Zerubbabel and Ezra in these chapters?
- This question was asked during the message: *“How do we interact with moments in our lives when there is a possibility for the future that we may never experience, and yet a longing for change with how current reality is?”* How would you respond to this question?
- Jesus calls us to live out the Kingdom of Heaven here on earth. What are ways you are living out the Kingdom of Heaven in your life?
- This statement was made during the message: *“When we interact with both the conviction of the Holy Spirit, Jesus with us, and the Bible as written, do we choose to trust it?”* How would you respond to this question?