


NOTICED AND TREASURED

Ezra 2:1 And these are the sons of the province who went up out of the captivity, of those who had been exiled, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had exiled to Babylon. And these came again to Jerusalem and Judah, each one to his city. 2 These are the ones who came with Zerubbabel: Jeshua, Nehemiah, Seraiah, Reelaiah, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispar, Bigvai, Rehum, Baanah. This is the number of the men of the people of the sons of Israel: 3 The sons of Parosh, two thousand one hundred and seventy-two. 4 The sons of Shephatiah, three hundred and seventy-two. 5 The sons of Arah, seven hundred and seventy-five. 6 The sons of Pahath-moab, of the sons of Jeshua and Joab, two thousand eight hundred and twelve.

This past week, we celebrated another great human achievement in the exploration of the universe with the launch and successful splashdown of Artemis II.

 Reid Wiseman – Commander


 Victor Glover – Pilot


 Christina Koch – Mission Specialist


 Jeremy Hansen – Mission Specialist (from Canadian Space Agency)


 First Crewed Artemis Mission


Successfully carried astronauts beyond low Earth orbit for the first time since Apollo. Traveled 1.1 million kms

 Lunar Flyby Accomplished Executed a crewed mission around the Moon, validating deep-space navigation and trajectory.

 Orion Spacecraft Tested with Crew Demonstrated life-support systems, safety, and onboard operations in real space conditions.

 Re-entry & Recovery Validated Proved safe high-speed re-entry into Earth's atmosphere and successful ocean splashdown.

 Deep Space Systems Verified Tested communication, propulsion, and navigation systems over long-distance space travel.

 Foundation for Artemis III Paved the way for the next mission aiming to land humans back on the Moon.

Some facts

Re-entry into the Earth's atmosphere at 40 000km/h (11km/sec)

The heat shield managed temperatures of roughly 3,000°C

That type of achievement will draw a great deal of attention worldwide and yes it did – people viewed this event from 03 Apr till 11 Apr, exceeding 10 million concurrent livestream viewers.

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This morning, I want to talk to you about a matter related to this issue. As part of our series titled **FROM RUBBLE TO RADIANCE PRT 7**, I want to talk to you on the subject **NOTICED AND TREASURED**.

- The way you view God determines how your life will play out; it determines what you can believe Him for and receive ultimately.
- Today's teaching is about recalibrating your view and perception of God. Some of you are not making progress in certain areas of your life because you have an unhealthy view of God.
- There is an aspect of God that we need to rediscover as individuals and as a church. That view is this: **It is God's nature to notice and pay attention to His people.**
- In moments of your hiddenness, of silence, and stagnation, the devil will whisper in your ears that you have been forgotten by God.
- **But the Holy Spirit wants to remind you that God pays attention to you, even when it feels like you are forgotten.**
- Guess what, this is the message we find in Ezra 2. On the surface, one would be tempted to skip such chapters because what does a list of strange names and people have to do with me?
- Hold on, hold on for a moment, everything written in the Bible was inspired by the Holy Spirit for the edification and equipping of God's people.
- So, just listen, and you will see the beauty of this portion of the scriptures.
- **Where we have read, we see God's people volunteering to go back home, and this was not a small feat at all.**

Ezra 2:1...And these came again to Jerusalem and Judah, each one to his city.

- They were going to the land which God had given to their fathers, to the scenes of the most sacred and stirring events in their national history.
- Their return to Jerusalem was God's act of restoration of identity and religious worship. If your life is in a state of captivity, be of good courage because in the same way that God restored Israel, He will also restore you.
- A time comes when you will smile again, a time comes when you will be free from pain and discomfort.

Joel 2:25 (NKJ) "So I will restore to you the years that the swarming locust has eaten, The crawling locust, The consuming locust, And the chewing locust, My great army which I sent among you. 26 You shall eat in plenty and be satisfied, And praise the name of the Lord your God, Who has dealt wondrously with you; And My people shall never be put to shame.

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- How does God restore the years that you have lost? In one year, the Lord can promote you in such a way that you gain all that you lost over many years.
- In whatever state you find yourself in, be reminded that it is not a big deal for the Lord to restore your fortunes – *Psalm 126:1 When the LORD restored the captives of Zion, we were like dreamers.*
- Your biggest restoration was your salvation: **The salvation of Jesus Christ restores man to his true condition and to his lost inheritance.**
- Yes, they had experienced God's restoration, but as usual, life happened in the course of time. The enemies of God's people did not stop tormenting them just because they had come back home.
- **Yes, you are born again, but the devil will not stop harassing you. The deeper you go with the things of God, the harder the enemy presses against you.**
- The surrounding nations continued pushing false worship among God's people, resulting in moments of discouragement.
- Over time, God's people felt overwhelmed, and discouragement started to kick in, and that is when God decided to raise Ezra to write to them.
- Ezra writes this book, 80 years after the first return of the exiles, and this is about 2 generations after the fact.
- **God inspires Ezra to document everyone who left Babylon and it is important that we appreciate what this meant to the Jews in Jerusalem.**
- Why was it important for this record to be compiled? **The significance of the fact of the record.**

1. You are personally known by God

- It is good to be known by your community, it is good to be known by powerful and influential politicians, but there is nothing that surpasses being known by God, the creator of the heavens and the earth.
- In their state of discouragement and almost becoming a non-entity, the Lord comes and reminds His people that He knew them by name.
- There is a divine record of you - The name of every true believer in Jesus Christ is "written in the Lamb's book of life" (Rev 21:27).
- When you feel forgotten and no one is paying attention to your situation, you must be reminded that God knows you by name.

Luke 10:20 Yet do not rejoice in this, that the evil spirits are subject to you, rather rejoice because your names are written in Heaven.

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- Your troubles on earth will not remove your name from the book of life, so even if your life does not come together on this side, **it will be together in the afterlife because you are in the Lamb's book of life.**
- The Bible says, the Lord knows them that are His – 2Timothy 2:19.
- God knows the details of your life, even details that you do not pay attention to.

Luke 12: 6 Are not five sparrows sold for two pennies? Yet not one of them is forgotten by God. 7And even the very hairs of your head are all numbered. So do not be afraid; you are worth more than many sparrows.

- This is how much God pays attention to you. If He cares about the hairs of your head, surely, He cares about your health, He cares about your studies, He cares about your marriage.
- In creating a list of people who left Babylon, it was to remind His people that they are not forgotten and that He notices them.
- The parable of the 99 and 1 sheep is another example of how God notices change in the state of His flock. He constantly looks across the sheep to see if all are accounted for.
- He leaves the 99 to search for the lost 1.

Matthew 18: 12 What do you think? If a man has a hundred sheep and one of them goes astray, will he not leave the ninety-nine on the hills and go out to search for the one that is lost? 13And if he finds it, truly I tell you, he rejoices more over that one sheep than over the ninety-nine that did not go astray

- In other words, the list in Ezra is a reminder of how precious God's people are in His sight.
- Let me remind you of your value in the eyes of God:

Isaiah 49: 15"Can a woman forget her nursing child, or lack compassion for the son of her womb? Even if she could forget, I will not forget you! 16Behold, I have inscribed you on the palms of My hands; your walls are ever before Me.

- You have heard people saying there is nothing like a mother's love, but here we see something greater than a mother's love, it is called God's remembrance of His people.
- **The day you became a believer, He didn't just write your name in the Lamb's book of life, but also in His palm – there is nothing more intimate and precious than this.**

2. God's attention brings abundant life

- Some people will notice you so that you can meet their needs – they run to you not because they want to give you something, but because they want to receive from you.
- When God remembers you, it is to show you kindness.
- God was remembering the selfless act of these families when they left behind the comfort of Babylon to return to their own land for the purpose of rebuilding the Temple.

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- They acted very religiously and courageously, and to their praise, their names were recorded.
- **God will notice you for several reasons; the first one being that you accepted His son as your Lord.** You don't have to be part of Artemis II crew to be noticed by the Lord – because of your love for Jesus, heaven takes note of you.
- When Hagar was running away from her mistress Sarah with Ishmael, she found herself in desert of Beersheba and having run out of water, she placed her son a distance away so that she avoids watching him die. God noticed her and visited her and opened her eyes to see a well by her side – Genesis 21. God noticed her
- God is jealous over you, for your well-being and preservation. Today is not a day to ask where God is, but to be reminded that God notices you.
- **Secondly, because you serve Him faithfully**
- We often forget our service to the Lord, both the great and the small.

Matthew 10: 42 And if anyone gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones who is my disciple, truly I tell you, that person will certainly not lose their reward.”

- God notices even the smallest acts of love and ministry, and He cherishes those who do that.

Hebrews 6:10 For God is not unjust. He will not forget your work and the love you have shown for His name as you have ministered to the saints and continue to do so.

- On the day of remembrance, you will experience God's visitation that brings restoration and meaning to life.

Malachi 3:16 16 Then those who feared the LORD talked with each other, and the LORD listened and heard. A scroll of remembrance was written in his presence concerning those who feared the LORD and honored his name. 17 “On the day when I act,” says the LORD Almighty, “they will be my treasured possession. I will spare them, just as a father has compassion and spares his son who serves him.