

# Sermon Outline

## EZRA'S PRAYER (AFTER THE TEMPLE HAS BEEN REBUILT) | Geoff Lin

Bible Reading: Ezra 9:1-15 (p.679)

*Great God: you are gracious and kind, and you punish us less than our sins deserve  
We confess with shame that despite your lavish blessings we keep turning away from you  
Thank you for Jesus, whose death takes away our sin and makes us alive with Him  
Please change us by your Holy Spirit so we might honour you with our bodies.  
In the name of Christ, and for His sake, wherever we are in your world, Amen.*

Great Prayers in the Bible ...		
23/11	David's prayer (after a cancelled building project)	2 Sam 7:1-29
30/11	Solomon's prayer (at the opening of the Temple)	2 Chr 6:12-42
7/12	Daniel's prayer (after the Temple has been destroyed)	Dan 9:1-19
14/12	Ezra's prayer (after the Temple has been rebuilt)	Ezra 9:1-15
21/12	Our Lord's kingdom-building prayer	Mt 6:9-13

### 1. The story so far (aka the OT in a nutshell)

- Abraham (God's foundational promise)
- >> **Moses** (rescue from slavery in Egypt)
  - >> **Joshua** (finally into the Promised Land)
  - >> **Judges** (ongoing rebellion against God)
  - >> **David** (establishing the monarchy)
  - >> **Solomon** (building the Temple)
  - >> **Daniel** (the Babylonian Exile)
  - >> **Ezra** (return and rebuild)

Ezra 3:12 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.

Ezra 7:6 ... He was a teacher well versed in the Law of Moses, which the LORD, the God of Israel, had given.

Ezra 7:19 **Deliver to the God of Jerusalem all the articles entrusted to you for worship in the temple of your God.** 20 And anything else needed for the temple of your God that you are responsible to supply, you may provide from the royal treasury. 21 Now I, King Artaxerxes, decree that all the treasurers of Trans-Euphrates are to provide with diligence whatever Ezra the priest, the teacher of the Law of the God of heaven, may ask of you— 22 up to a hundred talents of silver, a hundred cors of wheat, a hundred baths of wine, a hundred baths of olive oil, and salt without limit. 23 **Whatever the God of heaven has prescribed, let it be done with diligence for the temple of the God of heaven. Why should his wrath fall on the realm of the king and of his sons?**

## 2. Ezra's prayer

- vv1-2 Is this a prohibition against inter-racial marriage?
- vv3-5 Ezra is appalled ...
- vv6-7 "Our sins are higher than our heads and our guilt has reached to the heavens"
- vv8-9 "The LORD our God has been gracious"
- vv10-12 "Oops, we did it again ..."
- vv13-15 Ezra's prayer finishes without an actual request ...

The big idea: prayer begins with our circumstances but is based on God's character

- "LORD, the God of Israel, you are righteous"
- "you have punished us less than our sins deserve and have given us a remnant like this"

### 3. The people's response (Ezra 10:1-4)

Ezra 10:44 All these had married foreign women, and some of them had children by these wives.

#### So what, for us?

- i. Sometimes the OT characters DO give us examples to imitate!
- Jn 1:29 The next day John saw Jesus coming toward him and said, "Look, the Lamb of God, who takes away the sin of the world!"
- ii. Why we NT believers are so much better off ...
- in Christ, God has changed our circumstances
  - Eph 2:4 But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, 5 made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions —it is by grace you have been saved.
  - God is also changing us by His Holy Spirit
  - 1 Cor 6:19 Do you not know that your bodies are temples of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are not your own; 20 you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your bodies.