

Intro

~ We've all played hide and seek as children. When you're the person seeking you look around every corner, behind every bush and you scour the scene trying to find the people in the game.

~ In Luke 15 Jesus tells us about 3 things that were lost – sheep and coin. The shepherd looked for his lost sheep and the woman searched the house until she found that lost coin. They looked because what was lost was important to them. The sheep and coin had a special relationship to the owner. The sheep and coin were income to the owners

~ In like manner - the Lord is important and worth seeking after

~ Ezra demonstrates for us the importance of seeking God

Passages on Seeking God in Ezra

Ezra 6:21,22 *And the children of Israel, which were come again out of captivity, and all such as had separated themselves unto them from the filthiness of the heathen of the land, to **seek** the LORD God of Israel, did eat,*

Ezra 6:22 And kept the feast of unleavened bread seven days with joy: for the LORD had made them joyful, and turned the heart of the king of Assyria unto them, to strengthen their hands in the work of the house of God, the God of Israel.

- The people separated themselves from the filth of heathenism to seek the Lord God of Israel
- Result of seeking = the Lord made them joyful, turned the heart of the king of Assyria toward them, and strengthened their hands to build the house of God

Ezra 7:9,10 *For upon the first day of the first month began he (Ezra) to go up from Babylon, and on the first day of the fifth month came he to Jerusalem, according to the good hand of his God upon him. 10 For Ezra had prepared his heart to **seek** the law of the LORD, and to do it, and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.*

- Ezra prepared his heart to seek the Law of God, to do that and teach that law
- Result of seeking the law = the Lord brought him safely into the land so he could do and teach the law

Ezra 8:21-23 *Then I proclaimed a fast there, at the river of Ahava, that we might afflict ourselves before our God, to **seek** of him a right way for us, and for our little ones, and for all our substance. 22 For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that **seek** him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. 23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.*

- The people sought God for a safe way to Jerusalem
- Result of the people seeking God = because Ezra trusted more in God than in the king the Lord brought them safely to Jerusalem because his hand is for good to those who seek him

Focus on Ezra 8:21-23

- Ezra was ashamed to ask for an escort of the king because Ezra had already told the king that the hand of God is upon all them for good who seek him; and that same hand of God is against all who forsake him
- Barnes said, "Ezra had more concern for the glory of God than for his own personal safety"
- If we want to experience the goodness of God's hand on us then based on what Ezra has said there is a qualifier to be able to experience the goodness of God – that qualifier is seeking God
- That qualifier is seeking God for his good hand to be upon us
- "His hand is open to them to bestow all needful good upon them, temporal and spiritual, and his power and providence are over them, to protect and defend them from all evil." *Gill*
- Those who don't seek him, his hand is against them. We see this with Israel and the Philistines in 1 Samuel 4 and 5. It may not look like it because ungodly prosper but the way of the righteous pleases God and the hand of God is on us and maybe we don't recognize it because we expect it to look like what we want
- The unsaved may have happiness (based on happenings) but we know they can't have joy and peace, because that only comes through Christ. The ungodly may prosper but we have peace in Christ
- Seek (1245 baqash) require, desire, request, search out, strive after, look for

- Seeking the Lord is found 18 times in 1 & 2 Chronicles
 - 1 Chr 16:10 – The heart rejoices that seeks the Lord
 - 1 Chr 16:11 – Seek the Lord, his strength, and his face continually
 - 1 Chr 22:19 – Set your heart and soul to seek the Lord before you work
 - 1 Chr 28: 8 – Seek and keep the commandments of God
 - 1 Chr 28:9 – If you seek him he will be found of you, if you forsake him he'll cast thee off forever
 - 2 Chr 7:14 – Humility, prayer, seek God's face, and turning from sin will bring God's forgiveness and healing
 - 2 Chr 11:16 – They of the tribes of Israel that set their hearts to seek God came to Jerusalem and sacrificed
 - 2 Chr 12:14 – Rehoboam did evil because he prepared not his heart to seek God
 - 2 Chr 14:4 – King Asa commanded Judah to seek the Lord their God
 - 2 Chr 15:2 – The prophet Azariah told Asa if you seek God he will be found of you
 - 2 Chr 15:12 – Judah and Benjamin entered into a covenant to seek the Lord
 - 2 Chr 15:13 – Those who wouldn't seek the Lord was put to death
 - 2 Chr 19:3 – Jehoshaphat was shown mercy because he prepared his heart to seek God
 - 2 Chr 20:3 – Jehoshaphat feared the Lord and set himself to seek the Lord
 - 2 Chr 20:4 – Judah gathered themselves together to seek the Lord
 - 2 Chr 30:19 – Hezekiah prayed that the Lord pardon everyone who prepares his heart to seek God
 - 2 Chr 31:21 – Hezekiah did seek his God
 - 2 Chr 34:3 – When Josiah was 16 years old he began to seek after God

A king who didn't and did prepare their heart to seek the Lord

Didn't - Rehoboam

2 Chr 12:14 *And he (Rehoboam) did evil, because he prepared not his heart to seek the LORD.*

- Rehoboam was the foolish son of the wise Solomon

Did - Jehoshaphat

2 Chr 19:9-5 (3) Jehoshaphat was shown mercy (he aligned himself to King Ahab) because he prepared his heart to seek God

- The context here is in 1 Chron 18 where Jehoshaphat joined with the wicked king Ahab
- Though he was rebuked by Hanani the seer he and had wrath from the Lord the Lord found good in him because he prepared his heart to seek God

Other example of seeking God

Ps 14:2 (Ps 53:2) = seeking God is associated with wisdom

Matt 6:33 = seek first the kingdom of God

Conclusion

Ezra 8:22 *For I was ashamed to require of the king a band of soldiers and horsemen to help us against the enemy in the way: because we had spoken unto the king, saying, The hand of our God is upon all them for good that seek him; but his power and his wrath is against all them that forsake him. 23 So we fasted and besought our God for this: and he was intreated of us.*

The benefit or result of seeking God is his goodness (in the context of Ezra and Nehemiah are):

Prosperous (God prospers us with his goodness)

Power

Protection

Provision

Providence

~ Israel forsook God and had fellowship failure which was formal, forsaken and forgotten. The result is they were missing God's goodness, power, protection, provision and providence in their lives until they called to out to him

~ Let's be seekers of God through the word of god and fellowship with God

