

**Ezra 8 “The Hand of Our God for Good”****Icebreaker**

When you think about failure—either your own or someone else’s—do you tend to focus more on the failure itself or on what happens afterward? Why?

**Read:** Ezra 8

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**Key Theme**

God’s hand is for good on all who seek Him and He advances His kingdom through humble repentance, faith, and obedience.

**Discussion Questions****1. God’s Kingdom Is Built Through Faithful Remnants (8:1-14)**

Why do you think Ezra carefully records names, families, and numbers of those returning from exile?

How does the small number of returnees challenge our assumptions about what it looks like for God to be at work in this world?

**2. Failure, Identity, and Loving Confrontation (8:15-20)**

Why is the absence of Levites such a serious problem for Ezra and the mission God gave him?

What does this passage teach us about responding to the failure of God’s people—with both truth and love?

**3. God’s Mercy Toward Those Who Respond (8:18-20)**

How does Ezra describe the arrival of the Levites, and what does he credit for their change of heart?

How does God’s mercy toward the Levites encourage you when you remember times you preferred “Babylon” over obedience to God?

**4. Seeking God Instead of Self-Protection (8:21-23)**

Why does Ezra call for fasting and prayer rather than relying on a military escort?

What does this passage reveal about the difference between rejecting worldliness and actively seeking the Lord?

### **5. The Hand of God for Good (8:22-23)**

Ezra says, *"The hand of our God is for good on all who seek him."* What does it mean to truly seek the Lord?

How does this promise shape the way we think about repentance, faith, and hope after failure?

### **6. Holiness, Stewardship, and Accountability (8:24-30)**

Why does Ezra appeal to God's holiness rather than fear of the king to motivate faithfulness?

What does the way we steward money, time, and responsibility reveal about what we believe regarding God's holiness?

### **7. God's Faithfulness and Renewed Worship (8:31-36)**

How does Ezra recognize and respond to God's protection and provision at the end of the journey?

Why is it important to pause, give thanks, and worship after God answers our prayers?

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#### **Takeaway**

Seeking God's Kingdom means:

- Acknowledging failure honestly and responding with repentance
  - Remembering our identity as God's redeemed people
  - Trusting God's power instead of worldly security
  - Believing God's mercy is greater than our past disobedience
  - Living faithfully because God is holy
  - Giving God glory for protection, provision, and progress
  - Taking courage that God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary work
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#### **Prayer**

Thank God for His mercy toward sinners and His faithfulness to those who seek Him. Confess areas where you have preferred comfort or familiarity over obedience. Ask the Lord to place His good hand upon your life, to deepen your trust in Him, and to use your ordinary faithfulness for His kingdom and glory.