**Series: The Stewardship Of Theology**

**The Ezra Complex**

**What does it mean to have the Ezra complex?** It is the mental state and behavior of fulfilling an assigned task through discipline, devotion and dialogue.

As I begin this series today, I want to set our focus on Ezra. Not the Book of Ezra it self, but on the person of Ezra, who is the main character of the book. Ezra was a priest and a scribe who is historically recognized as a descendant of Aaron through the priestly line. Ezra was sent by King Artaxerxes of Persia to Jerusalem in 458 B.C. with a large company of Israelites. His mission was to study, practice, and teach God's law in Israel. But for Ezra, this was not just an assignment, it was his life.

If you would study the life of Ezra, you will discover that he was a serious study of the word of God. However, he was not just an academician, he lived by God’s word daily. He surrendered his life and committed heart to God. Once he studied the word and put it to practice in his own life, he then began to teacher of the word of God to others and encouraged them to live for God.

Today, I want to focus on just one verse that’s found in Ezra 7:10. This verse will serve as our launching pad for the next few weeks.

**Ezra 7:10** says, “*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.*”

Our series theme is “The Stewardship of Theology.” Stewardship is defined as the process of being responsible for someone else's property or interests while they are entrusted to one's care. The doctrine of stewardship defines a person's relationship with God, identifying God as the owner and humans as managers of His resources. God has entrusted the church with His word. We are to be **disciples of the word, doers of the word, and a disseminator of the word**.

1. **Disciples Of The Word**
2. In the New Testament, a disciple is defined as a student, pupil or learner. Jesus selected 12 disciples who were tasked with the responsibility of becoming students or learners of God’s word, will, walk and work. When God saved us, He called us into service. According to Matthew 28:18, we have been commissioned by God to go out and make disciples and teach to observe or do what God’s word teaches. In the Gospel according to Matthew, when Jesus called His disciple, His goal then and now is to make disciples to become fishers of men. But when you read the book of Ezra, you will discover that’s Stage 3. Before we can perform Stage 3, we have to practice Stage 2, and be prepared in Stage 1.
3. Stage 1:  **First, he studied God’s law.**  The Word of God is supremely authoritative because its author is the God of all creation. If the divine Ruler of the universe, Creator of our soul, and One True God has something to communicate to you, you can bet it’s important. Ezra was determined to know God’s Word through and through.
4. **Study the Word** – This requires a deep engagement with Scripture beyond the simplicity of reading.
5. You are fighting a losing battle against sin without the word of God. Psalm 119:11 says, “Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.” The word of God will (a) Root out evil (b) Regenerate the soul (c) Restore righteousness.
6. 2 Timothy 2:15 teaches us that when we study the word of God, it will provide validation, personal verification, and proper interpretation. We are to “Study to show thyself approved unto God, rightly dividing the word of truth.” The hidden truth of this text is that God’s word can be wrongly divided meaning improperly interpreted. We don’t want to be guilty of false teaching (false doctrine).
7. God’s word is designed to be a “lamp unto my feet and a light to my path.” It will provide (a) Illumination so that I can see my steps (b) and Isolation to keep me on the right path.
8. **Doers Of The Word**

Knowing the principle means nothing if you are not practice the precepts. If you know the word and don’t obey the word, your no better than someone who lacks knowledge of the word.

1. **Obey the Word** – We are responsible for teaching the word of God to others. Especially those who are in leadership positions. Personal application precedes public proclamation. The word must be lived out before it’s taught up.
2. God’s word is life. Matthew 4:4 says, “It is written, Man shall not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God.” Just as the physical body needs physicals food to survive and thrive, so does the spiritual being of man need spiritual food to survive and thrive. If you are spiritual dragging along, maybe the cause is spiritual malnutrition.
3. The Bible says that we must be “doers of the word and not hearers only.” We are required to learn the word and then live the word. This is what Ezra did.
4. **Disseminator Of The Word.**

Ezra a credited with revitalizing the law and leading Israel back to following God’s word after they returned from exile. He did this by learning, living and leading the nation to practice of faithfully following the word of God.

1. **Teaching the Word** – Instruction should flow from a life immersed in truth and spiritual empowerment. The most effective teachers are those who are committed to practicing what they preach and provide a living example of faithfulness.
2. I Corinthians 11:1 says, “Be ye followers of me, even as I also am of Christ. How many of us are willing to put ourselves in this position? Are you willing to be the teacher and living example of the word coming to life for others to follow you as you follow Christ?
3. James 3:1 gives us a power warning about teaching others. **NRSV - “*Not many of you should become teachers, my brothers and sisters, for you know that we who teach will be judged with greater strictness*.”**

**Conclusion:**

**Next week we will launch out deep into become living disciples in the spirit of Ezra who learned the word, lived the word, and lead others to faith through the word.**