

Pressing Reset

Ezra 3:1-13 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 03 January 2021

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: What individual or collaborative project have you worked on that you are most proud of and why?

Worship: Psalm 117 (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God's invitation to you?*)

Sermon Summary for Ezra 3:1-13 (*Read the passage before reading the sermon summary.*)

We want a new start in this new year. Each of us is confronted with our need for change, growth, transformation. We need healing and hope. We need connection with each other as the body of Christ and a path forward. This is true for Christians all over the world, but particularly here at PCC. But how do we do that? What does “pressing the reset button” look like? It may help to look at a group who had their own “reset moment” in the Book of Ezra. We can see how – in the midst of devastation and loss – they found hope. And we can use their actions during this new exodus as a model for how we can move forward.

Pressing Reset on our Worship as a Church // When the Israelites returned to Jerusalem, their first priority – even before reestablishing the temple – was to be connected to God through worship. Why? Because it brings us together, it heals our wounds, reminding us that we are united in Christ. Not just within Pacific Crossroads but across the ages and throughout the history of the church. We are not forgotten by our Father. Nor will we ever be.

For these reasons, worship must be a priority in this new year. Whether in person or online, we need to make worshipping the living Christ the center of our week. This is what gives us purpose and hope. As we are pointed to the wonders of God and His love for us in Christ, our worship is turned away from false hopes, false gods, and functional saviors that will let us down again and again. And as we order the flow of our lives around our worship services – whether virtually or in person – we will have an anchor for our souls and a hope that secures us in deep ways, enabling us to both endure and be resilient.

Pressing Reset on the Building of the Church // In the time of Ezra, the work of the church was significant both in the near term (rebuilding the temple) and for the distant future (a new Heaven and new earth). It is always God who builds His church, but He builds it through us. We, like the ancient Israelites, engage by giving what God has provided and organizing creatively toward rebuilding the life of God's church. Because through Christ's church, He is renewing all things. Each of us has gifts to contribute to and serve the church, to build community, and for its mission going forward. And so we are called to respond. Because it demonstrates to the world that God is present on earth and active in the world. And because God sees every one of us as vital.

Pressing Reset on the Emotions of the Church // Health involves real tears – both of sadness and of joy, each in their own turn. Mourning is necessary as we endure and work through loss. But so too is rejoicing as God does new things. Because God is not done yet. In Ezra's day, the second exodus was vastly smaller than the original. But their actions remained a vital part of what God is doing to bring His kingdom to the world, so that the beauties and wonders and kindnesses and mercies of God will fill the earth. We too can rejoice, knowing that our church is part of God's working to bring His love to us, to LA and to the world.

Discussion Questions *(You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)*

- In all the challenges that 2020 brought us, what was toughest for you to face/navigate through last year?
 - How did God meet you in that space and show you his faithfulness and care?
- How do you feel heading into 2021? (Are you hopeful, numb, discouraged, confused, ready to run?)
 - What kinds of resolutions/changes, if any, are you pursuing as the New Year begins?
- Ezra writes of the early returnees from exile resetting their lives as they came back from exile. What kinds of connectivity do you feel with these saints.
 - How is our moment like their return from exile? How is it different?
- How do you sense that God wants you to push reset on your worship of him personally and corporately?
- How does Jesus want you to re-engage in the life of the church in fresh ways in 2021?
 - How does he want to use you/family/friend group/community group to build his church in 2021?
- How does embracing the truth that God “is good for his steadfast love endures forever” (verse 11) shape the way a person lives and faces challenges?
- What encouraged you or challenged you in this sermon or passage?

Prayer: Take time to pray for fresh winds of worship and the building of the church through us, bringing love and healing to LA and the world. For the weekly Prayer Guide click [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Generosity Our 2021 focus of Generosity will be split into four parts over the course of the year: generous grace, generous hospitality, being generous with our resources, and being generous in our service. The first one we will look at is Generous Grace.

- How would you describe each of these aspects of Generous Grace – generous justice, generous peacemaking, generous forgiveness, generous mercy, generous love? What do they look like?
- Reflect throughout the week on how these forms of human generosity are a reflection of God’s generous grace toward you. Journal your thoughts, prayers and actions.

Generous Grace - Biblical Peacemaking Workshop - Saturday // January 16 // 9-12

Our first Generosity workshop of the year is on peacemaking. Peacemakers are people who breathe generous grace. They draw continually on the goodness and power of Jesus Christ, and then they bring his love, mercy, forgiveness, strength and wisdom to the complexities of daily life. In this 3 hour interactive webinar we will explore ways that God breathes his grace through peacemakers and uses them to dissipate anger, improve understanding, promote justice and encourage repentance and reconciliation. The facilitator is Ken Sande the founder of Peacemaker Ministries and Relational Wisdom 360.

Cost is \$15/person. Register [HERE](#).