



## Small Group Questions

Message: September 24<sup>th</sup>, 2023

Speaker: Pastor Bob

Series: *Rise Up and Build*

Topic: "Planted AND Called"

Text: Ezra 4-6

1. **ICE BREAKER:** What was your favorite thing to build as a kid? Legos? Toy Figurines? Etc. Have some fun sharing stories.
2. We opened the message by discussing the topic of exile. What does it mean to be in *exile*? Is the 21<sup>st</sup> Century American Church in *exile*? Explain your answers.
3. Pastor Bob shared an illustration from the book, *The Benedict Option*. What was the difference between the parents and their daughter in the missionary example? Discuss this quote and relate it to our current cultural moment (exile?): "*Christians with sacrificial hearts will make it through what's to come ... but it's going to cost us* (Rod Dreher, *The Benedict Option*)."
4. **Pray, out loud, The Lord's Prayer together** (Matthew 6:9-13). After you pray, walk through each line and ask: "What is God calling me to?"
5. **Review Ezra 4.** Who are the main characters? What tension is set up in the narrative? The author offers a three-step process to live in exile. First, you have to *Face The Adversary*. We discussed three examples of adversaries in the sermon: **People, Ideas, and Cultural Systems**. What adversaries are you currently facing in your life? How have you responded? (*Contrast your response with the responses of Zerubbabel and his people*)
6. How have you been uniquely called to build God's kingdom? Are you afraid to live out that calling? Why?
7. **Review Ezra 5.** The second step in exile is to *Seek Prophetic Insight*. In the Bible, God provides prophets to: (1) Expose our Sin (2) Confirm our Calling. In Ezra 5, God sends two prophets with very different styles. **Read Haggai 1:1-6 and Zechariah 4:4-7.** Which prophet do you prefer? Why was/is it important to hear both messages?
8. Pastor Bob made this statement: "*When God plants us in a location, he calls us to a mission and he offers providential protection.*" Do you believe that? Do you believe that God PROVIDES and PRESERVES us? If we struggle to believe that God protects, provides and preserves, does it keep us from answering his call on our lives? Offer examples.

9. **Review Ezra 6.** The final action step was *Rest in the King's FAVOR*. Discuss Darius response and decree (Ezra 6:6-17). How did God use him to help the temple come to completion? Which part was most amazing to you? Have you seen God do this in your life? If not, do you believe he could?
10. As you conclude, spend some time on discussing the final three discussion questions: *Where have you seen God's PROTECTION? How have you experienced God's PROVISION? Can you trust him for PRESERVATION?* Then meditate upon Jesus' sacrifice – the true Passover Lamb was slain! His work on the cross protects us from wrath and judgment. His sacrifice provided atonement for our sins and secured salvation for us. His saving grace will preserve us to the end. Hallelujah, what a Savior! Amen.