

We Have Transgressed Against our God
By Trey Sullins

Have you ever done anything wrong? Certainly, we all have in life. This is the constant struggle of the Christian: staying away from sin. Throughout the Bible there are many examples of those trying to live righteously and their struggle with the very same thing. Ezra 10:1-3 is one example where we can find great encouragement to do everything necessary to live holy before God.

The people acknowledged their sins. Verse 2 says “we have trespassed against our God and have taken pagan wives.” This statement proves that not only did the people recognize that they had sinned, but they also acknowledged the specific sins which they had done. While Ezra was away, the people of the land had begun mixing themselves with the pagans once again. This was one of the big problems that led them to their destroyed state that they were in during Ezra’s time (Ezra 9:13-14). This certainly was a sin because one of God’s long-standing commands for the people was to destroy the inhabitants of the lands and not intermarry with them (Deuteronomy 7:1-4).

We too must recognize when we have sinned. The first step in repentance is admitting or confessing that you have sinned. If you don’t do this then how can you move any further towards removing and changed from that sin? The parable of the Pharisee and the tax collector is a good example of how easy it is to forget our own sins. The Pharisee was quick to point out the flaws of the tax collector in his prayer. He seems to never stop and think about how he should be considering his own sins and not the sins of others. When we sin, we must confess the specific sin before our God in a proper and humble manner.

The people acknowledged their hope. Again, in verse 2, right after confessing sin, Shechaniah says, “yet now there is hope in Israel in spite of this.” Why did they know that there was hope? Because their choice was to humble themselves and get right with Him. The people came before God and were choosing Him again, that is why there was hope. This desire for God is further evidence in verse 1: “a very large assembly of men, women, and children gathered to him from Israel; for the people wept very bitterly.” The people came to Ezra weeping because of the sins which they had committed.

God’s people still have great hope as well! Like Israel was in this day, every one of us has sinned. Romans 3:23 could not be clearer when it says, “for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God.” Yet we all still have great hope. This hope comes from our acceptance of our sins and humbling ourselves in repentance. If we remain hardened to God, then we will not have this hope that is founded upon the truth of God’s word. God’s word says those who humble themselves will be exalted (Luke 18:14) and those who confess and repent of their sins will be judged righteous (Acts 17:30-31).

The people acknowledged their commitment. In Ezra 10:3 the people determine that they will make a covenant with God to put away the pagan influences in their lives. At the end of the verse is says, “let it be done according to the law.” Finally, the people seem to have remembered that they already had a covenant with God and decide to recommit themselves to this. In verse 7-8 the

people go through with what they said they would do by issuing a proclamation to gather everyone together and begin the process. In verse 19 the Bible says that those who were guilty gave their promise that they would finish this repentance process.

Christians have an obligation to make things right with God. Israel gave a powerful example of obedience and repentance in this chapter. Such an example proves to us that there are no limits that should stop us from doing the will of God. Matthew 7:14 explains that the way of righteousness is narrow and difficult, so hard decisions are just a expectation in the life of a Christian. Jesus also explained in Matthew 5:29-30, “If your right eye causes you to sin, pluck it out and cast it from you.” This once more proves to us the great lengths we should go through in order to remove sin and abstain from it.

The challenge presented in Ezra 10 is a great one that leaves us with much to learn from. In our lives we should leave no stone unturned when it comes to making sure that we remain holy and righteous. The process of repentance requires acknowledgement of sins, hope and humility, and commitment to be right with God. With these things strong in our lives, then when repentance is necessary for us, we can, “Be of good courage, and do it” (Ezra 10:4).