

Searching For Normal

• A Series through the book of Ezra

Tear Out The Tent!

Ezra 8:1-36 (ESV)

Camping at Refugio. Started raining. Let's go back home! First thing we do: **tear out the tent!**
Tent: that place in life you've grown comfortable with, that's keeping you from deeper life in God.

God's calling you back to Him

Ezra 8:1-14

Context & meaning: more Jews leave family behind in Babylonia to join family in Jerusalem.¹

Point: a call to leave "Babylonia" (the way of the world, even if it costs you)

Application: be "called out" together. **God is calling us out of the tents of comfort we've built.**

Change requires challenge

Ezra 8:15-20

Context & meaning: it's too hard and life is too comfortable for Levites.² So Ezra finds 38 fill-ins.

Point: Following a Jesus is hard, and must be reflected on. But God will always have a remnant. And even when it is discouraging, He is working in the ordinary and mundane.

Application: Why are you a Christian? Comfort? Prosperity? Cultural power? Tradition? These are not gonna hold you when following Jesus gets hard. Suffering. There must be a deeper anchor: the gospel.

Cross: Luke 18:27-30³

Don't overthink this

Ezra 8:21-23

Context & meaning: Ezra prays instead of trusting in the King. Nehemiah trusts in the King.

Point: there is no bifurcation between the spiritual and the practical. God works through prayer *and* practice.

Application: pray hard, work hard. Sometimes you gotta pray, other times you gotta work!

Pray hard, then **Tear out the tent!**

Just get up and go

Ezra 8:31-36

Context & meaning: Forward movement. Gods people don't get too comfortable...not even at Ahava.

Nug: The word 'departed' (ESV) is literally 'pulled up their tent pegs'⁴(v.31). **Tear out the tent!**

Point: God will deliver you. You just need to reorient to Him in worship and obedience.

App: **Tear out the tent!** Step out in faith means BELIEVING & DOING.

1. Where are you too comfortable? (your tent)
2. What does "tearing out your tent" going to look like for you?

¹ "Given that this occasion by no means meant that all Judahites had now made the move, Ezra's mission involved these people in leaving members of their extended family in Babylon. But it also meant their joining members of their extended family in Judah." John Goldingay. *Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther for Everyone*. 1139.

² "It is likely that the Levites had not responded to the call because of the chance to own property and settle in Babylon had proved much more attractive than the strict routines of temple service." Robert Fyall. *The Message of Ezra and Haggai*. 1858.

³ "And Peter said, "See, we have left our homes and followed you." And he said to them, "Truly, I say to you, there is no one who has left house or wife or brothers or parents or children, for the sake of the kingdom of God, who will not receive many times more in this time, and in the age to come eternal life.'" Luke 18:28-30 ESV

⁴ Fyall. 1906