

15 April 2018: Preached by Preacher Clement Chew

**Topic: A Study of Ezra: A Right Response to Sin**

Scripture text: Ezra 10:1-17

1. Sin has plagued all men for all have sinned and come short of the glory of God (Rom 3:23). Born again believers also struggle with sin and it is an issue that needs to be addressed because it destroys a believer's fellowship with his holy God. True spiritual revival comes by the right perspective of sin and subsequently, the right response to it.
2. The right response to sin is sincere confession and repentance. Ezra and the people have trespassed against God by taking wives who were not Israelites and walked in their idolatrous ways. To "trespass" is to betray the covenant we have made with God to remain holy. The Israelites made a sincere confession because they were humble to acknowledge their sins without excuses (v. 1-2a). If we confess our sins, God is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness (1 John 1:9). There is hope of our sins being forgiven because God is longsuffering, compassionate and merciful (v. 2b).
3. The right response to sin is to humbly return and submit to God's Word. The Israelites obeyed God's Word by putting away strange wives because they had a reverential fear for God and His judgments (v. 3). When we desire to follow the path of righteousness, there is bound to be sorrow, pain and opposition. We must be courageous and be prepared to submit to God according to His Word (v. 4-5).
4. The right response to sin is to have a committed and urgent obedience to repent. Ezra had an urgency to address the issue of sin in the congregation and took action within four months of his return to Jerusalem (v.10; 7:9). He made a serious commandment to gather the people in Jerusalem despite the cold weather conditions (v. 8-9). Thank God that the people were committed to repent of their sin and the issue was resolved in three months (v. 12, 16-17). However, the Levites were against casting away their strange wives (v.15).