



## BIG IDEA

*Maybe what our nation needs most is for the people of God to weep and mourn over the sinfulness of our nation as we pray for God's Spirit to help us to be faithful disciples of Jesus who take him at his Word.*

## THOUGHTS FROM THE SERMON

1. How can God's punishment be an act of mercy on his people? What examples of God's punishment in Scripture were actually an example of his mercy on display?

**Read: Ezra 9:1-15**

2. Spend some time briefly discussing the context surrounding the book of Ezra.
3. In Ezra 9:1-2, the people of Israel are found intermarrying with the surrounding nations, contrary to God's command. Why was this against God's will? What principles can we pull out of this and apply to our modern context? Are there any New Testament passages that speak into this? Discuss.
4. What does Ezra teach us about the role of community leaders in shaping the spiritual lives of their people?
5. Ezra's response to the sin of the Israelites was a great example for us to follow. How so? How do you typically respond to sin that you observe around you? Does your response to sin look different depending on whether it comes from inside or outside the church? Explain.
6. Can you think of other cross-references in Scripture that you can apply to the major themes outlined in this passage?
7. How does this passage in Ezra point us to Jesus?
8. What stood out to you in this week's sermon? What were your biggest takeaways?

## NOTES

### PERSONAL REFLECTION AND APPLICATION

1. What has God shown you as you studied his word this week?
2. Why is there such value in reading and understanding the scriptures we looked at this week?
3. What points in the message encouraged you and gave you hope?
4. How will you personally apply what you learned from the sermon to your life?

### DEEPER

**Pray:** Weep and pray for our nation and its disobedience to God's commands.

**Read:** Consider reading the book of Ezra to understand this week's message in further context.

**Write:** Take time to write down your thoughts and insights from the sermon this week. Keeping a journal is just one more tool that you can use to track what God is showing you in your walk with him. Consider writing in questions for the podcast on the Gateway Church app.

**Sing:** Listen to the worship songs from Sunday throughout the week. Look up the lyrics to each song and spend some time reading them as well.

**Memorize:** A verse or passage that will help you to remember to pray and weep over our wrongdoings.

**Love:** Share God's mercy with a family member, friend, or acquaintance this week.