



Sermon Notes, 18 July 2021

Term Summer 2021

Series Preparing for ... the New Start (Ezra & Nehemiah)

Gatherings: the 11, the 5

Title transformation

Preacher Paul Langham

Reading – Ezra 12:27-47

After almost 100 years, our reading describes the moment that the work of the Return is completed. It's a moment of transformation ... and yet, like all such moments, is transitory. This 'Second Temple' was destined for destruction, just like the one it replaced.

The bible's understanding of transformation is truly epic – nothing less than an entirely recreated cosmos

- Isaiah 65:17-19
- Revelation 21:1-7

And an entirely recreated humanity

- Philippians 3:20-21
- 1 Corinthians 15:20-58

But, followers of Jesus are not called simply to wait for Jesus to return and inaugurate this new cosmos. Rather, we are called to be both adverts for, and agents of, this future renewed creation in the here and now. It's what Jesus called The Kingdom of God, and wherever he went and whoever he met, the result was transformation. He sent out his first followers to both demonstrate and proclaim this Kingdom ... and calls us to do the same, to bear witness in word and deed to what will one day be perfectly revealed when Jesus returns.

Becoming a Christian is such a sign. Paul writes:

if anyone is in Christ, the new creation has come: the old has gone, the new is here! 2 Corinthians 5:17

QUESTIONS

- Are you in denial or acknowledgment of your need for personal transformation?
- Where do you see evidence around you that our world needs transformation?
- Where do you sit right now on the spectrum which stretches from 'I believe in God's power to transform both society and me' to 'I really struggle to believe that'?

Ask the Holy Spirit to confirm or renew or give for the first time a call on your life to be both an advert for and an agent of transformation