

The Beginnings of Revival
Ezra 9:1-15

I. Review

- A. Ezra's preaching convinced the leaders of Israel that it was wrong for them to marry pagan women. They didn't become defensive about their sin – they simply confessed what they had done.
- B. Ancient Israelites weren't supposed to marry people from other nations because they would be tempted to worship their gods. They also needed to maintain their identity as the covenant people of God so that Jesus would obviously be the fulfillment of God's promises to Abraham and David.
- C. Instead of accusing his people of their sin, Ezra identified with his people, confessing the sinfulness of all of them to God.
- D. Ezra understood God's righteous justice, but threw himself and his people on God's loving mercy. We see both God's justice and mercy in the cross of Christ.

II. Go Further – Read Matthew 19:1-11

- A. In verse 3, what is the particular question the Pharisees ask Jesus? Is this the only way that God's plan for marriage breaks down today?
- B. Instead of listing all the different ways people can fail at marriage, in verses 4 and 5, Jesus simply explains God's design for marriage. What is this design?
- C. In verses 4 and 5, Jesus quotes from Genesis 1:27 and 2:24. Why would He quote these passages to the Pharisees?
- D. Why does Jesus say in verse 8 that Moses had allowed divorce? Does this allowance change God's original design for marriage?
- E. Look back at Deuteronomy 24:1-4, where divorce is discussed. What is the particular situation in view?
- F. In verse 9, when does Jesus say divorce is allowable?
- G. In verse 10, what is the reaction of Jesus' disciples to this teaching?

III. Apply

- A. How can we follow Ezra's example of identifying with the sins of his people when we proclaim God's justice and mercy?
- B. If you were to write a prayer confessing the sins of our culture, what would you include?
- C. What sins of the modern church might we Christians need to confess?
- D. How well has our culture maintained God's design for marriage? What sins might we need to confess in this particular area?