**Gratitude is More Than an Attitude**

**Ezra 3:1-7**

Simple Deductive Outline Manuscript

**Topic:** Gratitude

**Subject:** Showing gratitude to God

**Complement:** is by preparing yourself and worship Him.

**Purpose:** The listeners will value gratitude than just an attitude

**Introduction**

1. Need: How many times a day do you voice thankfulness to people and God? 10 times? 6? 3? 1? Or never? Do you give thanks for the food you have in SBC canteen? Do you give thanks for classmates that you have in SBC? Do you even give thanks for being able to study in SBC? Or you just take all those for granted?

Another question, would the people who know you best say you are filled with gratitude? Or they may say that you are the complainant?

1. Background: Last week we have heard the sermon from Pastor Peng Chye and Pastor Angie of this Ezra sequence. For review, in chapter 1, finally, Israelites returned to their homeland, after 70 years captivity in Babylon. There were so many people returned to Jerusalem and some of their names are written in the genealogy in chapter 2. After getting settled, there gathered together in Jerusalem in the beginning of chapter 3 and today, we want to learn from what they did there? What would be their first priority for the returning community? Did they voice thankfulness to God?
2. Preview: Today’s passage is taken from Ezra 3:1-7. Ezra 3:1-7 teaches us how to show our gratitude to God for what He has done for us by preparing yourself and worship Him. Restatement: It is good to learn from the exilic Israelites who showed their gratitude to God by building the altar and worshiping Him. By building the altar and sacrificing burnt offerings, actually, Israelites has prepared themselves and worshiped God in order to show their gratitude to what has God done in their lives.
3. I divide this sermon into two parts. First, we are going to see how Israelites showed their gratitude to God and the second, how we are going to show our gratitude to God based on what we have learned from Israelites.
4. **Israelites gave thanks to God by preparing themselves and worshiping God (1-7).**
5. The Israelites Gathered Together…

The very first thing that the Israelites did was assembling together in Jerusalem (1; cf. Deut 12:5-6).

From Deuteronomy 12:5-6, we understand that God has selected one particular place where His people can worship Him and sacrifice the offerings. And from Ezra 3:1, it is clear that Jerusalem is the place that God selected. It is even stronger when we notice in the following verses, the Israelites focused just on building an altar to worship God through sacrifices and festivals. GATHERING TOGETHER IS PART OF THEIR PREPARATIONS. You may ask me, what is the relevance for me? Be patient ☺

1. The Israelites Prepared…

The Israelites prepared themselves by building an altar (2-3; the presence of God).

In verse 2, we can sense the urgent of building an altar. This movement was led by Jeshua son of Jozadak (high priest) and Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel (royal household-leader). We also understand that without the altar, the Israelites could not offer their burnt, peace, guilt, grain, and sin offerings. Altar represents a place of fellowship with God, a place where praises and prayers are rendered unto God, and a place of comfort and refuge from the troubles of this world. It symbolizes holiness and represents the presence of God.

1. They built the altar on the basis of the Law of Moses (2; Exodus 20:25-26).

There are rules and appropriate ways to build an altar and the Israelites clearly understood the process. Building an altar based on the Law of Moses was significance for them. One of the rules is building it of hewn stones and not chisel for the sake of holiness.

1. They still built the altar although they were afraid of the peoples around (3; the need to build an altar).

There were challenging while they building this altar. Yes, they were freed from the Persians, but we must remember that there were descendants of various idolatrous nations like Hamathites, Babylonians, Susianians, Elamites, Cuthaeans, etc. Even though the Israelites had permission from Cyrus to raise up their altar, it was not at all certain that his nominal subjects would passively submit. They trusted God although there were challenging. BUILDING AN ALTAR IS PART OF THEIR PREPARATIONS. You may ask me again, what is the relevance for me? Be patient ☺

1. The Israelites Worshiped…

The Israelites gave thanks to God by worshiping Him (4-7).

For me, this is the best part. Once Israelites gathered together, they immediately built an altar. What do you think the reason behind the altar building? Is it because they had nothing to do? Is it because that was their tradition as the Israelites? Or just for the sake of obeying the Law of Moses? Through verses 4-6 we know that their prior purpose is to worship God. All the preparation that they did was primarily to worship God, to give thanks to God. The Israelites worship God at least in three ways; celebrating festivals, offering sacrifices, and willingly giving for the building of the temple.

1. They cheerfully celebrated their festivals (4-5; Festival of Tabernacles, New Moon Festival).

Festival of Tabernacle or Festival of Booths is primarily a thanksgiving festival showing gratitude for God’s provision. It also commemorated the wilderness wandering, the booths (Succoth) being a reminder that the Israelites lived in tents during the 40-years commute from Egypt to the Promised Land

The New Moon festival is often mentioned in a list of feast/rest days. The festival where they need to rest and enjoy the intimacy with God. In short, the festivals that they had significantly to remind them to give thanks and worship God.

1. They constantly offered sacrifices (6; cf. 3:3-4).

It is clear in the passage, that the Israelites offered sacrifices with eager, sincere, and constant heart. In verse 3, it says that they sacrificed the burnt offering both the **morning and evening** sacrifices. In verse 4, it says that they required a number of burnt offerings prescribed for **each day** for their festivals. In verse 5, the word **regular** or**continual** is there. Lastly, in verse 6, **from the first day of the seventh month,** they already began to offer burnt offerings to the Lord. We can sense their eagerness to give thanks and worship God and it was continuous.

3. They willingly giving to the building of the temple (7; the need to build the temple).

At last, verse 7 tells us that they also collected money for the building of the temple. They need to build the temple for the place where the tabernacle is, the dwelling of the presence of God. My senior ever said that by supporting mission works financially, you are as much a partner as those who are going personally and physically. PREPARING AND WORSHIPPING ARE PART OF THEIR THANKSGIVING. You may ask me again, what is the relevance for me? Now, you will get the answer.

(Then after we know all these things, what is the relevance for us today? How gathering together, preparing, and worshiping be applied in our today’s life. And how we are going to give thanks to God through those three elements? This passage basically says…)

1. **Let us give thanks to God by preparing our self and worshiping Him.**

Let us prepare our self and worship Him.

Three important points based on what the Israelites did:

1. We Gather Together…

Do you think we need to gather as much as possible? Maybe it is not about gathering in a particular place or time. But what I want to say is that we need to be united. To have “One heart” idea in a community to worship God. Do you think we need that? The recognition that we are weak will make us move. Do not ever think that you can live alone. Find help and strength from the God and others. Look to your classmates, friends, or roommates and build a deeper relationship by praying, sharing, and encouraging one another. It just too sad when you graduated from SBC, you just have your academic certificate with you but you have no friend who really is with you for your future ministry. Remember, 2 years left before we scattered to all over the world. THIS IS PART OF THANKSGIVING.

1. We Prepare…

We need to prepare. What do you mean? Do we need to prepare an altar? Don’t be so literal☺. Instead, let’s build a relationship. Think this way that SBC is the place for you to prepare yourself not only academically but also spiritually and socially. Build your relationship with God and people around you. This is the preparation time that God gave to you so that you can be able to face the world. By having a strong relationship with God and friends, you have a lot of support, courage, and joy from God through your friends. This is one of the ways for you to give thanks o God and appreciate people around you. Community, fellowship, relationship are the thing that matter. At the end of the day, everything will be gone but the relationship will stay. THIS IS PART OF THANKSGIVING.

1. We Worship…

We need to worship God (celebration, don’t you think we need it? Weekly as well as annual activities)

We do not come to God because of routine and obligation of being a Christian but with a cheerful, constant, and willing heart to give thanks and worship Him. Worship is part of thanksgiving. Think this way, that our Combined Chapel is the celebration time. It is not just the time to sing and listening to a boring sermon but a celebration time enjoys really have fun with God and others.Together with your community in SBC, let us worship God and give thanks to Him. The celebration is always fun and doesn't you think we need more fun in SBC? THIS IS PART OF THANKSGIVING.

**Conclusion**

1. Show your gratitude to God by preparing yourself and worshiping Him (Main Idea). From the title, we know that preparing self and worshiping God is not just an attitude but also a gratitude.
2. And by gathering together, preparing yourself, and worshiping God, we actually are giving thanks to God for what He has done in our life. (Restated MI). Moreover, use this opportunity in SBC to have more friends.
3. Application: As the SBCans, do these three simple impactful things. G. B. W. Gather more often, Build a relationship with more people and Worship Him with more cheerful, constant, and sincere heart. To help you remember, there is a company in Decatur, Alabama called GBW. It is a full service architectural and landscape architectural firm. G. B. W. Gather, Build, Worship. Because Gratitude is more than an attitude.