**FEC Arcadia English Congregation Sermon-based Bible Study**

**2021 Church Theme: Twenty to Breakthrough**

**Sermon: Thanksgiving in Deeds**

**Scripture: Ezra 6:16-22（Date: 8/22/2021）**

**Opening questions:**

1. What is your key takeaway from the sermon “Thanksgiving in Deeds”?
2. What is the relationship between “thanksgiving” and “deeds”?

**Scripture: please refer the appendix**

**Interpretation**:

 Section 1: vv. 16 – 17

1. Please refer to 1 Kings 8:62-64 when Solomon held the dedication ceremony of the Temple. What are the similarities and differences between the two ceremonies? What does God see as the most important?

*【Leader】The number of sacrifices made by Solomon was far exceeding (142,000 vs. 712, about 200 times), but the returned exiles had put up all they could since the people were not as prosperous or as numerous as they were before the exile. Their ACTION reflected their heart of thanksgiving.*

1. Those who rebuilt the Temple were primarily from the two tribes of Judah and Benjamin. Why did they offer twelve male goats as sin offering according to the number of Israelites tribes? What do you learn from this?

*【Leader】Still there were returnees from the other ten tribes, though the number was much less than the tribes of Judah and Benjamin. The twelve sacrifices emphasized the desire for God to maintain His covenant relationship with all Israel.*

*Lesson learned: we should intercede for others, but not just pray for our own needs only.*

 Section 2: v18

1. According to the sermon and the Scripture, how did the priests and the Levites come up with their serving orders? Please refer 1 Chronicles 24:1-19.

*【Leader】They were assigned in 24 lots/divisions, and those in each lot would serve for 7 days. Example, Zachariah (father of John the Baptist) was serving in the Temple when an angel of the Lord appeared to him (Luke 1:8-11).*

1. What does it mean to serve “according to their divisions and their groups”?

*【Leader】To follow what God instructs for His people. God wants our obedience rather than productivity/visible outcomes.*

 Section 3: vv. 19-22

1. When did the Israelites observe Passover the last time? Why did God command the Israelites to observe Passover?

*【Leader】Ref: 2 Kings 23:22-23. It’s almost 100 years since the last Passover celebration by the Israelites. The meaning of Passover is for the Israelites to remember God’s salvation when they were still slaves in Egypt.*

*Reflection: Do you remember God’s salvation when you were still a slave of sin?*

1. What is the purpose of observing the Festival of Unleavened Bread?

*【Leader】Leaving the old life behind and entering a new way of living*

1. 【Reflection】Why did Satan want the believers to neither celebrate Christmas nor Easter? How does Satan achieve his purpose?

*【Leader】Ask small group members to share. Satan wants us to forget the birth and the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and follow the world (Christmas is just happy holidays, Easter is about egg hunt and bunnies) instead.*

**Induction:**

(1). 712: A deed of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_；

*【Leader】giving all to Him*

(2). 24: A deed of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_；

*【Leader】following His will*

(3). 114: A deed of \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_.

*【Leader】remembering His rescue*

**Application**:

1. Do you have corresponding deeds to show your gratefulness to the Lord?
2. Among the following thanksgiving deeds, which one do you need to work on the most?
	1. 712: a deed of giving all to Him;
	2. 24: a deed of following His will;
	3. 114: a deed of remembering His rescue.
3. Please share one key learning point from today’s study.

**Appendix: Ezra 6:16-22 (NIV)**

**16**Then the people of Israel—the priests, the Levites and the rest of the exiles—celebrated the dedication of the house of God with joy. **17**For the dedication of this house of God they offered a hundred bulls, two hundred rams, four hundred male lambs and, as a sin offering[[b](https://www.biblegateway.com/passage/?search=Ezra+6&version=NIV#fen-NIV-12169b)] for all Israel, twelve male goats, one for each of the tribes of Israel. **18**And they installed the priests in their divisions and the Levites in their groups for the service of God at Jerusalem, according to what is written in the Book of Moses.

**19**On the fourteenth day of the first month, the exiles celebrated the Passover. **20**The priests and Levites had purified themselves and were all ceremonially clean. The Levites slaughtered the Passover lamb for all the exiles, for their relatives the priests and for themselves. **21**So the Israelites who had returned from the exile ate it, together with all who had separated themselves from the unclean practices of their Gentile neighbors in order to seek the Lord, the God of Israel. **22**For seven days they celebrated with joy the Festival of Unleavened Bread, because the Lord had filled them with joy by changing the attitude of the king of Assyria so that he assisted them in the work on the house of God, the God of Israel.