

## Wednesday Devotional

July 16, 2025

Scripture reading: Ezra 7: 1-10

### Gleaning the Fields by June Masters Bacher

The vegetable garden has succumbed – except for the faithful tomatoes. When we debated over plant names, “Wonder Yield” appealed to my fancy. It takes eighty days to bear fruit, but each tomato weighs nearly a pound, and the scarlet, overweight beauties just bear on and on. “Eighty days!” My husband (and live-in gardener) was aghast. “Why, we could go around the world in that time.” Actually, I liked the giants because they reminded me of the fruits of my childhood. My grandmother selected the plants and tended them with great care. When my grandfather complained at her insistence on perfection, she invariably resorted to her favorite punch line: “What this world needs is more Ezras!” I was unfamiliar with the passage then, but it silenced Grandpa. “We put up only the best.” She used to say, “and strictly according to the letter of the law.”

Once the tomatoes were gathered, she sorted each one with the same care she’d shown in selecting the plants. Then came the scalding of the jars and the long waterbath-type processing. Only the finest rated her pantry shelves. Results? Excellent! Botulism was unheard of.

Were Ezra and Grandma friends? No, more likely the friendship lay between Grandma’s literal translations of her recipe and the Biblical Ezra who never questioned an assignment or a commandment. His scholarship and dedication were the characteristics for which he was selected to journey to Jerusalem to introduce the reforms. He familiarized himself with every letter of the old laws and he prepared his heart with prayer.

Ezra offered a good model of strength and determination to deliver and carry out a decree. He never said, “Now, I have here a new way,” or “Let’s put this in the hands of a committee.” He followed directions in a way that would have qualified him for Grandma’s field!