

## **First Things First**

### *Rebuilding worship at Jerusalem after the captivity*

#### **Introduction: Priming the pump for tonight's discussion.**

- Let's begin with our own observations. What is one thing that stood out to you from the message that you would share with the group? Was there a moment where God spoke to you personally through His Word?

#### **Exploration: Questions to guide our group discussion.**

- We learned that God moved upon Cyrus' heart and impressed him to begin the restoration of Judah after 70 years of captivity in Babylon. This entire account reminds us that God can place a person where He wants him to be, to do what He wants him to do, when God's time is right for him to do it! How does this speak to us about the potential of one person who is submitted to the directives of God? Can one person really make a difference?
- In our study we discovered that Cyrus was mentioned by name in the Bible 150 years before he was born, and was set apart as God's man to restore Judah to her homeland. We also learned that God had proclaimed 70 years of captivity, followed by their release from Babylon. How were you encouraged to trust God, and His Word, by seeing another example of specific and accurate prophecy from the Bible? How does prophecy function like a divine fingerprint upon the Bible?
- When the children of Israel returned to Jerusalem, we learned that their first real action towards restoration was to begin worshiping the Lord again. They restarted their worship long before they had a building to worship in. We learned the importance of building a spiritual building over a physical one. Let's respond to the phrase..."doing comes before having" and discuss as a group what this means as it relates to our own church.
- Once the people began rebuilding the temple and laid the new foundation, there was a celebration moment. The younger people celebrated because they were building a temple and they had never had one. The elders wept because the new one paled in comparison to the glory of the old one. The Bible says that the sound of laughter and weeping were indistinguishable...some were filled with rejoicing and others with grief. In what ways does our tendency to want things the way they used to be have the potential to rob us of God's joy in what God is doing now?

#### **Additional Scriptures for Deeper Study:**

- 1 Peter 2:2-11 Believers are a spiritual building.
- 1 Corinthians 3:9 You are God's building.
- Jeremiah 29:10-14 Prophecy of returning.

**Application: How can I apply this to my life this week?**

- If God could use just one person who was committed to faithful obedience, to accomplish so much for His people in Judah, how might God use you if you purposely walk in obedience to His word? Do you believe that God can use you to make a difference?
- Since we've learned that building a spiritual building is more important than building a physical one, what would God say to you about your walk and worship...while we wait on God to give our church a place?
- Let's look deep into our heart of hearts. How connected are we to the way things used to be? How open are we to the things that God wants to do now? Will you weep or rejoice when God moves...will you accept with gratitude the things that are new, or compare them to the old things that have passed away?