

Discussion Guide For the Week of Nov. 11, 2018

Read Ezra 1:1-6; 3:7-13; Ecclesiastes 3:1-13

- After an extended period of time, God stirred the heart of Cyrus, King of Persia, to allow the Jews to return to Jerusalem so they could rebuild the temple (Ezra 1:1-4). The Jews had a mixed response when they finished the foundation of the temple (Ezra 3:10-13).
- Does it strike you as odd that the same event caused some to shout for joy and others to weep with sorrow? Why would some be overcome with sorrow?
- Ecclesiastes 3:1-13 says there is a time for everything: new life and death; killing and healing; crying and laughing; keeping and throwing away; love and hate; etc. Eccl. 3:11 suggests God has a hand in determining “what time” it is – and it even suggests that even the “bad times” can be “beautiful.” How can the “bad times” of death, grief, war, hate, etc., possibly be “beautiful?”
- Eccl. 3:11b says we can’t always see or understand the whole scope of what God is doing in our lives or in the world around us. Does it help to know God may be doing something beyond our ability to know or understand?
- It’s not always easy to know what “time” the people around us are going through. How can you know when the people around you are going through “bad times?” When you have gone through “bad times” in your life, there were, hopefully, people who helped you. How can you be helpful to others when they are going through “bad times?”
- Spend some time in prayer silently meditating on these passages. Ask God to show you what specific steps you should take in response. What would He have you do?