



Stuff They Didn't Teach Me In Sunday School



Episode 100 - Coming Home at Last (Ezra and Nehemiah)

After a long time in captivity—as many as 70 years—the time has finally come to go home. Those first companies of Jews might have been very excited, remembering their cities, their childhood homes, the streets they ran and played on. But when they arrived the only thing greeting them were piles of rubble.

- Have you ever had your house demolished through storm or fire? Describe the thoughts and emotions that flooded your mind when you saw the rubble for the first time.
- How can rebuilding shattered relationships be similar to sorting through the rubble that used to be your house?

Rebuilding the city walls and the temple in Jerusalem were difficult. When Solomon built the first temple, Israel was enjoying a golden age without comparison. Gold, silver and expensive building materials were plentiful. But that time was long gone. Lacking Solomon's manpower and his resources it was obvious to everyone the new temple and the new Jerusalem would have to be built on a much humbler scale.

- What would be the hardest part of downsizing if you faced financial hardships or health problems?
- What words of advice can you give a friend facing the realization that life will never be the same because of failing health, marriage or finances?

The prophet Haggai noted the disappointment of those who had seen the glory of Solomon's temple and now looked at the modest new temple. In reply he gives a bold promise about this very temple. (Read Haggai 2:1-9.)

- In what ways does God's promise of the Holy Spirit remaining in our midst help us accept the downsizing we face in this life?
- What reaction do you think believers had when they heard God's promise that the Messiah—His own Son—will stand in these very courts and proclaim the peace of the Gospel?
- Consider how you feel about the places where you meet Jesus Christ as you study the Bible. How does His presence transcend and transform that location for you?