**The Foundation**

**(Ezra 3:7-13)**

**Yearly Theme: *“Joy is…”***

**Series Title: *“Joy in Returning Home”***

**August 16th, 2020**

***Something to think about:***

Today, we continue to follow the story of the Israelites’ coming back home to Jerusalem and the rebuilding of the altar and Temple foundation in Jerusalem. Though they had wandered far from God, and suffered the consequences of their faulty decisions, God’s mercies and loved followed them throughout their season of exile and punishment and back to the Promised Land.

Let’s pick up the ongoing narrative that we’ve been exploring this month. After rebuilding the Altar of God as a place of worship, the people of God began the process of setting the foundation stones for the Holy Temple of God…

***Ezra 3:7-13 (NLT),***

***7  Then the people hired masons and carpenters and bought cedar logs from the people of Tyre and Sidon, paying them with food, wine, and olive oil. The logs were brought down from the Lebanon mountains and floated along the coast of the Mediterranean Sea to Joppa, for King Cyrus had given permission for this.***

***8  The construction of the Temple of God began in midspring, during the second year after they arrived in Jerusalem. The work force was made up of everyone who had returned from exile, including Zerubbabel son of Shealtiel, Jeshua son of Jehozadak and his fellow priests, and all the Levites. The Levites who were twenty years old or older were put in charge of rebuilding the LORD’s Temple. 9  The workers at the Temple of God were supervised by Jeshua with his sons and relatives, and Kadmiel and his sons, all descendants of Hodaviah. They were helped in this task by the Levites of the family of Henadad.***

***10  When the builders completed the foundation of the LORD’s Temple, the priests put on their robes and took their places to blow their trumpets. And the Levites, descendants of Asaph, clashed their cymbals to praise the LORD, just as King David had prescribed. 11  With praise and thanks, they sang this song to the LORD:***

***“He is so good!***

***His faithful love for Israel endures forever!”***

***Then all the people gave a great shout, praising the LORD because the foundation of the LORD’s Temple had been laid.***

***12  But many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders who had seen the first Temple wept aloud when they saw the new Temple’s foundation. The others, however, were shouting for joy. 13  The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud noise that could be heard far in the distance.***

So, what’s the most important takeaway from this passage today?

**Key Point: *“God’s love endures forever.”***

Let’s take a look at a couple aspects of this passage that focus us on God’s enduring love:

* **God’s love for us endures throughout every circumstance.**

*Ezra 3:11a (NLT), With praise and thanks, they sang this song to the LORD: “He is good! His faithful love for Israel endures forever!”*

* **God’s future glory is far greater than our previous successes.**

*Ezra 3:12-13 (NLT), 12  But many of the older priests, Levites, and other leaders who had seen the first Temple wept aloud when they saw the new Temple’s foundation. The others, however, were shouting for joy. 13  The joyful shouting and weeping mingled together in a loud noise that could be heard far in the distance.*

***Something to take home:***

We must remember…

**Key Point: *“God’s love endures forever.”***

We cannot live in the past glories of our (or God’s) successes. We must press on in the present realities of God’s new mercies. We mustn’t be so backward looking that we neglect to praise God in the present hope of His future glory.

Just as the older priests, Levites, and other leaders who had seen the first Temple (Solomon’s Temple) in all its glory, we too remember the Cross of Christ and the Empty Tomb. However, the cross of Christ and the Empty tomb pale in comparison to Jesus’ second coming when He will make all things new!

We, like the Israelites of old, have to come to grips with the fact that God is always doing something new in order to advance His perfect plan. When we pray, “Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven.” we desperately need to remember that what that looks like may be different than our expectations.

With our eyes fixed on Jesus, we must continue to press on and praise God for the accomplishments He works through us. We must honor the past, live in the present, and press on toward God’s glorious standard that will one day be consummated into life everlasting.

***2 Corinthians 4:16-18 (NLT), 16  That is why we never give up. Though our bodies are dying, our spirits are being renewed every day. 17  For our present troubles are small and won’t last very long. Yet they produce for us a glory that vastly outweighs them and will last forever! 18  So we don’t look at the troubles we can see now; rather, we fix our gaze on things that cannot be seen. For the things we see now will soon be gone, but the things we cannot see will last forever.***