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**I Love My Church**



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**Mess to Masterpiece | Ezra 3:8-18**

“And all the people shouted with a great shout when they praised the LORD, because the foundation of the house of the LORD was laid. <sup>12</sup> But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers’ houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy, <sup>13</sup> so that the people could not distinguish the sound of the joyful shout from the sound of the people’s weeping, for the people shouted with a great shout, and the sound was heard far away.” ~ Ezra 3:8-13



*Defeating Disappointment*

**Honesty** about the Past

**Charity** about the Future

**Optimism** \_\_\_\_\_ about the Present

“<sup>6</sup>This is the word of the LORD to Zerubbabel: Not by might, nor by power, but by my Spirit, says the LORD of hosts. <sup>7</sup>Who are you, O great mountain? Before Zerubbabel you shall become a plain. And he shall bring forward the top stone amid shouts of ‘Grace, grace to it!’ ” <sup>8</sup>Then the word of the LORD came to me, saying, <sup>9</sup>“The hands of Zerubbabel have laid the foundation of this house; his hands shall also complete it. Then you will know that the LORD of hosts has sent me to you. <sup>10</sup>For whoever has despised the day of small things shall rejoice, and shall see the plumb line in the hand of Zerubbabel.” - Zechariah 4:6-10

## Small Group Discussion Guide

### I Love My Church

#### Mess to Masterpiece | Ezra 3:8–13

##### The Big Idea

In Ezra 3 the returned exiles begin laying the foundation of the new temple. This milestone stirs mixed reactions: many who never saw the former temple rejoice, while others who remembered it weep. Together we'll explore possible reasons for their disappointment—and ours—and discover how God helps us move through discouragement toward joy.

##### Getting Started

God promised that the new temple would be “greater” (Haggai 2:9), yet to some it seemed inferior. Can you think of products, trends, or traditions that were “better back then” than they are today?

##### Digging Deeper

*Read Ezra 3:8-13 and discuss the following reasons they might have been disappointed.*

#### 1. Disappointed by Comparing

a. What were they comparing, and why do you think it saddened them?

b. How can comparing ourselves with others lead to either pride or self-pity?  
examples.

Share ex-

#### 2. Disappointed by Forgetting the Past

a. How do people today lose joy by dwelling too much on “what used to be”?

b. How does remembering how close we were to eternal separation from God—and the grace we now have—reshape how we face disappointment?

### **3. Disappointed by Overlooking the Future**

- a. God promised the glory of this temple would surpass the first (Haggai 2). In what ways would that prove true?
- b. God's promises are like previews of what He will do. What are some promises He gives us, and how can they help us push through disappointment?

### **4. Disappointed by Focusing on Flaws**

- a. Instead of noticing God's small but significant work, they magnified what wasn't going right. Through Haggai and Zechariah, God urged them: "Don't despise the day of small beginnings" (Zech. 4:10).
- b. How does this apply to how we view other Christians, our church, and ourselves?

### **Making It Real**

- 5. Take time to point out and thank God for "small beginnings"—the little ways you see Him at work in each other's lives.