

Going Deeper

Your weekly guide to understanding God with others

Nehemiah - Part 4 Heaven is our home

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Introduction

In Nehemiah 8:1-3, the Israelites gather at the Water Gate to hear Ezra read God's word. Relieved and happy to be home, they worship God. Nehemiah reminds them that "the joy of the Lord is your strength" – that is, the Lord is our place of permanency. Jesus reminds the people in John 7:2-10, 33-69 about the permanent home and the living water. Our life is a temporary dwelling and heaven, our permanency, is coming. When we understand that life is temporary it changes the way we live in this world.

Read: Nehemiah 8:1-18

Discuss

1. In our reading we find the Israelites celebrating the Feast of Booths. Why were they weeping? Share your feelings of coming home from a vacation or work trip.
2. Read verse 10. "This day is holy to our Lord, do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." The word 'strength' is translated as 'refuge' in many places in Scripture. What is your understanding of the word 'refuge'? What are some things we try to substitute for God as our refuge?
3. At the Feast of Booths (Hebrew name: Sukkot), it could be tempting for the Israelites to dwell in the city wall and for that wall to become a stronghold. Nehemiah reminds them that the Lord is our place of permanency. Jesus also reminds us that He is preparing a place for us. How should this promise change the way we live?
4. What do you think heaven is like?

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5. What is the importance of Jesus preparing a place for us in heaven?
6. What are you most attached to in this temporary life? Have you lost hope during the chaos of life? Read John 14:1-3. What does this verse mean to you?

Respond

What are some things we must let go of that are rotting our lives? Let's make a commitment to change and cultivate a habit of letting go of those things.