

## THIS WEEK'S MESSAGE

SEPTEMBER 25TH - 26TH, 2021 // BOOK OF NEHEMIAH

### REPOPULATION (NEHEMIAH 11:1-36) CHOOSING TO REBUILD THE CULTURE

Jerusalem already had some community leaders living in the city, but it needed to repopulate in order to thrive and grow.

- Many people cast lots to see who would move while **others volunteered to move out of their comfort zones in order to build back the culture and community of their people.**

### THE LIST OF PEOPLE MOVING INTO JERUSALEM

The people moving back into the city were Judah and Benjamin's descendants (common citizens), the priests and Levites (religious leaders), and the gatekeepers (military/security). It also mentions singers (artists). On the outskirts they had farming communities.

- The point is the **intentional diversity** of the community of God's people.

### GOD LOVES COMMUNITY

It doesn't have to be a large city. God loves people and wants us to be in a healthy community with Him and others.

- **Christians are not only called to be around people, we're called and empowered by His Spirit to be the "light of the city" that is not to be hidden (Mt. 5). Remember, insulation not isolation.**

### THE RISK OF COMMUNITY

**With people come problems.** In order to be in community we must learn to sacrifice our comforts for the greater good. We must also choose to live on mission where we are and be open to wherever God may send us.

- **Christian sacrifice is not just to God but to others. Are we willing to seek God's will for the benefit of other people?**

### SOUNDS LIKE THE MIGRATION TO ANOTHER CITY

As Christians we will eventually end up in a New Jerusalem. In order to get there **we must exchange our desires and wills for Jesus'.**

- The Bible is a book about migration. Hopefully, we're moving through life on our way to eternity with Jesus. In the migration towards our new home, **we're to bring as many people with us as possible.**

### MINISTRY (NEHEMIAH 12:1-26)

#### A HISTORY OF CONSISTENT MINISTRY

V1-26 lists various time periods in order to validate the religious authority of the priesthood in Jerusalem. This is important because it shows that **the ministry of God never stopped during turbulent times.**

- The ministry includes all people that claim to follow Christ. **Are we ministering to others in the worst of times?**

#### KNOWING THE PAST HELPS NAVIGATE THE PRESENT

Tracing back the history of the Levites helped determine how they were to lead the people, similar to **teaching straight from the Word so the Bible steers our decisions not culture.**

- People haven't changed. **If we are to weather and navigate the chaos of our time, we must go back to the source of how we are to live, the Word of God.**

#### THEOLOGY AND METHODOLOGY

**Our beliefs on God must never change because He and His principles never do.** Some methods by which we serve and reach our community may evolve and change, but the message must stay the same.

- **Are we being creative, gracious, and persistent in building bridges with others while still holding firmly to the Word?**

### DEDICATION (NEHEMIAH 12:27-43)

#### DEDICATING THE ENTIRE WALL

The repopulation and the established history of the priests set up the formal dedication of the wall. Though the wall was just stone, it symbolized a renewed purpose and distinction for the Jews.

- The dedication was a huge celebration with music, singers, worship, and personal "purification."

### ADDRESSING OUR SIN FIRST

V30 says the Levites purified themselves, then they "purified the people, the city gates, and the wall."

- We learn from that **we must first address the sin in ourselves before trying to help others. We also learn that if the city/community is going to be healthy, we must first address the evil in us.**

### "THANKSGIVING PROCESSIONS"

Nehemiah had 2 groups circle the city in opposite directions that would eventually meet at the temple. Their primary purpose was to thank God for the success of the wall.

- **We need to celebrate present and past "wins" in our lives because it strengthens God's reputation in our lives. Remembering wins helps us in times of doubt.**

### THEY ENDED THE CELEBRATION AT THE TEMPLE

The completion of the wall was a gift from God. After the celebration, the people ended at the temple and "offered great sacrifices." The rejoicing "was heard far away."

- Concluding at the temple was a reminder that **joy isn't found in the gifts of God but in God Himself. If we're not careful, we can focus more on gifts than the Giver of gifts.**

### THE WORK CONTINUES (NEHEMIAH 12:44-47)

#### AFTER THE DEDICATION OF THE WALL

In the time following the dedication of the wall and the repopulation of the city, the community got back to the work of living out the commands of God given through God's Word.

- There was still work to be done. People still had to be appointed for the supplies and finances of the community, teaching the Word, and protecting the city.

### THERE IS ALWAYS WORK TO BE DONE

Humanity will never reach a point of perfection until Christ returns and "glorifies" our minds and bodies. Until this life is over, we **must be working to love others by serving them and sharing the gospel of Christ.**

- **Celebrating the past is fine, but we must also be present and building disciples of Christ for the future.**

### IT STARTS WITH PERSONAL SANCTIFICATION

Nehemiah wrote that the Levites "performed the service of their God and the service of purification." As we read in V30, purification begins with self, and **we continually need work.**

- Just like society needs continual help, so do we as individuals. **Sanctification is the process by which we are always evolving to be more like Christ.**

### BEING THE LIGHT IN DARK TIMES

- We're called to be in community because it grows our faith, protects us, and enables us to do the work of God more efficiently.
- We are also called to build relationships with all kinds of people in the hope of sharing truth and love with them. It is only **in building relationships that we can be the light in a dark world.**

### THE MINISTRY CANNOT SLOW DOWN

- Ministering to other Christians and to people that don't know Jesus yet cannot stop or even slow down during turbulent times. **Tumultuous times should be when the church shines the brightest.**
- **Are we pouring into people, being gracious, speaking kindly, and building relationships with non-believers?**

### SANCTIFICATION

- If we are to be set apart as holy people for God's use, we must firmly hold onto the truth of God's Word while exploring new ways of sharing that truth.
- Sanctification only happens when our focus is more on God than ourselves. It must become less about blessings and more about the One Who blesses.

### ANOTHER QUICK INVENTORY

- What Christians do you have in your life to challenge and encourage you?
- Are we building relationships with non-Christians? Are we balancing love and truth?
- Are we firmly holding onto the Word?
- Are we praying for creative ways to share the truth?
- Will we push forward when it gets harder?