

Building What Lasts

A SERIES IN NEHEMIAH

LIFE
GROUPS

WEEK 1 • SEPT 13

NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

If you could choose to remain an age forever, what age would you choose?

BACKGROUND

Sunday begins a seven-week sermon series looking at the book Nehemiah. However, to fully appreciate this book, we must first understand its place in the history of God's chosen people. Ezra and Nehemiah are about to return from Babylonian captivity to restore the temple and Jerusalem's walls. In our English Bible Ezra follows 2 Chronicles, picking up the story where 2 Chronicles leaves it. Many biblical scholars place Ezra and Nehemiah as one book in the Hebrew canon in the historical sense. However, within the same timeframe of these two books are the books of Ester, Haggai and Malachi. These same scholars consider the author of both books to be Ezra. The primary biblical characters in this period were Zerubbabel, Ezra, Esther, Nehemiah, Haggai and Malachi.

Zerubbabel leads the first group of Hebrew exiles back to Judah under King Cyrus's decree to rebuild the Temple and Jerusalem's walls. Outside pressure and distractions prevent them from completing the work. Ezra later returns with another group to assist Zerubbabel. Together they rebuilt a smaller, less elaborate Temple, but Jerusalem's walls remain unfinished and its people unsettled.

The book of Nehemiah begins approximately 70+ years after Zerubbabel and 12-14 years after Ezra's return to Judah. Upon Nehemiah learning of Ezra's problems, Nehemiah immediately goes into fasting and prayer to God in Heaven. You will find his prayer in Nehemiah 1:5-10. Note there are multiple Nehemiah's mentioned in the Bible but only one is the son of Hacaliah here in the Book Nehemiah.

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?



KEY VERSES: Nehemiah 1:3

And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire."

READ: Nehemiah 1



HEAD LEVEL: *What does it say? These help us to examine what the Word tells us.*

1. How did Nehemiah react to the news from his brother Hanani?
2. What does Nehemiah's prayer tell us about the connection between confession, repentance and mercy?
3. What does Nehemiah's role as cupbearer suggest about providence, vocation and influence?

DIGGING DEEPER - NEHEMIAH'S PRAYER

- Why is Nehemiah's confession of sin significant and how does this reflect his understanding of the spiritual state of his people?
- What point is Nehemiah making in verses 8-9?
- What does Nehemiah remind the Lord of in verse 10?
- Why was it important for Nehemiah to pray for success with the King in verse 11?
- Which qualities of God does Nehemiah emphasize and why do they matter for his prayer?



HEART LEVEL: *What does it mean? These questions help us shape our beliefs around the objective truth of God's word.*

1. How does Nehemiah's prayer reflect his understanding of God's character?
2. In Nehemiah 1:8, Nehemiah recalls God's promises to Moses. How can we use God's promises in our own prayers?
3. What role does fasting play in Nehemiah's response and what is its significance for us today?



HANDS LEVEL: *What does it mean to me? These questions help us commit to live out the truth in our everyday lives and commit to potential next steps.*

1. What are the needs in our community and how can you respond to them in a way that reflects Nehemiah's example?
2. What need is God placing before you right now?
3. Which promise or truth from scripture do you need to bring into your present concern?



MEMORY VERSE: Nehemiah 1:5

And I said, "O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments."

PRAYER REQUESTS:

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)