



BRUDEN FOR THE RUBBLE

Nehemiah | 10.5.25

Libin Abraham

(The following text is automatically generated and has not been edited)

Libin Abraham 0:00

One of the stories that one of our missionaries told me this week. She is a an amazing woman of God who serves in war torn countries around the world, in places like Ukraine, all across the Middle East and Afghanistan. She told us a story, because what they do is significant. They bring the hope of Jesus and the gospel and tangible help to minister to people who have literally lost everything, who are fleeing homes and have their lives completely devastated. He told me the story of a man who came to Christ through their ministry a couple of years ago, and he was disciplined, and they were celebrating his story of conversion. He even went through their ministry training program and became a pastor, a key leader in their network, only to then realize he was a spy sent by a Middle Eastern government to spy out and to scout out what this ministry was doing. And he took the long term strategy to go through all of this. I'm like, how did this guy not get saved in the process. But he went through this long journey and did what he came to do. He turned in the name of every pastor, every missionary, every leader in this organization, to the government, and sure enough, the government began to call forward every pastor and leader and interrogate them with the intention of arresting them or doing something far worse to them. But don't you know what the enemy meant for evil, God turns around for good. And what happened is that they did ask some of the missionaries to leave, but they told the local pastors, you all need to stay. And in fact, we need you to keep doing what you've been doing, because this might be the only hope for millions of people who have flown the war, who have left their homes, and in fact, we want you to set up shop a Ministry Center at the border of Gaza, and we want you to serve hundreds and 1000s of people keep doing what you're doing. That was incredible favor. Can we just praise God for that? So our missionary left missions week this week and is now setting up a ministry center on the border of that region of the country. Hearing stories like this and so many others this week just reminded me that Jesus is at work in the rubble of the world, that God is moving amidst the rubble of broken cities and broken families and broken lives, but he is bringing beauty out of ashes and creating hope and life and church. This is what we get to be a part of. I don't know about you, but when something breaks in my house, I'm pretty quick to fix it. If I just hear the garage door squeaking, where's my WD, 40 or whatever I can get my hands on to fix it. We're good at fixing things when they're broken in our life, but unfortunately, many people have learned to look away from the brokenness of the world. As we hear stories of war and violence, we tend to scroll through the rubble and passed it. Do you know that every single week, 60,000 children die of hunger related causes? 60,000 a week. That's the size of Ullis that many children a week die of hunger related causes, more than 2.5 billion people in the world still have no access to clean water or proper nutrition that in America, suicide rates in the last 20 years have increased 35% due to loneliness and despair. We can't get desensitized to still the brokenness of the world and let another shooting or another cause of injustice or act of injustice be just a headline that we look beyond. We've got to feel it. What about the moral decay of our world and even in our own nation, where we've lost a compass for what is good versus bad or evil and right versus wrong? Perhaps for you, the brokenness isn't just out there somewhere in the distance. It could be within your own family, brokenness in a marriage or in a strange relationship between a child or a parent. It could be a friend or a neighbor who is so wounded and confused that they've pushed everyone out and you're wondering, how do I serve them? How do I help? Perhaps the greatest sign of brokenness today is that even today, 2025 2000 years, almost since the resurrection of Jesus, we have 3.5 billion people who are considered unreached the gospel, most of which have never heard the name Jesus, who haven't heard the gospel yet, and they're on their way to an eternity apart from Christ, unless someone goes and tells them what Jesus did for them. It's convenient to scroll past the brokenness and the rubble, but the very heart of missions and the heart of our church and your heart is that we refuse to do nothing about the brokenness and lostness of the world. We don't scroll past the rubble. No, no. We. Ask God to use us and to send us and to move among us, so that his light can come into darkness, his hope can come into the brokenness, his life can enter the despair of our world. And God used our church, from

every family, every neighborhood, every people group in the world, we refuse to scroll past the rubble. Can I get an amen? Isn't that what our heart is? That's why we do missions. That's why we give, that's why we send and we celebrate the stories of how Jesus moves in the rubble, because we refuse to look past it. That is precisely the story of a man in the Old Testament by the name of Nehemiah. Nehemiah heard about the rubble of his home city, Jerusalem, and it would have been really convenient for him to ignore what he heard. But he doesn't. He doesn't ignore it. Rather, he engages fully in the mission of God in his day, in his generation, and he gives himself over to being a part of God building up a city and building up a people, he leaves incredible, comfortable life to build up a city so that God could build up a people. Over the next eight weeks, we're going to be in the story of Nehemiah. And Nehemiah's story is an invitation for us. What will we do in the brokenness of our world, in our day, in our age, in our time. How do we see our story as part of God's redemption story in the world? How are we to feel? How are we to respond to the brokenness and the rubble of our city and of our role? What are the challenges we can expect and what are the miracles we can anticipate as we join God in his mission. What is God's view of justice and righteousness in the world? How do we endure through opposition and discouragement? How do we stay the course in the long haul to be part of this missional move of God on the earth? To give us a little context of where we find ourselves in the story of God, in the book of Nehemiah. It's important to know that before we get to the days of Nehemiah, the people of God that He rescued for himself from slavery had now sunk deep into sin and rebellion against God, and God had told them, Look, unless you repent, I'm going to have to give you over to the nations. I'm going to have to send you into exile, but repent, come back to me. And sure enough, they didn't repent. They didn't return to God. And so God did the only thing that would bring them back, which was to send them into exile. So this is what happens in 605, BC, King Nebuchadnezzar comes to rule, and the Babylonian Empire is now the leading empire of the day. And their first deportation was to take the brightest young men of Jerusalem and bring them to Babylon. So that's where you get Daniel Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego being exiled into Babylon. But still, the people of God didn't repent. So later, in 586 Babylon comes into Jerusalem and completely destroys the city. That burned down the temple, tear down the walls of Jerusalem. Now you have a city in ruin, and majority of the people in Jerusalem are deported, taken into exile, into Babylon. This is the exile that would last 70 years. A whole generation of people will live in the Babylonian exile. But God had promised them, if you repent, I'll bring you home. Let's all read the verse through Jeremiah. I know the plans I have for you, plans to prosper you, to bring you to an expected future, to bring you home. At the end of those 70 years, Babylon is overthrown by Persia, and King Cyrus comes to rule. And Cyrus gives a decree saying, hey, Jews, you can go home. You're free to go back home. And here's the deal. In Babylon, at this time, there were over 100,000 some people more, several 100 1000s of people living in exile, and Cyrus gave the decree for them to return home. And you would think every single one of them would head home, but they did it. Only 50,000 people of the several 100 1000s of people went back home. Why? Why would they leave the most advanced, leading, prosperous, comfortable nation in the world and go back to a city that was still in ruins? Jerusalem seemed hopeless, so only 50,000 of the several hundreds of 1000s of people left captivity and went home, but the 50,000 that went home, they got to work. They began to lay a foundation for the temple, and by the time you get to 536, BC, they laid the foundation of the temple to rebuild the Second Temple. But things got hard. They faced discouragement and opposition, so they left the temple work for 20 years, and instead, they built their own lives and their homes and their families, but they forgot about God's temple, and eventually, in 516 BC, the temple is dedicated.

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They have a fully built temple, but they still had a city in ruins, which. Without a wall, which meant they had no protection. They were exposed to their hostile neighbors and their enemies, and now a city still lies in ruin. And then 70 years later, we get to Nehemiah and the burden he feels for Jerusalem. Now here's the deal. Since 586 BC, when Jerusalem was destroyed, to the time we get to Nehemiah story, it's been 141 years. It's a long time. 141 years of a city lying in ruins, walls destroyed, Temple burned, it's rebuilt, but still a people who don't have safety. And over the course of this, people, people who could have gone back during Cyrus's decree, chose not to, because they felt so hopeless. And even those that came back 70 years now, they're like, it's just the way things are. They accepted status quo and gave up of a city that could be restored and rebuilt. People had lost all hope. They settled for the rubble, instead of wanting to see it Redeemed and Restored according to the promises of God. But then it just took one man who felt the heart of God, who saw through eyes of faith, and sought what could be not just what is. And by the time you get to Nehemiah chapter one, you see Nehemiah who didn't have to care, who didn't have to worry, who didn't have to leave his convenience. He chose to do so, and he did three things in Nehemiah chapter one that we must do as we engage the brokenness of the world. So that's we're going to be today, Nehemiah chapter one. Three things Nehemiah chose to do that we must choose to do if we want to see a spark of restoration, revival and renewal, both in the world and right around us, three things we must do as we engage in the brokenness of the world. So let's begin in Nehemiah. Chapter One. Verse One says like this, the words of Nehemiah, son of

hakaliah. You know, Stacy and I were counting the number of families we know in our church, we're expecting kids. It was like 13 families. I'm just offering this as a great name for kids, boy or girl, hakaliah. It'd be great. I couldn't convince Stacy, but maybe you guys, you can convince your wife That's a great name. Hakaliah during the month of Kislev in the 20th year, when I was in the fortress city of Susa Hanani, one of my brothers arrived with men from Judah, and I questioned them about Jerusalem and the Jewish remnant that has survived the exile. These first few verses give us a lot of context to where Nehemiah is and what he is doing. At the end of chapter one, we read and we hear that Nehemiah is a cup bearer to the king. A cup bearer was a pretty cush job. It was awesome. You got to taste all of the wine and all the king's food before he took it, in case there was poison, right? And if there was poison, the cup bearer would need a pallbearer, because he would die instead of the king, right? But over time, the king and the cup bearer would develop a really close relationship, because this was somebody he could trust, someone willing to die for the king. And most people say, outside of the king's wife, the cup bearer was actually the most trusted relationship a king had. In fact, a cup bearer was a trusted advisor and a counselor to the king. He would be an expert in legal proceedings and in the affairs of the country. So this was not Nehemiah who was just an errand boy for the king. No, no, he was in an exalted position, perhaps the highest position a Jew could arrive at, except for Queen Esther, by the way. But he was in an elevated position to the king. And we read in the text, this is the month of Kislev, which is one of the winter months in Persia, and where is Nehemiah. He is living in the fortress city of Susa. So here's a map I want to show you on the screen. There's Jerusalem, there's Babylon to the right, and then Susa is about 150 miles east or right of Babylon, right by the Persian Gulf. It's where the beach is. It's where, if you could afford it, you will leave the winter months, and you would go live in Susa, if you could afford it. It's the Palm Springs of Persia. It's lush, it's comfortable, it's convenient. All of the luxuries of the world are there. So here's what you get. Nehemiah has got incredible influence, power, access. He's serving at the right hand of the king, and now he's in Susa having it made. I mean, this dude is living more comfortably than the American dream. He's enjoying life, tasting the best of the wine, the best of food, serving in Susa, this fortress city, protected, safe. Nothing can get to him. And then comes one of his brothers, the Judah and Nehemiah choose us to do this. First thing that we must do, he asked simply a question. Notice what the text said. He questioned him about Jerusalem. He asked a question, Nehemiah, don't you do this. Don't go here. Don't ask. You know, sometimes you ask a question. You're like, Oh, why did I ask that question? Well, here is Nehemiah living in all of his comfort security, but he chooses curiosity over comfort, and he asked a question about Jerusalem. He said, How is Jerusalem. Tell me about our people, tell me about our city. What's happening. I need to know. He didn't just say hey, and I hope things are well. You know, when somebody says, I hope you're well, they don't really want to know how you're doing. But if they ask you, tell me how you're doing, then they want to know. And here's Nehemiah, actually wanting to know how they're doing. Nehemiah didn't need to ask the question. Nehemiah has never been to Jerusalem. He grew up in captivity. He could have said, You know what, I'm too far away because Susa is more than 900 miles from Jerusalem. He could have concluded, look, let the 50,000 people who are there take care of Jerusalem. I don't need to worry, but he chooses to care. Here's why, because distance does not excuse indifference. He was distant from Jerusalem, but he chose to ask a question, because distance does not excuse indifference, and the story of how God has moved on the earth is with people who simply ask the question about the brokenness of the world. One professor once asked the student, what do you think is the biggest problem in society? Is it ignorance or apathy? And the student said, I don't know, and I don't care. That's a more comfortable way to live. I don't know. I don't care, but that's not what Nehemiah does. He questions Jerusalem tell me about my city, and here's what he's saying. This question simply is a statement that I care. I care because I choose to care, even if I don't need to or have to. I could be living in convenience, but I'm choosing to care. It's like Moses and Midian, finally away from Egypt, but he chooses to care about the slavery of people in Egypt. It's like Queen Esther, who is incredibly influential as Queen of Persia, but she chooses to care about the plight of our people. It's like Daniel, who is in Babylon, who was in Babylon, but daily praying for the restoration of his people. Just because you're far away doesn't mean we get to turn away. Distance is not an excuse for indifference. We choose to care. Why? Because God cares, and God sees and he longs for the restoration of lives and homes and families and cities and people groups to know Him. So this is where sparks of revival happen. It's for the people who don't have to care, but they choose to care, and they come to the conclusion, my distance is not an excuse for indifference. Nehemiah, though he didn't need to question he does ask a question about Jerusalem, and he gets the answer. And here's the answer in verse three, the brother tells him they said to me, the remnant in the province who survived the exile are in great trouble and disgrace. Jerusalem's wall has been broken down and its gates have been burned. They tell him the reality of his city, that he's never been to Nehemiah 141, years, and the city is still burned. The walls are still torn down, and your people, God's people, are living in disgrace and in danger. Ancient cities, the wall represented security, identity and dignity. Without a wall, you were exposed to all of your enemies. Without a wall, you stood the danger of extinction without any protection. And here it is a city for 141 years, existing like this in Nehemiah, as he sees the disgrace of God's people, the danger to their life, he begins to care.

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Then he leads them. Leads him to the second thing in emotion, he begins with a question. He gets the answer of a people living in disgrace, in great calamity, because the wall wasn't just about protection, it was It wasn't just about exclusion, it was about their protection. And as he finds out the reality of the city he loves and the people he loves, it leads him to an emotion. A question led to an emotion. And here's the emotion that Nehemiah feels in verse four, when I heard these words, when I heard the king. Addition of God's people and of the city of Jerusalem. When I heard these words, I sat down and what did I do? I wept, I mourned for a number of days. He didn't pass the news on. Oh, that's just another headline. That's just the way that things are always going to be. If the 50,000 couldn't fix it, there's nothing I can do. No, no, he didn't settle for the status quo. His question led to an emotion, and the emotion was to simply lament and to weep and to feel the pain of God for the brokenness of the city Nehemiah could have chosen to grow numb and apathetic, but he chose to feel what God feels about the brokenness of the world. Often tell the story of a guy who would show up to Starbucks every Sunday morning or every weekday morning for his private devotion. He would tell God what was on his heart. And one day, God told him, why don't you today ask me what's on my heart? And he began to lament and weep, because he saw what God saw. Saw faces of people and cities who did not know Jesus, and he was baptized with the lament of the father, because God sees and He grieves over the brokenness of the world. And here Nehemiah's question leads to an emotion of weeping and lamenting. So really, this chapter asks us the question, will our hearts be tender enough to feel what God feels about the brokenness and lostness of the world? Will we choose to let God break our heart for the things that break his heart. Or will we numb it with entertainment, comfort, busyness, just ignore it, leaving it for someone else to fix. Or do we ask ourselves, as many of our missionaries and partners have, God help me feel what you feel to lament now to lament is not to feel guilty about the blessings that we have, because honestly, we're all super blessed, aren't we, to be in a setting like this, to be able to give and to support and to raise our families here in our city and our nation, that is an incredible blessing. So it is not to feel guilty, but it is to ask God through lament, how can I steward my blessing? Lament actually postures us to hear from God how we can steward our life and our resources and our time for the things that matter the most to God, for what he sees and what he feels and how we can be a part of the story of God. It's an invitation to feel what he feels. Nehemiah's question was a statement of him caring. His emotion was I lament. So his question led to an emotion, and then his emotion leads to a reaction. What's he going to do now? Well, here's verse four. It says again, when I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days doing what, fasting and praying before the God of the heavens. In the Book of Nehemiah, we read about Nehemiah praying at least 11 times, but we know in settings like this, he spent days mourning, fasting and praying and all throughout the book, as the work is going on and God is using him to rebuild a city, he kept coming back to a place of intercession and prayer, because he was not fixing his gaze on the brokenness of the world. He was fixing his gaze on God. That's how the brokenness of the world didn't lead him to despair. He kept coming back to his heavenly Father, bringing the pain of the world to God. He kept fasting and praying and interceding before the Father, taking his pain to his father. It was a ministry. It was a mission. It was a life covered and immersed in prayer. So if the question says I care, and the emotion says that I lament, and the reaction is, I pray, we go to God that we don't first start with our blueprints and strategies. We began with seeking Him and feeling his heart, and that's where the blueprint and the strategy comes. Had Nehemiah not gone to God in prayer, he would, one, either be overwhelmed by the brokenness he sees, or two, would have acted in the flesh. But the first resort, not the last option, but the first resort was to go to God in prayer. So when we see the brokenness of the world and we hear another headline, it is right and good to start in prayer. There's an end there, but it always starts there, and that's what carries us through, because it's that reaction to prayer. Pray. That leads to the action in chapter two, reaction leads to action. And our first reaction to the world, to the world's brokenness, is to go to the Father, say, God, what do you want me to do? How do you want me to respond? What do you want me to see who are the people you're calling me to be a part of in this mission, question leads to an emotion. Leads to a reaction. Sometimes, when we see the brokenness of our world, we don't know how to pray, and so we feel incredibly overwhelmed and at loss. So I think it's beautiful that the rest of Nehemiah chapter one is this prayer, how to pray when you see the brokenness of the world, how to engage with the heart of the Father. So here's his prayer. I want to just give you a few handles of how Nehemiah prayed, because perhaps it could help you pray and help me pray when we see the brokenness of the world. His prayer begins with regaining perspective. Regaining perspective. He begins his prayer by saying this. I said, Lord the God of the heavens, the great and awe inspiring God who keeps His gracious covenant with those who love Him and keep His commands. He begins by reminding himself of who God is. You are, the great and awe inspiring god of the heavens, God you do keep your covenant with those who obey your commands. He begins with a perspective on who God is, because sometimes, when your problem seems so big, your God can seem so small, but that's just an illusion. The crisis of the world, the brokenness of the world, the chaos of our world, does not limit or decrease the size and power of our God.

And here Nehemiah reminds himself, God, you are the God of the heavens. You are the awe inspiring one. And maybe today, some of you are living through your own brokenness. It's a diagnosis you just received. It's a person in your life. It's something in your home, in your family, in your life, and you have lost sight of perspective. And today, begin with how Nehemiah prayed, start to trust God again, start to see through the rubble and see the greatness of your God. Say to God, you are the one who made me. You are the one who put this family together. You are the one who called me. You are the one who provides for me, and I am in your hands. Get a perspective of the greatness of God, even in the midst of the rubble of the world. That's what keeps you from despair. That's what keeps you from quitting. This is where Nehemiah begins. He reminds himself in prayer of who God is. But then his prayer goes into confession. Notice what he says, Let your eyes be open and your ears be attentive to hear your servant's prayer that I now pray to you day and night, for your servants, the Israelites. I confess the sins. Notice this, the sins we have committed against you both. I and my father's family have sinned. Sometimes, when we see with the world's brokenness, you know what we do? Whose fault is it? Who can I blame? Which party is at fault who did this? That's not what he does. Is it? What does he do? He confesses his sins and the sins of His Father. That's wild to me, because Nehemiah wasn't alive 141, years ago when God brought judgment on Judah, but yet he embraces the collective identity of his people, and before he could see his role in the solution, he embraces the sin, and He says, I'm sorry God for what I've done. I'm sorry for my fathers and what my family has done. This is where in prayer, our walls of defense come down, and we allow God to search us, and we stand on behalf of even others, and we offer a collective repentance to the Lord. We say, God forgive us. You own what's yours, and even if there's nothing for you to own, you just still take this posture of humility with a contrite heart and say, God, would you look in my heart and our story and our people? Oh, this is a posture of humility and confession, letting the Lord search our own heart, no fault, finding and blaming, but confession,

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Nehemiah gains a perspective the greatness of God, moving him to confession, a personal confession for a collective people. And then he holds on to the promises of God. Notice what He doesn't ask. Please remember what you commanded, Lord. You commanded Your servant, Moses. So he begins to go through the first few books of the Old Testament in what God had promised to Moses. And here's the specific promise Nehemiah holds on to. Here's the promise God, if you are unfaithful, God said, I will scatter you among the peoples. But if you return to me and carefully observe my commands, even though your exiles were banished to the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I chose to have my name dwell. Nehemiah goes through the oracles of God's promise, and he picks one, and he says to God, God, remember what you said to Moses. Remember you promised your servant, Moses said, Okay, if we sin, you'll scatter us to the nations, but if we repent, you will gather us even from the furthest horizon, and you will bring us back home. He is quoting the words of God back to God. And I have to wonder, did God need the reminding, or did Nehemiah need the reminding? I have a feeling Nehemiah needed to remind me more than God. He needed to remember the promises of God. He needed to go back in memory lane and remember what God had promised. He needed to hold on to something that was true that made his journey worth it, that made his mission worth it, and he anchors his next steps on the promises of God. Someone told me once, when you pray, take your Bible with you, because as you're praying, pouring out your heart, search through the scriptures and find the promises of God. Find the promise for your pain, find a promise for your difficulty, find a promise from God that He has promised you, and let that promise lift your soul again. This is how you don't become in despair as you engage in the brokenness of the world. No, no, you hold on to his promise. You gain a perspective of who he is, the next part of his of his prayer is he recounts the history of God with his people. He says, They are Your servants and your people, essentially, I think, offloaded the burden. And say, God, they're not my people. They're yours. And guess what? You redeem them by your great power and great hand. He's saying, in other words, God, you've done this before. You've rescued your people from Israel, from Egypt through slavery, you provided manna from heaven, water from a rock. You split the Red Sea. You can do this because if you've done it before, you can do it again. He recounts the history of God to His people to bolster his inner being in confidence that God is able, that he still has a mighty strong hand, that his hand is not short, that it cannot heal, his ear is not stricken, that it cannot hear. No, no, God, you are the same, yesterday, today and forever. He's reminding his soul of the history of God and His people. And now Nehemiah comes to his plea after having, after having gained a perspective confessing his sins and the sins of His people, after having gained a reminder of the promises of God and the history of God. Now he comes to plea, and isn't it interesting? That's why we often begin our prayer with plea. Panhe Maya has gone through this whole journey in prayer over many days, fasting, mourning, praying, weeping, and I imagine it was during that season of prayer that he even knew what to do. Now he asked God for specific help. Please, Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and to that of your servants who delight to reveal rear your name. Give your servant success today and grant him compassion. In the presence of this man, he's about to go to

the king and make a pretty bold, risky request that could get him killed. But after having remembered who God is, His promises gaining confidence in his heart, he says, God, here is my plea. Here is what I want you to do. Here is what I am asking of you to do. Give me success today, as I take this bold step of faith and confidence in you and present this request before the king. This is what he does, and this is what we must do as we engage in the brokenness of the world. It begins with that question, leading to an emotion, but it leads to a reaction. And I wonder today, what the question today is, what is your Jerusalem that you're being inspired to ask about. What is the question that you have silenced for a long time, even today, as you make your way to the lobby and see some of our mission leaders and partners, perhaps, ask them about the plight of the people that they're serving. Maybe there's a ministry on your heart or a country that God has given you a burden for and you don't see it represented, that might lead you to a risky question that could alter the course of your life, causing you to leave the comfort of your home step into God's work in the nations. What is the question? Question that's worth asking. Yeah, I know it's risky, it's courageous, but it's where we must begin, because that question is a statement that we care, and we choose to care. That question leads to an emotion all of us, as we see the brokenness in real time of our world. Let's not know men any longer, let's feel what God feels. But we don't go and be paralyzed by the pain of this world. We take it to God in prayer, reminding our soul of his promise, history, gaining perspective, confessing our role in that, our sins, and asking for him to give us wisdom and grace. We lament, we ask questions, we're curious, we care, and we pray. I know there's some in this room and maybe some online who you can't even see beyond your own rubble. You can't think about the brokenness of the world, because you see your life story, and you look within and it seems broken, it seems lost. And today, I just want to encourage you of the gospel truths that Jesus is the ultimate Nehemiah. Why Jesus was seated at the right hand of the Father. Jesus left Souza, which was heaven? If Souza was comfortable for Nehemiah, Heaven was Christ's palace. He was a center of worship and adornment. Yet, when he saw the brokenness of our life, of our world, For God so loved the world, he sent his son. He went on our journey, longer than Susan to Jerusalem, but from heaven to earth, he took on our sin, our brokenness. He saw you, he saw me, he saw our sin, he saw our brokenness, and he knew the only way for us to be saved was for him to go on a journey, walk in our shoes and not just rebuild a city, but restore a people to Himself. Jesus did that for you, and you just need to know today he's available to do that for you, if you deal with the brokenness of your sin or the sin against you, if you'll deal with the wounding of your heart and the brokenness of your family or the relationship we have the Prince of Peace, who has come to mend the broken heart, to give hope to the hearts that feel hopeless and you don't have to settle for the things that are always as they have been, even it's been 141 years of ruin and destruction, and you see all the way through your family history, man, this struggle has stayed with us, this Addiction, this stronghold, has been a part of our story. And maybe you've given up hope thinking, well, it's just the way things have always been. If my great grandfather couldn't be free from it, if my parents couldn't be free from it, if no one in my family has been saved, how can I ever be used by God or be saved? I'm just here to tell you it can end with you, and a new line of hope, giving gospel work can start with you, if you will, say, Jesus, here I am. Use me. Take me as I am, heal my brokenness. I receive you as Lord and Savior, take my life and let it be fully consecrated for your purposes here on the earth.

Libin Abraham 38:21

Invite us into a time of prayer today. And a couple of things I want to ask you to do. One, you likely received this card on your way in, or you received it for sure last week, and it's actually an invitation to pray and give to our missions. As you know, we have our ministries fund here, and we have our missions fund, and every year, our missions fund that you give generously to supports all of our partners and all of our missionaries. And last week, I asked you to grab this card and put it somewhere visible, and spent this week praying. And today I'm asking you to either commit or recommit your giving to missions. And some of you have already given, and many of you have recurring giving, and you've been given to missions for a long time. Today I'm asking you to recommit your giving to missions. There's others of you. Maybe God is leading you to give more, and I want to invite you to listen to the prompting of the Spirit. But I also know there's a lot of people who are new to entry, and this is your first missions week, and God is stirring in your heart generosity. Two missions last week, I was walking into the lobby, I met one of our new families who was like, man, all these ministries are amazing. I don't know which to give to. I had to just remind them, hey, you don't have to pick which to give you. You just give to missions Advent tree, and we get to disperse the funds as they're needed to all of our partners. So all the partners you saw last week and some that are out there still today, your generosity already is being given to them. So as you give, we get to continue our support for them. As we increase our missions, given, we get to do more. We got to take on more partners and more projects and be even more generous. So as we go into the song, which is really a prayer, I want to invite you, would you pray? And you can either scan the QR code or just a seat back in front of you, and that'll take you to a link to. See admissions. Giving is a first there we commit to giving. Maybe it's setting up reoccurring giving, or for the first time you're giving to missions, it makes a difference. It makes a difference in hidden places that you don't ever see in our ministry funds, you get to see the impact of

it in kids' ministry, in spaces like this. But in missions, it makes a profound difference in ways you cannot see. So would you pray and ask God of how you can be a part? So we're gonna sing and you can stay seated right where you are, but I'm gonna ask you, with an open heart, even with an open hand, would you ask God for how he's moving in your heart to feel and respond to this invitation to be a part of bringing restoration to the rubble, so proud of what we get to be a part of. At the same time, I know people who are here in this room who are dealing with your own brokenness and you need the grace of God, and as we pray, may God meet you at the altar of your seat after the song, I'll invite you to come forward if you need for if you need prayer, but Jesus, even now like receive the comfort of your heavenly Father. So Would you bow your heads with me as we sing? I want to just invite you to a posture of open hands, open heart. Maybe as we sing, God gives you a prompting to respond immediately and scan the QR code, and you can commit to giving or at least sometime a day. So Father, would you stir in us a fresh question. Give us a sensitive sensitivity to your heart. But at the end of the day, we know that we come to you in prayer, and that's where we hear, that's where we are strengthened, that's where we find hope. So this moment as we pray, would you recalibrate our heart to your heart, no longer numbing our soul from the brokenness of the world, but we ask that you would baptize us afresh with the pain you feel for the world that you love. So let's pray. Let's ask God how he wants us to respond.