



THE STORY *continues...*

Chapter 21 Rebuilding the Walls

Join us each week as God weaves

Listen to *The Story*

*Read **Chapter 21** of *The Story**

Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi—three prophets...a priest, a builder and a preacher...all three playing a necessary role in the reconstruction of Jerusalem's city walls but the greatest role is always taken by our God who inspires, who equips, who provides, who fights...so, His people can be freed to worship and work toward a future with great hope.

Learn *The Story*

Look for ways in which God's story and your story connect this week.

Ezra, Nehemiah and Malachi—three prophets...a priest, a builder and a preacher...different roles to live out, different responses to a city walls in ruins.

As you are out driving around town, what do you see in ruins?... who do **you** see responding to that reality?...what is **your** response?...are **you** an Ezra whose heart breaks?...are **you** a Nehemiah who cannot wait to roll up **your** sleeves, grab a group of workers, develop a plan and work it?...or, are **you** a Malachi who remembers that God is ever-present even in places of destruction and responsive to the needs of His people and extravagant in His transforming **your** offerings into abundance?

Love *The Story*

Intentionally take a step forward in faith.

Let's start rebuilding!" What needs rebuilding in your life? Nehemiah, with a confidence in God's help, and a team of believers eager to follow his lead, rebuilt the walls in just 52 days. Nehemiah was a dreamer. Nehemiah was a planner. Nehemiah was a recruiter. Nehemiah was a worker. Nehemiah was successful. Nehemiah was a leader who was confident in God's extravagant blessing.

Seek God. Dream of a preferred future in your life—whether it be small...attitude changing or whether it be big...life changing. Write it down. Tell someone. Then, together with God, accomplish something truly amazing!

Luther's Explanation

“So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. And Nehemiah, who was governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, ‘This day is holy to the LORD your God...’ (Nehemiah 8:8-9)

For the most part, Lutherans are more interested in *understanding* the Bible than they are in *defending* it. We don't have to prove the Bible is the Word of God—we just believe it is the Word of God, and then we focus on asking, “What does God have to say to us?”

The people were hungry for God's Word. They were the ones who summoned Ezra, the scribe, to read them the book of the Law of Moses. Ezra and the Levites, the traditional teachers of Israel, then helped them to understand what the Word meant. In fact, this intentional time of studying God's Word was called holy.



When writing about the third commandment, “Remember the Sabbath Day to keep it holy,” Martin Luther reflected on this event in the book of Nehemiah: “This is the simple meaning of the third commandment: People must have holidays. Therefore, such observances should be devoted to hearing God's Word so that the special function of this day of rest should be the ministry of the Word for the young and the mass of poor people [Nehemiah 8:2-3, 8].” (Large Catechism of Martin Luther, *Concordia*, p. 86)

PROMISE

This week, cling to God's promise for you:

“Just as I promised, I will provide for you extravagantly!”

The EXTRA Mile



Nehemiah was a problem solver. So often, we are quick to point out problems but fail to offer solutions. Gather together and identify some “problems” that need attention in your household. Take turns brainstorming solutions and decide which will work best for your family.