

SAVED TO SERVE Nehemiah 11:2 “And the people commended everyone who volunteered to resettle in Jerusalem.”

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. Today we continue our sermon study on steps to spiritual renewal... from the book of Nehemiah.
- b. Because of their sin... and their refusal to repent... God allowed the nation of Israel... to be conquered and carried into captivity by foreign, pagan nations.
- c. The northern tribes of Israel...were conquered by the Assyrians in 722 BC.
- d. Then God allowed the southern tribes of Israel... to be conquered by the Babylonians in 586 BC.
- e. When the Babylonians conquered the southern kingdom... they devastated the land... they destroyed the Temple... they demolished the city of Jerusalem... and they carried many of the people into exile.
- f. 70 years later... God moved on the heart of pagan kings... to began to allow the Jewish people to return to their homeland to rebuild Jerusalem and restore the land.
- g. Nehemiah and Ezra came to Jerusalem... as a part of the third wave of returning exiles.
- h. Under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra... great progress was made by the Jews in rebuilding the walls surrounding Jerusalem... rebuilding the Temple... and the city itself.
- i. While rebuilding the city and the Temple was important... Nehemiah and Ezra knew that the nation of Israel had a greater need... and that was the need for a spiritual renewal and revival.

- j. The last half of the book of Nehemiah focuses on 10 steps the people took... to reestablish their relationship with God.
- k. In our study so far we have looked at six of these steps... (1) Getting back to the Bible... (2) Obeying the Bible... (3) Making worship a priority... (4) Regaining a desire for holiness... (5) Living a distinctive Christian life... (6) A revival of giving.
- l. Today we look at the seventh step in spiritual revival... the willingness to serve.
- m. We have all heard the old adage... “Everybody talks about the weather... but no one does anything about it.”
- n. Of course we know... that we cannot do anything about the weather ... God is in control of that.
- o. But we could also say that today in church life... “Everybody is talking about revival... but no one is doing anything about it.”
- p. While doing something about the weather is beyond our control ... doing something to have revival is not.
- q. Having the revival we need... begins with us.
- r. God will not give revival to a people... who just sit around talking about revival... who just sit around studying about revival... but who are not willing to do what needs to be done to have a revival.
- s. If we as a church want to have a God-sent revival... then we need to do something.
- t. We need to repent of our spiritual indifference and apathy... we need to repent of all of our sins... we need to get right with God... we need to begin to love God and His church as we are supposed to.
- u. In the verses we look at today... Nehemiah challenged the people to regain a willingness to serve God and to serve others.

- v. Today too many Christians are content to sit on the sidelines... and watch other Christians as they serve the Lord.
- w. Other Christians are willing to serve... as long as what they do requires little time, energy or commitment.
- x. But if we are going to have the revival we need... we need Christians who are willing to step forward and like Isaiah the prophet and say... "Here am I... I will serve."

II. WE ARE SAVED TO SERVE-

- a. The Bible makes it clear that Christians... are saved to serve.
- b. God did not save you and me to just sit, soak and sour for the rest of our life on a church pew ... He saved us to serve Him.
- c. *Ephesians 2:8-10 (NKJV) "For by grace you have been saved through faith, and that not of yourselves; it is the gift of God, not of works, lest anyone should boast. For we are His workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand that we should walk in them."*
- d. We are not saved by any good works we have done... but we are saved to do good works... we are saved to live a life of obedience, commitment and service that honors God and points people to Christ.
- e. Jesus said in Matthew 5:16... that as believers in Christ... we are to let our light so shine before men... that they may see our good works ... and glorify our Father in heaven.
- f. As believers in Christ... we are to serve the Lord in three primary places ... (1) in our home... (2) in the world... (3) in the church.
- g. We are to serve the Lord in our home by living a pure, holy, consistent and honest life... and by loving our family with a Christ-like love.

- h. We are to serve the Lord in the world by sharing Christ with the lost ... by loving our neighbor as we love ourselves... by helping those in need ... by being consistent and honest in our Christian life, witness and testimony.
- i. We are to serve the Lord in the church by loving the church... by being active and involved in the church... by supporting the church with our tithes, time and talents.
- j. God did not save us to sit... He saved us and equipped us to serve Him and to make a difference for Him in our home... in the world... and in the church.

III. PROTECTING THE CHURCH'S WITNESS-

- a. While every Christian is called and equipped by God to serve the Lord in the church in some capacity... not every Christian is qualified to serve the Lord in His church.
- b. Being qualified to serve in the church has nothing to do with how smart a person is ... being qualified to serve in the church has to do with four things.
- c. (1) They must be saved... (2) They must be a member of the church they serve in... (3) They must be blameless... (4) They must be a willing servant.
- d. Obviously if a person is going to serve the Lord in a church... they need to be saved.
- e. Secondly, if a Christian is not willing to commit themselves to being of a church family by joining that church... and being a church member...then they are not qualified to have a place of service in that church...non-church members are not qualified to serve in the church.
- f. To be qualified to have a place of service in the church... a Christian must also be blameless.

- g. In 1 Timothy 3... being blameless is one of the spiritual qualifications of men who would be Pastors or Deacons.
- h. To be blameless is not only one of the qualifications of men who would be Pastors and Deacons... it is a qualification for anyone who will hold an office or a place of service in the church.
- i. To be blameless does not mean being perfect... if a Christian had to be perfect to serve the Lord in the church... then no one could serve ... including your Pastor.
- j. Blameless means that a person's life must free from any kind of on-going conduct and behavior that is contrary to the Bible ... and undermines the teachings, beliefs, message, witness and the unity of the church.
- k. Let me give you an example of something that more and more... American churches are facing today.
- l. The Bible teaches...we believe...we proclaim... that God has reserved the gift of physically intimacy between a man and a woman ... to be a part of the marriage relationship only.
- m. If a professing Christian and church member is in an intimate relationship with someone without being married to them... then they are living in clear disobedience to what the Bible teaches ... and they are living contrary to what we as a church believes and proclaims.
- n. As long as this is the case in a person's life... it does not matter how this world accepts such a thing... and it does not matter how called, equipped and talented they may be ... that Christian is disqualified from serving the Lord in the church.
- o. To allow someone in such a situation to have a place of service in the church ... contradicts the Word of God... it contradicts what we believe and teach ... it confuses the community... it confuses and divides the church ... it delivers the wrong message to the children

and youth of the church ... and it undermines the message, witness and testimony of the church.

(Christians in such situations should not even ask to serve in the church... but often they do.)

- p. There are other situations... that would disqualify a Christian from serving the Lord in the church.
- q. If a Christian in a disqualifying situation wants to serve the Lord in the church ... then they need to repent... they need to get themselves out of the situation that they have put themselves in... and they need to get right with God.
- r. The fourth qualification for serving the Lord in the church is a willing spirit... a willing spirit is not just occupying a place of service ... not just having a name in an office...a willing spirit is giving your best in your service to the Lord.
- s. If some Christians did their job at work... the way they do their service at church...they would be fired tomorrow.
- t. If the stewardship parables of Jesus teach us anything... they teach us that the Lord expects His people to give Him their best when we serve Him.
- u. If you are not going to give the Lord your best have when you serve Him in the church... then don't serve Him.
- v. If you are going to serve the Lord in the church... then prepare yourself ... show up on time... show up ready... show up with joy ... and give the Lord your very best.
- w. It is an honor to serve the Lord in the church...we are to give Him our best.

IV. FILLING A NEED-

- a. In this passage, a great need is identified... the city of Jerusalem... in the process of being rebuilt... needed people to live in it.

- b. While many of the returning exiles were willing to live outside of Jerusalem...in the country... not enough were willing to live within the holy city... the conditions in the city were rough... the demands were high... the danger from attack was great.
- c. But if Jerusalem was ever to regain its place as a major city in Israel ... it needed people to live in it.
- d. To fill that need... Nehemiah and Ezra asked for volunteers to move into the city... and many did... their names are listed in verses 4-21.
- e. It is a shame today when a church that is filled with many talented and gifted people... has needs that are not being meet... and places of service that are vacant and unfilled... because the people in that church are not willing to serve.
- f. Many Christians today are willing to serve the Lord in the church... as long as what they do takes little effort... as long as what they do is easy ... does not tie them down... and requires little commitment.
- g. To save themselves the embarrassment of having no place of service in the church... many Christians seek out such places of service... the church today is filled with people like that.
- h. But what the church needs today... are believers who are willing to serve the Lord wherever the need may be... no matter how tough and demanding the service may be.
(We need church members like Caleb... "give me the mountain.")
- i. If a church is going to have revival... then it needs committed people to step forward to meet the needs of the church... and fill needed places of service.
- j. A church like ours... with all the good, talented and gifted people that our church is blessed with... should not have to beg people to do a simple thing... like work in a nursery once every six months... and to show up in the nursery when it is their turn serve.

- k. A church like ours... should never have to beg people to work with children and youth.
- l. A church like ours should not have some people with three, four, five places of service in the church... while other healthy and gifted people ... have no place of service in the church.
- m. A church like ours should never have a need that is not met... a church like ours should never have a place of service that is vacant and not filled by a willing and capable servant.
- n. If we want revival in our church... then like Isaiah... we need to be willing to say... “Here am I... I am willing to serve.”

V. CONCLUSION-

- a. Ephesians 5:16 says believers should “redeem the time”... that means that we are to make the most of the opportunities we have to serve the Lord.
- b. If you are strong, healthy, capable and qualified to serve the Lord in His church ... you should be doing so.
- c. I thank God for our senior saints and all that they have done and are doing for the Lord in our church...but when you get older...you are not physically able to do what you use to do... no matter how willing you are... some of our senior saints would love to be able to do what they use to do in the church...but bless their hearts they can't.
- d. If you are in your prime... then redeem the time... serve the Lord now... while you are strong, capable and healthy.
- e. By the way... if I am not already in enough trouble with this message ... let me add this to it ...in my ministry I have seen many people... basically quit serving the Lord in the church when their own children got grown ... more than one person has told me that they have put in

their time ... and now that their children are grown... it is somebody else's turn to serve.

- f. Please understand this... your time of serving the Lord in the church does not expire when *your* children get grown... it is never somebody else's turn to do what God has called and equipped you to do in His service.
- g. God did not put this church here just to serve *your* children ... and He did not call and equip you just to serve *your* children... if God has called you and equipped you to work with children and youth... then He has called you and equipped you to work with His children and youth ... which are all of them... not just your own.
- h. If you are in your prime and you have retired yourself from serving the Lord in the church ... then it is time for you to come out of retirement... and it is time for you to do what God has called and equipped you to do... this church and the kingdom of God needs you.
- i. In Matthew 9:37-38... Jesus said... *“The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.”*
- j. The church today has enough spectators... the church needs laborers and servants... will you be one?
- k. God has rich blessings in Heaven reserved for those who serve Him on earth... and those who especially faithfully serve Him in His church.
- l. *Hebrews 6:10 (NKJV) “For God will forget your work and labor of love which you have shown toward others in His name...”*
- m. *Matthew 25:21 (NKJV) “His lord said to him, ‘Well done, good and faithful servant; you were faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.’”*