

**THANK YOU FOR GIVING TO THE LORD**  
**Next Steps Devotional Guide — Nehemiah 7 & 11**  
**April 16, 2023**  
**Sermon Series > Nehemiah: Repair, Rebuild & Restore**  
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1. When you to the movies, at the end they run what is called “The Credits.” This is where they list everyone’s name who assisted in the making and production of the film. It is their way of expressing appreciation to everyone who made the movie possible.
  - a. Do you ever stay to watch from beginning to the end all of “The Credits?” Why or why not?
  - b. In Nehemiah chapters 7 & 11, Nehemiah has his own list of “Credits.” He list names of people and groups who helped him to do what God sent him to do in Jerusalem. We read these names, and like 99% of the names rolling on the screen in a movie, we have no idea who these people are. Nehemiah had to have known there would come a day when someone would read his book and they would not recognize nor know any of these names. So, why list them? Why would God have him put them in there?
2. In the sermon, there was given a quote by Eugene Peterson from his book, Run With the Horses. Here is the quote:
  - a. *“There is little to admire and less to imitate in the people who are prominent in our culture. We have celebrities but not saints . . . Neither the adventure of goodness nor the pursuit of righteousness gets headlines. If, on the other hand, we look around for what it means to be a person of integrity, we don’t find much. They aren’t easy to pick out. No journalist interviews them. No talk show features them. They’re not admired. They’re not looked up to. They do not set trends. There is no cash value in them. No Oscars are given for integrity. At year’s end, no one compiles a list of “The Ten Best-Lived Lives.”<sup>1</sup>*
  - b. How would you respond to the quote above? Do you think the author is being realistic or being a little over-sensitive? Or something else? Why?
  - c. His point is that the world does not notice lives it should notice and some feel the same thing could be said about the church. Do you think the church takes for granted the achievements and service of the volunteers in it? Should each individual church have its own form of The Oscars, The Grammy’s, or the Emmys to reward and acknowledge those who volunteer and serve? Do you? If so, why do you think this happens?
  - d. Take your Bible and read Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:1-4. Is it even possible to acknowledge others for their ministry in and through the church without violating Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:1-4? If so, how would you suggest it be done?
3. Take your sermon notes and read Nehemiah 7:1-2 and Nehemiah 11:22-23 in point #1 in your sermon notes.
  - a. After the wall was completed, the first thing that Nehemiah does is get the Levites, who were the worship leaders and singers, back to doing their God-given responsibilities.
    - i. Since 606 BC, the Jews in Judah had been a conquered, enslaved people who had gone through a horrible holocaust. Through 3 major military campaigns against them by the Babylonian king, King Nebuchadnezzar in 606 BC, 598 BC, and 586 BC, they felt they had no reason to praise God.
    - ii. Being conquered and enslaved was their own fault. God had warned them for years through prophets that if they did not repent, He would have this done to them. It had to break God’s heart to do this to His own people. Here is Jeremiah 25:9, *“Behold, I will send for all the tribes of the north, declares the Lord, and for Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon, My servant, and I will bring them against this land and its inhabitants, and against all these surrounding nations. I will devote them to destruction, and make them a horror, a hissing, and an everlasting desolation” (ESV)*. Instead of God calling the Jews in Judah His servant, God called Nebuchadnezzar His servant. Today, that would be like God calling Adolf Hitler His servant.
    - iii. Now read Psalms 137:1-2 in your sermon notes in point #1. Due to what God had done to them, they did not want to praise God. Keep in mind — this is their own fault due to their own sin — not God’s fault. Has there ever been a time in your own life you did not want to praise God because you either blamed Him for something or were angry with God for something? Has your perspective on your reaction changed since then? How?
4. “Praise Him! Praise Him!” should be the anthem of the church. In the Psalms, King David wrote, nearly all of them have some verses about praising God. When come to church, would you say during the singing time, you sing with vigor, enthusiasm and joy praise God? Why or why not?
5. After completing the wall around Jerusalem, Nehemiah saw that the Jews living in it and around it resemble more their world rather than the Word of God. He realizes that the people have not had been worshipping and praising God because they have opened up the gates of their heart to other influences.
  - a. Read Nehemiah 11:19 in your sermon notes under point #2. Nehemiah gives credit to two named gatekeepers and 172 of their associate gatekeepers. These 170 plus gatekeepers were to make sure no threat from the outside entered. But sometimes, a greater threat is not external, but internal. Read Proverbs

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<sup>1</sup> Eugene Peterson, Run With the Horses, Kindle Edition, p. 12.

- 4:23 in your sermon notes in point #2 as well as the explanation for the Hebrew word translated as “guard.” Which “gates” to your heart do you need to have sentries or guards and why?
- b. When Genghis Khan breached the Great Wall of China, he was asked how he was able to do it. He said this, *“The strength of the wall depends on the courage of those who defend it” and then he and his army breached it by bribing a sentry. Gates are only as good as the character of the guards.*<sup>2</sup> Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:20-23 in your sermon notes in point #2. Based on Jesus’ words, what kind of “sentries or guards” do you need to have to protect your heart and why?
  - c. Read Psalms 119:9, 11 in your sermon notes in point #2. Nehemiah had 174 sentries on gates around Jerusalem. Since the Word of God is the best guard or sentry for your heart, how many Bible verses would you say you have memorized to help guard your heart? If none or a few, why?
6. Read Nehemiah 7:2 in your sermon notes in point #3. Nehemiah used two terms to refer to his biological brother, Hanani and Hananiah — they were both “faithful and God-fearing” more than others. Now read the explanation of these Hebrew words in your sermon notes. Would be said about you? Why or why not?
  7. Read Exodus 20:3-4 and Jesus’ words in Matthew 6:33 & Matthew 22:37 in your sermon notes in point #4.
    - a. What is Jesus saying to you from Matthew 6:33 and Matthew 22:37?
    - b. If you claim to be a Christian, if you claim that Jesus Christ is Lord of your life, do you have any idols or little gods in your life? Many times these idols are not bad or sinful, but they take priority in our lives over our relationship to Jesus Christ. If you do have idols, what do you need to do to get rid of them?
  8. Years ago there was an advertisement that said, “Membership has its privileges.” Membership into the family of God certainly does. Yet, so many people have been deceived into thinking that if they are good, or belong to a church or are ethical and other things, that gives them entry into God’s family and heaven.
    - a. Read Nehemiah 7:61, 64 in your sermon notes in point #5. God had Nehemiah enforce a strict requirement for anyone who wanted to live inside the walls of Jerusalem — they had to have Jewish blood flowing through their veins and they had to have written proof of their genealogy. This was no easy task since they had been a conquered, enslaved and dispersed ethnic group since 606 BC. It is not 445 BC. To some they may feel that both God and Nehemiah were being unfair, which is the same attitude many people feel about God and His preachers/pastors/churches. Why do you think God imposed this on the Jews?
    - b. Read Revelation 21:2-3 in your sermon notes in point #5. There will be “new Jerusalem” one day. Will you be able to trace your lineage back to the family of God? Are you related to God through faith in His Son, Jesus Christ?
    - c. Many people think of Jesus as being loving, kind, forgiving, accepting and etc. He was, but there was more to Jesus than these qualities. Read Jesus’ words in Matthew 7:21-23a in your sermon notes in point #5. Some of the people were able to do miracles but they were not allowed in heaven. What does that say to you?
    - d. Read Revelation 20:5 and John 1:12-13 in your sermon notes in point #5. The pressing question in the last day of human history, as we know it, will be, “Are you related to that Jewish Carpenter—the true Messiah? Can you prove your relationship to the family of God?” God has a book of reservations with names written down in it of who will be allowed entry into heaven. How do you prove your name is written in it?
    - e. Read Jesus’ words in John 3:6 and read 1 Peter 2:9 in your sermon notes in point #5. According to these verses, how do you prove you have left the bloodline of Adam for the royal bloodline of Jesus Christ?
  9. It has been said, “The church is a place where 20% do all the work and the other 80% do nothing.” Personally, I do not believe this because it’s not biblical and I know where this statement originated. Yet, I do believe that every Christian needs to have a ministry — a place where they give.
    - a. Read Nehemiah 7:70-71 in your sermon notes in point #6. The troubling word here is “some.” This implies not all. Now read Jesus’ words in Matthew 20:26-28 in your sermon notes in point #6. Jesus makes it clear that we are saved to serve. Where do you serve God and His church?
    - b. Read 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 in your sermon notes in point #6. What does this say to you and why?
    - c. Take your Bible and read the following: 1 Peter 4:10, James 2:14-17, Colossians 3:23-24, & Matthew 10:42. What do these verses say to you about serving?
  10. Some times you go to a church and it is obvious, you are an outsider. Has that ever happened to you? What could you do personally to make visitors and new people feel welcome at Southside?
    - a. Read Nehemiah 7:4 in your sermon notes in point #7. This is the problem. Why do you think so many people did not want to live inside the walls of Jerusalem?
    - b. God gave Nehemiah two solutions. Read Nehemiah 11:1 in your sermon notes in point #7. First way was a lottery. Read Nehemiah 11:2 in your sermon notes in point #7. Nehemiah’s second way was to get people to voluntarily move inside the walls of Jerusalem. This would be challenge since their farms were outside the walls. What do you think of Nehemiah’s remedy and why?
  11. Nearly all Christians recognize the importance of prayer. Read Nehemiah 11:17a in your sermon notes in point #8. When you hear a need, do you (a) tell the person you will pray for them, or (b) stop right there and pray with them? Which do you think impacts their life more and why?
  12. Nehemiah chapters 7 & 11 are chapters of where Nehemiah gives credit to people and groups who helped him. Read Hebrews 6:10 in your sermon notes as well as the explanation for the Greek New Testament word translated as “ministering.” Meaning what? Which Christian will you thank this week for giving to the Lord?

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.stuff.co.nz/southland-times/columns/5263591/The-Great-Walls-dark-side>.