

## Called By God to Make an Impact

Discussion Notes- April 26, 2026

1. If you could have any superpower to help people, what would it be and how would you use it?

This week's sermon reminded us that God has specifically and intentionally called every believer, not just pastors, to make an impact. The pastor's role is to equip the church, but the work of ministry belongs to all of us. Every person in the body of Christ has been given a spiritual gift, and God expects us to use it. Too often, those gifts go neglected or untapped, leaving the body incomplete. Just like a physical body needs every part to function well, the church suffers when members sit on the sidelines. We were also challenged with a sense of urgency; today is our test, and eternity is our reward. How we steward our gifts and our time here matters in light of what's to come.

### Read Ephesians 4:11-12

*"And he gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the shepherds and teachers, to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ..."*

This passage comes from Paul's letter to the church at Ephesus. He was addressing a young, growing church that needed to understand how it was meant to function. Paul's point was not simply organizational, it was deeply theological. God didn't design the church to be carried by a few gifted leaders while everyone else watched. He designed it so that leaders would pour into people, and people would pour into the world. The word "equip" in the original Greek (katartismos) carries the idea of mending, restoring, and preparing something for full use, like setting a broken bone so it can function again. Every believer is meant to be prepared and released, not just informed and entertained.

2. In your own words, how would you describe the difference between the pastor's role and the congregation's role based on this passage and did that challenge or affirm how you've thought about church membership?

### Read Romans 12:4-5

*"For as in one body we have many members,[e] and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another."*

Romans 12 is one of Paul's most practical chapters, coming right after eleven chapters of deep theological teaching. It's as if Paul is saying now that you understand who God is and what He's done, here's how that should change the way you live together. He uses the body as a picture not just of structure, but of belonging and mutual dependency. No one part of the body earns its place or proves its worth by doing someone else's job; it simply does its own, and that's enough. Your gift, however quiet or behind-the-scenes it may seem, is exactly what someone else in this body needs. When you're not functioning in it, the body feels the gap even if no one names it.

3. Have you identified your spiritual gift? If so, are you actively using it, and if not, what is one honest reason that might be holding you back?

### Read 2 Corinthians 5:10

*"For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, so that each one may receive what is due for what he has done in the body, whether good or evil."*

Paul wrote 2 Corinthians to a church that had gone through significant conflict and pain. There were false teachers, personal attacks on Paul's character, and a congregation wrestling with doubt. In the middle of defending his ministry, Paul anchors everything in eternity. He's not writing from a place of fear, but from a settled confidence that this life is not the whole story. The judgment seat he references here is not about condemnation for sin (that was settled at the cross) but about accountability for how we lived and what we did with what we were given. It's the picture of a life fully seen and fairly evaluated. That reality, Paul says, should reshape how we live right now.

4. If today truly is the test and eternity is the reward, what does that change about how you think about your everyday life, your schedule, or even your involvement in this church?

### **Read 1 Peter 4:10-11**

*"As each has received a gift, use it to serve one another, as good stewards of God's varied grace: whoever speaks, as one who speaks oracles of God; whoever serves, as one who serves by the strength that God supplies—in order that in everything God may be glorified through Jesus Christ. To him belong glory and dominion forever and ever. Amen."*

Peter wrote this letter to believers who were scattered, suffering, and likely wondering whether their lives and their faith even mattered in the grand scheme of things. His answer wasn't to minimize the hardship, it was to reframe purpose. Even in difficulty, even in obscurity, the call to steward your gift remains. The phrase "varied grace" is striking. The Greek word is *poikilos*, meaning many-colored or diverse. God didn't give everyone the same gift because the body doesn't need the same thing everywhere. Each gift is a specific expression of God's grace, uniquely suited to a specific need. To neglect it isn't just a personal loss, it's leaving grace on the table that someone else was meant to receive.

5. This week, what is one specific and concrete step you will take to either discover, re-engage, or use your spiritual gift and how can this group hold you accountable to it?

### **Prayer Points:**

- Thank God for the gifts and callings He has given you specifically
- If you aren't sure what they are, pray that He would help guide you and show you where you can serve Him best
- Pray for obedience to walk in those areas God is challenging you in.

## **DEEPER DIVE: Nehemiah and the Rebuilding of Jerusalem**

### **Context and Background**

Nehemiah's story takes place around 445 BC, during one of the most painful seasons in Israel's history. Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians decades earlier, its walls reduced to rubble, its gates burned, and its people either exiled or living in disgrace among the ruins. Nehemiah was not a prophet or a priest, he was a cupbearer to the Persian King Artaxerxes, a position of trust but not obvious spiritual authority. When news reached him about the state of Jerusalem, he wept, fasted, and prayed for days before doing anything else. What followed was not a one-man restoration project; it was one of the most striking examples in all of Scripture of a community coming together, each person doing their part, to accomplish something none of them could have done alone. Nehemiah's story is not just about a wall. It's about what happens when a leader equips and organizes people to use what they have, right where they are.

### **The Burden and the Call**

#### **Read Nehemiah 2:17-18, 4:6**

*"Then I said to them, 'You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision.' And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, 'Let us rise up and build.' So they strengthened their hands for the good work... So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work."*

Before Nehemiah ever picked up a stone, he shared the vision honestly and connected it to something larger than the task itself. He didn't just describe the problem; he pointed to the hand of God. And the people responded. Nehemiah 4:6 is one of the most quietly powerful verses in the whole story: the wall reached half its height not because of great resources or perfect conditions, but because "the people had a mind to work." Willingness preceded progress. Nehemiah cast vision, but the people had to own it. No movement of God has ever been carried by one person alone; it moves when ordinary people decide that the work belongs to them too.

### **Everyone Had a Part**

#### **Read Nehemiah 3:1-6**

*"Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel. And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built. The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel repaired. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana repaired. And next to them the Tekoites repaired, but their nobles would not stoop to serve their Lord." Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Gate of Yeshanah. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars."*

Nehemiah 3 is sometimes skimmed over because it reads like a long list of names, and that's exactly why it matters. Every name represents a real person who showed up and did their portion. Priests, merchants, rulers, goldsmiths, perfume makers. All people with no background in construction and all worked on a section of wall adjacent to their own homes or their own trades. God didn't ask anyone to do everything. He asked everyone to do something. It's worth noticing the one painful exception: the nobles of Tekoa "would not stoop to serve." Their absence is recorded in Scripture forever. The wall still got built, but their refusal to participate was not invisible to God and neither is ours.

## **Perseverance Under Opposition**

### **Read Nehemiah 4:14, 21, 23**

*“And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, ‘Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.’... So we labored at the work, and half of them held spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out... So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand.”*

The work wasn't without opposition. Enemies mocked, threatened, and schemed to stop the rebuilding. Nehemiah's response was not to retreat or to try to handle it alone. He organized the people, armed them, and reminded them what they were fighting for. They built with one hand and held a weapon with the other. This is a picture of what it looks like to be both vulnerable and faithful. Doing the work God has called you to while fully aware that resistance is real.

Nehemiah didn't pretend the opposition wasn't there; he named it, prayed about it, and kept building anyway. The wall was completed in 52 days; an accomplishment so remarkable that even their enemies recognized the hand of God in it (Nehemiah 6:16). That's what happens when a body of people refuses to quit.

### **Deeper Dive Discussion Questions**

1. Nehemiah 3 records the names of everyone who worked and also the nobles who refused. What does it say about God that He noticed both? Does that change how you think about your own participation or absence in the work of the church?
2. Nehemiah wasn't a priest or a prophet; he was a cupbearer who felt a burden and responded to it. Have you ever dismissed a burden on your heart as “not your place” or “someone else's job”? What would it look like to treat that burden as a calling instead?
3. The people built with one hand and held a weapon in the other; doing the work while staying alert to opposition. What are the real threats or distractions in your own life that keep you from fully engaging in what God has called you to, and what would it look like to keep building anyway?