

Week 3

Day 1

Scripture Nehemiah 1

Now that we have talked about what it means to be the salt and light of the world we want to look at some examples of this in the bible. People like Nehemiah, Esther and Peter who all show us what it can look like to live these commands out.

This week we start with Nehemiah. Chapter 1 introduces us to this man who learns about the walls of Jerusalem being broken down and the gates destroyed by fire. Nehemiah lives in a time where the walls of a city were important. These walls being destroyed meant that

the city wasn't safe, the walls and the gate would bring protection to the city but also would allow Jerusalem to finish the building of the temple. This story takes place in the Old Testament. At this time the temples were important for so many reasons, but especially because this is where the presence of God would be. So without the protection of the wall, the temple wouldn't be finished and therefore, the presence of the Lord wouldn't be there.

So when Nehemiah hears this he weeps and mourns for days. He knows how important this is and how the people will suffer without it. How often do we hear stories about people hurting, people who lack what we have and brush it off? He fasts and prays about the situation. He purposely doesn't eat and instead spends that time in prayer because of how major this is. He spends his time crying out to God calling on him to have mercy on the people of Israel.

I love seeing Nehemiah's heart. There is a line from a worship song that I heard years ago and always stuck with me, so much so that I got a tattoo of it. It says, "Break my heart for what breaks yours"*. This is Nehemiah in a nutshell. He is broken by a situation that he knows breaks God's heart. He is broken by the hurt, pain, fear and unknown future that awaits the people of Jerusalem. And in that brokenness he is moved to pray.

This is what I want for all of you. That your hearts would become sensitive to the things that God cares about. That when you hear about hurting, broken people you would be moved to pray. May this week you find yourself praying to have your heart break at the things that break the heart of God.

*Hosanna by Hillsong United

Day 2

Scripture Nehemiah 2:1-8

Yesterday we talked about how Nehemiah was so moved at hearing about the walls of Jerusalem being destroyed that he mourned, wept, fasted and prayed. Now in Chapter 2 we get to see how God calls him to do something about it.

Nehemiah was a cupbearer and yes that was a real job. Basically he was a high up official who was thought to be very trustworthy because he had to pour the drinks for the King. He was there to help make sure no one was poisoning him. And it was because of this close and trusted relationship that he had built with the King that he was able to request to leave his duties and go help rebuild the wall.

Remember Nehemiah had spent a great deal of time praying about this situation and when the King asked him what was wrong he was willing to step out and ask this big favor of the King because he knew how important it was. Verse 8 ends by saying that the King grants him this request and the hand of God was upon him.

When we take the time to align our hearts with God, when we focus on caring about the things that he cares about, we too will have opportunities like Nehemiah. While I don't think you will be in the presence of royalty anytime soon and can call in some favors, it

doesn't mean that God won't use you right where you are. Are you open to being used by God?

Day 3

Scripture Nehemiah 4:1-14

Chapter 3 goes into the rebuilding of the wall, this is exciting! This is what Nehemiah and the people of Jerusalem had been praying and waiting for. But then comes chapter 4. The rebuilding of the wall would strengthen the city and this angered other people groups. So much so that they plotted to come and fight. Because side note, things don't always go smoothly when God calls you to do something.

So in verse 9 it says they prayed for protection and in verse 14 they reminded the people that they shouldn't be afraid, that the Lord who is great and awesome was with them. And it says that God frustrated their enemies' plans. Because yes things and opposition will come up when you are doing what God has called you to do, but also because he has called you, he will be with you.

Eventually you see the wall is finished. That Nehemiah who was one random cupbearer helped bring this about. But this happened because he was a man who cared about the things God cares about. He was a man who was willing to step out in faith to do something he felt was important. And he was a man who knew God was on his side even when opposition came.

I don't know what walls you are being called to help to rebuild but I do believe that God will use you in ways you may not even be able to imagine. Pray for a heart after his heart, pray for opportunities and pray for him to show up and be faithful in those opportunities.

Day 4 Prayer

One of the most important parts of Nehemiah's story was that he spent time in prayer before anything else. So today let that be your goal. Before you tackle whatever the day brings or you know you have something hard coming up, take the time to pray about it. Bring it before God and ask that he gives you the right perspective and heart to tackle whatever comes.

Day 5 Catch up

We know life gets crazy so take today to catch up on what you may have missed so far this week.

Day 6 Questions

1. What breaks your heart? Do you think it breaks God's heart as well?
2. Does the idea of being used by God excite you or scare you and why?
3. Are you seeking out opportunities to be used by God or even just open to them, if not what is standing in your way?

Day 7 Journaling

Today before you journal I want you to stop and go back to the questions from yesterday. Use today as an opportunity to not just answer the questions but maybe take the time to dig a little deeper into them as you write down some thoughts