



Nehemiah
REBUILD, RESTORE, RENEW

Confession is the Key to Radical Revival

RECAP

Focus: God uses community to renew and restore us!

In Chapters 7 and 8 of Nehemiah, the Israelites were encouraged to stop mourning and instead celebrate and rejoice. But now, in the first verse of Chapter 9, we see the time for mourning and weeping has arrived. The Book of the Law had been found. It was being read aloud and explained and the people were convicted! The people responded as a community in four distinct ways.

The first response the Israelites had was to separate themselves from the foreigners around them and confess the waywardness of their forefathers and themselves. After this, they gathered and spent six hours standing while the Word was read and explained. This six-hour stint was immediately followed by their second response; another six hours of confession and worship as a community. This sounds somewhat similar (aside from the 12 hours) to our community worship gatherings on Sunday mornings here at Gateway.

The third element of this community response was the retelling of past stories. These stories included stories of God's goodness and faithfulness over the generations, as well as the people's inability to faithfully uphold their end of the covenant, namely avoiding idolatry.

The retelling of these stories as a community led to a conviction that brought the people to a place of recommitment. Chapter 9 ends with the declaration of this new recommitment to the covenant as the Israelites fourth response. We then see that Chapter 10 is filled with the list of names of all those who were voluntarily binding themselves to this recommitment as well as some additional elements they were committing to beyond the Levitical Law.

As we work our way through the text, we are made aware of the community elements of Christianity. God's intention was never to have His people live a life of isolation. Yet, here in America, individualism is celebrated. And as a result, there is a gravitational pull on us into isolationism. May these two chapters remind us that we are called to live this life together, in community, with other Christ followers. As we do so, we can incorporate elements of communal confession, worship, retelling, and recommitment just as the Israelites did under Nehemiah's leadership!

Where and with whom are you doing these things in your life today?

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SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker: What is the longest church service type gathering you've ever been involved with? Retell the story.

STUDY (about 30 min) Read Nehemiah 9-10

1. What stood out to you about the message on Sunday? Is there anything that was unclear, or that you have questions about?
2. What are the distractions in your life that prevent you from meeting with the Lord, either individually or together in community?
3. Read 9:1-6. In your opinion, why is worshiping together in community powerful (or not)?
4. If you were in the service on Sunday, what was it like to read a good chunk of scripture out loud together? What was uncomfortable to you?
5. Nehemiah 9:7-31 was the retelling of God's faithfulness that led the people to make a recommitment to Him. In this passage, why is it important for the Israelites to recall all that God had done?
6. Recall God's faithfulness in your life. Give a real-life story of how God's been faithful to you!
7. Like the Israelites, James 5:16 says, "Confess your sins to each other and pray for each other so that you may be healed." What makes public confession so difficult? What is accomplished by confession in a loving community?
8. Is the Lord drawing you to confess sin (disobedience, apathy, rebellion, etc.)? Find a safe person in your group and put into practice the discipline of confession.
9. What area of your life do you sense the Lord is asking you to recommit to Him (prayer, reading, serving, your thought life, finances, relationships, sharing your faith)? Share it with your group.

SUPPORT (15 min)

Pray for each other. Pick an area (confession, worship, retelling, or recommitment) that you would like prayer for...and pray!