

## Saved to be Sent, Worship to be a Witness

### RECAP

#### **Focus: Maintain Godly convictions in a culture of compromise.**

Nehemiah was an ordinary guy called to make an extraordinary difference. He took the passion God gave him and put it to work. By prayer, planning, gifted leadership, God's favor, and bold determination, he was able to do what many said would be impossible. We saw that in just fifty-two days, Nehemiah with God's people rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem. That was just the beginning of greater things. Chapters 1-7 give us a blow-by-blow account of the building of the wall.

In Chapters 8-10, we begin to see that the point of the wall, wasn't the wall itself; it was the renewal of faith and true worship for God's people. The physical wall would provide protection and security from outside forces. But the most important defenses had to be built inside the heart. They needed a spiritual renewal to truly appreciate what had been done. As Ezra opened up God's Word and taught, the people began to understand and apply it to their lives. They worshipped, wept, and rejoiced. With one voice, they recalled God's goodness and the nations failures. Together, they mourned and confessed their sin. They made public commitments to maintain the defenses from falling back into their old patterns of toxic behavior.

In Chapter 11, we see that once God makes you different, you want to make a difference. Ezra had led a time of intense personal renewal. Nehemiah saw there was still work to be done. His biggest problem was that it was hard to build a city without the people. After 141 years of neglect, many had moved to the rural areas around Jerusalem and set up homes. He instituted a voluntary draft. Many volunteered to return and once again, the city was filled with people from diverse backgrounds all united together to accomplish God's purposes.

In Chapter 12, Nehemiah brings people back to the wall for a massive worship concert. Now that their hearts had been renewed, they were finally ready to celebrate. With blaring trumpets, massive choirs, and voices raised loud enough to be heard outside the wall, they celebrated with grateful hearts all that God had done.

Finally, in Chapter 13, there was a major difference in what was happening with the people. The revival fires seemed to have dimmed. The people got complacent and slipped back into spiritual neglect. Nehemiah left for Babylon for twelve years only to come back and see that the people had failed to keep the promises they made in Chapter 10. They had failed to separate themselves from the culture around them. They stopped supporting the work of God in the Temple. They had also stopped observing a Sabbath rest. Perhaps the most discouraging for Nehemiah was they had united themselves with the sworn enemies of God through marriage. Nehemiah would aggressively confront their sin and once again boldly call them back to God.

Throughout Nehemiah, we can see that God never forgot Israel, but Israel consistently forgot God. Reforms could never change the heart. Nehemiah is pointing to Jesus. He is the One who would come to rebuild, restore, and renew broken lives. His best work is done when He takes that which is broken, marred by sin, destroyed, and breathes new life into it. The story of Nehemiah points to the story of Jesus and the power of redemption at work in the lives of sinners.



**Nehemiah**  
REBUILD, RESTORE, RENEW

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### SHARE (5-10 min)

Icebreaker: If you had to give up one thing, which would it be, your phone or your car?

### STUDY (about 30 min) Read Nehemiah 11-13

1. What stood out to you about the message on Sunday? Was there anything that was unclear, or that you have questions about?
2. In Nehemiah 11, the city needed to be repopulated. Nehemiah reminds them they were saved to serve. What kinds of things keep people from volunteering to serve? How can you serve to be a blessing to the people around you?
3. Read Nehemiah 12:27-43. How is our worship to God also a witness to others? Why do you think corporate worship is so vital to the function of a local church? How are gratitude, worship, and joy connected?
4. Nehemiah 4:1-3 is a reminder that God's people are to be different. What does being set apart (holiness not legalism) look like today?
5. Read Nehemiah 13:4-9. Having Tobiah, an enemy of God, live in His temple is tantamount to spiritual treason. In what ways might Christians commit "spiritual treason" by what they allow to exist in their hearts and lives?
6. Read Nehemiah 13:10 and Nehemiah 10:39. What vow did the Israelites fail to keep? How do you see this happening in the church today? What makes it difficult to stay committed to supporting God's work?
7. What can we learn from Israel's "backsliding" after experiencing such great revival? What warnings must we take away? Why can't we drift into Godliness?
8. Where are you most likely to compromise when it comes to living for God? (God's commands, putting God first, finances, relationships, etc.)
9. What are some of your core convictions that will help you maintain your commitments to the Lord and keep you from compromising your commitments?

### SUPPORT (15 min)

Break up into groups of 2 or 3 (men with men-women with women) Share your struggles or recent victories you have had when it comes to compromising your commitments. Pray that God would strengthen each of you to live for Him and resist the culture of compromise around us.