

Nehemiah: Take It to the Lord in Prayer
Nehemiah 1:4-11

I. Why Nehemiah?

A. Email Inquiry for Clarity

1. Would you like to know why we are focusing on Nehemiah? Not alone
2. Email question: I hear what you're saying, but I'm not sure I get it.

B. God wants to do for Cornerstone Community Church today what He did for His people in Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day.

1. Nehemiah is not primarily about building a wall.
2. Nehemiah is the story of God's work to restore His reputation, His glory, by bringing His people to repentance of sin and commitment to Him.
 - a. Their sin as a people led them into exile.
 - b. Their continued sin led them into obscurity.
 - c. God restores His glory in the world and among His people not by building walls and structures but by revealing sin and enabling repentance.

C. We're focusing on Nehemiah because sin in us and sin among us is obscuring God's glory through us and God is calling us to repentance and a new commitment to Him.

II. Paul's Perspective: "To the praise of His glory"

A. Ephesians: NT Nehemiah

1. Why are there Christians in the world and why does the church exist?
 - a. **Ephesians 1:12-14 (ESV) ¹² so that we who were the first to hope in Christ might be to the praise of his glory. ¹³ In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.**
 - (1) Every Christian and every individual church is called into being in order that we might be to the praise of His glory
 - (2) God's glory on display in our lives is the functional purpose God leads us to the cross!
 - b. **Ephesians 2:6-7 (ESV) ⁶ and raised us up with him and seated us with him in the heavenly places in Christ Jesus, ⁷ so that in the coming ages he might show the immeasurable riches of his grace in kindness toward us in Christ Jesus.**
 - (1) Paul further clarifies that God works in the Christians and in the church to show or to manifest his grace
 - (2) Christian, your life is intended by God to showcase His glory
 - c. **Ephesians 3:10 (ESV) ¹⁰ so that through the church the manifold wisdom of God might now be made known to the rulers and authorities in the heavenly places.**
 - (1) God makes known the magnificence of His glory through the church

- (2) God intends for your life not to be controlled or characterized by sin but to be a public display of His power, and grace, and glory
 - (a) Sin in the church obscures the glory of God from the world
 - (b) Therefore, God will act in the church to deal with sin in order to make His glory, His worthiness to be loved and worshiped, known in the world.
- d. **Ephesians 3:20-21 (ESV)** ²⁰ *Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us,* ²¹ *to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.*
- 2. **God intends every church and every Christian as long as time endures to bring Him glory**
 - a. You cannot bring God glory when there is consistent sin in your life
 - b. Nehemiah is not about building a wall.
 - (1) Nehemiah is the story of God's action to restore His glory by restoring His people to a full and holy and faithful relationship with Him
 - (2) Where sin is abandoned and personal holiness is pursued.

III. What sin are you talking about?

A. Sin defined

- 1. Sin = any self-indulgence that is not motivated by faith, that subjects the heart to guilt, and legitimately encourages someone in the world to doubt God.

B. Sins illustrated

- 1. Anger, arrogance - blow up at others when things don't go your way
- 2. Selfishness, meanness -
- 3. Greed
- 4. Lust - hooked on internet porn
- 5. Proud -
 - a. Pharisee/tax collector
 - b. **Luke 18:9-14 (ESV)** ⁹ *He also told this parable to some who trusted in themselves that they were righteous, and treated others with contempt:* ¹⁰ *“Two men went up into the temple to pray, one a Pharisee and the other a tax collector. ¹¹ The Pharisee, standing by himself, prayed thus: ‘God, I thank you that I am not like other men, extortioners, unjust, adulterers, or even like this tax collector. ¹² I fast twice a week; I give tithes of all that I get.’ ¹³ But the tax collector, standing far off, would not even lift up his eyes to heaven, but beat his breast, saying, ‘God, be merciful to me, a sinner!’ ¹⁴ I tell you, this man went down to his house justified, rather than the other. For everyone who exalts himself will be humbled, but the one who humbles himself will be exalted.”*

c. Some at Cornerstone have a reputation in this community for thinking you are better than others

6. Disobedient
7. Unforgiving
8. Blessing/cursing
9. Dishonesty

C. As bad as the sin itself is, what makes it even worse is that some of us think that calling yourself a Christian and coming to church once a week makes everything all right.

1. Some think as long as they live for heaven on Sunday they can live like hell Monday through Saturday.
2. That selfishness, that sinfulness, that unwillingness to deal honestly and forthrightly with sin is what kills the spirit and obscures the glory of God in the life of the Christian and in the life of the church.

a. And God has something infinitely better for us!

b. **1 John 1:6-10 (ESV) ⁶ If we say we have fellowship with him while we walk in darkness, we lie and do not practice the truth. ⁷ But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowship with one another, and the blood of Jesus his Son cleanses us from all sin. ⁸ If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. ¹⁰ If we say we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.**

- (1) Areas of darkness in our lives obscure the glory of God from being seen in our lives
- (2) Areas of darkness are sin and destroy our fellowship with God and with one another
- (3) And we all struggle against sin to one degree or another
- (4) The question is
 - (a) **What do we do about it?**
 - i) Live with it?
 - ii) Indulge it?
 - iii) Ignore it?
 - (b) **Confess sin and repent and seek God's grace to overcome sin**