

Title: Home Sweet Home

Passage: Nehemiah 11:1 - 12:26

Key Truths:

- No insignificant work is ever done in the body of Christ but rather echoes for all eternity for God's glory.
- Worship consists of prayers of thanksgiving to God. We are to give thanks in all circumstances in light of God's sovereign will and purposes.
- We look forward to Jesus' Second Coming as the glory that will ultimately be revealed will be much greater than anything anyone has ever experienced or can comprehend.
- Even in trials, be faithful and trust unto God as he sovereignly works all things towards the good of bringing Him glory by the greater refinement of our characters towards Christ-likeness.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
- Are you able to give thanks to God, even in trial or discontent? How does singing praises to God re-orient our thoughts and emotions?
- Have you felt insignificant with your life? How does having an eternal perspective and trusting in God's sovereignty help?
- What next steps will you take in response to the sermon?

EXPOSITION

Introduction

A place

- God has a special purpose for places.
- Context of passage:
 - Jerusalem was vacant for hundreds of years while the Israelites were in exile.
 - But it will be re-settled

Nehemiah 11:1

Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. And the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem the holy city, while nine out of ten remained in the other towns.

- The Israelites returned from exile and wanted to return back to their place.
- A lottery selected those who were to live in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 11:2

And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.

- A privilege to live in Jerusalem but also difficult.

- Fortified, now a target of renewed attack.

Nehemiah 11:3

These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but in the towns of Judah everyone lived on his property in their towns: Israel, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon's servants.

- A healthy ratio of population was maintained throughout the area.

Nehemiah 11:4-6

And in Jerusalem lived certain of the sons of Judah and of the sons of Benjamin. Of the sons of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel, of the sons of Perez; and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiah, son of Adaiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, son of the Shilonite. All the sons of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were 468 valiant men.

- Perez
 - Was brought into this world as the son of Judah through a scandalous sin (not one of original 3 sons).
 - God's gracious sovereignty chose the line of Judah to bring about Jesus, the Savior of the world.

Nehemiah 11:7-9

And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Jeshaiiah, and his brothers, men of valor, 928. Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer; and Judah the son of Hassenuah was second over the city.

- 928 households = 5,000 people

Nehemiah 11:10-14

Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin, Seraiah the son of Hilkiyah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, ruler of the house of God, and their brothers who did the work of the house, 822; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, son of Pelaliah, son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, and his brothers, heads of fathers' houses, 242; and Amashsai, the son of Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer, and their brothers, mighty men of valor, 128; their overseer was Zabdiel the son of Haggadolim.

- Every family name listed here represents hundreds of real individuals souls, like you and I.

mighty men of valor, 128;

- descriptive of pastors and teachers.
- We benefit from the plurality of godly leaders.

Nehemiah 11:15-18

And of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, son of Bunni; and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chiefs of the Levites, who were over the outside work of the house of God; and Mattaniah the son of Mica, son of Zabdi, son of Asaph, who was the leader of the praise, who gave thanks, and Bakbukiah, the second among his brothers; and Abda the son of Shammua, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun. All the Levites in the holy city were 284. who were over the outside work of the house of God

- Still mentioned - notice that work outside of the house of God was still greatly valued.
 - No insignificant work is done in the body of Christ.

who was the leader of the praise, who gave thanks

- Life in God is a rejoicing, singing relationship.
- What is Worship?
 - Prayer
 - Prayer of thanksgiving

1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances; for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you.

- Question: Are you able to give thanks to God, even in trial or discontent?
- Singing praises to God points our minds and thoughts to God.

in the holy city

- City was set apart special by God. Placing his special hand over it.

Nehemiah 11:19-21

The gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon and their brothers, who kept watch at the gates, were 172. And the rest of Israel, and of the priests and the Levites, were in all the towns of Judah, every one in his inheritance. But the temple servants lived on Ophel; and Ziha and Gishpa were over the temple servants.

- Those who watch the gates
 - Are you ready to worship our holy God when come to church?

Nehemiah 11:22-23

The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, over the work of the house of God. For there was a command from the king concerning them, and a fixed provision for the singers, as every day required.

- Praise / Songs
 - special place in the life of the people.
- Likewise, we should praise God frequently.

Nehemiah 11:24

And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the sons of Zerach the son of Judah, was at the king's side in all matters concerning the people.

- Structure is spiritual and proper

1 Corinthians 14:33a, 40

For God is not a God of confusion but of peace...But all things should be done decently and in order.

Nehemiah 11:25-36

And as for the villages, with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba and its villages, and in Dibon and its villages, and in Jekabzeel and its villages, and in Jeshua and in Moladah and Beth-pelet, in Hazar-shual, in Beersheba and its villages, in Ziklag, in Meconah and its villages, in En-rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages, Lachish and its fields, and Azekah and its villages. So they encamped from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom. The people of Benjamin also lived from Geba onward, at Michmash, Aija, Bethel and its villages, Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. And certain divisions of the Levites in Judah were assigned to Benjamin.

- Judah
 - Small geographical area (can walk from one side to another in only 11 hours)
 - Jerusalem in the middle.
- What's the significance?
 - From the small area of land come something special.
 - From the Temple Mount, can look out and see the people of God.
 - This small town that has been rebuilt will come something eternal.
 - What will come eventually?
 - God in the flesh - Jesus!
- Likewise, do we ever feel insignificant with our lives?
 - Have an eternal perspective and trust in God's sovereignty.
 - All that you do is echoing in eternity.
 - God sovereignly works things together for good for time and eternity.

Romans 8:28

And we know that for those who love God all things work together for good, for those who are called according to his purpose.

Nehemiah 12:1-7

These are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah, Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiah. These were the chiefs of the priests and of their brothers in the days of Jeshua.

Ezra 3:12

But many of the priests and Levites and heads of fathers' houses, old men who had seen the first house, wept with a loud voice when they saw the foundation of this house being laid, though many shouted aloud for joy,

- people cried at the sight of the second temple that was rebuilt after the first one was demolished.
 - The second one was nothing like the original as much smaller.

Haggai 2:9

The latter glory of this house shall be greater than the former, says the LORD of hosts. And in this place I will give peace, declares the LORD of hosts.”

- But God pointed to the future that the latter glory will be greater
 - Pointed to Jesus in His First Coming.
- Likewise, we can look forward to the Second Coming of Jesus.
 - The future glory will be even greater than the former.

Nehemiah 12:8-9

And the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with his brothers was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. And Bakbukiah and Unni and their brothers stood opposite them in the service.

- Only a few of the tribes were present. There was a gap between the fulfillment of God’s plan and the present.
 - Likewise, do we wrestle with the present and the desire for the future?
 - Be faithful and trust in God.
- Hymn: “I Asked the Lord” (John Newton)

I asked the Lord that I might grow
In faith, and love, and every grace;
Might more of His salvation know,
And seek, more earnestly, His face.

‘Twas He who taught me thus to pray,
And He, I trust, has answered prayer!
But it has been in such a way,
As almost drove me to despair.

I hoped that in some favored hour,
At once He’d answer my request;
And by His love’s constraining pow’r,
Subdue my sins, and give me rest.

Instead of this, He made me feel
The hidden evils of my heart;
And let the angry pow’rs of hell

Assault my soul in every part.

Yea more, with His own hand He seemed
Intent to aggravate my woe;
Crossed all the fair designs I schemed,
Blasted my gourds, and laid me low.

Lord, why is this, I trembling cried,
Wilt thou pursue thy worm to death?
“’Tis in this way, the Lord replied,
I answer prayer for grace and faith.

These inward trials I employ,
From self, and pride, to set thee free;
And break thy schemes of earthly joy,
That thou may'st find thy all in Me.”

Nehemiah 12:10-21

And Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim the father of Eliashib, Eliashib the father of Joiada, Joiada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jaddua. And in the days of Joiakim were priests, heads of fathers' houses: of Seraiah, Meraiah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; of Malluchi, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; of Hilkiyah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

- Israelites were meticulous in their names and the tracing from the priestly line of Aaron. The Levitical priesthood being preserved.
- In New Testament, Zechariah has a son and he is told to name him John.
 - Why? To break the lineage and make clear something new was happening.
 - Zechariah (Levitical priest) was silenced and his first words would point to John.
 - What message would John preach?
 - One of repentance.

Nehemiah 12:22-23

In the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, the Levites were recorded as heads of fathers' houses; so too were the priests in the reign of Darius the Persian. As for the sons of Levi, their heads of fathers' houses were written in the Book of the Chronicles until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib.

- The ages and careers of people were previously marked by the kings. But during exile, they were marked by the high priests.
- Today, our time is measured by our High King/High Priest Jesus.

Nehemiah 12:24

And the chiefs of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their brothers who stood opposite them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, watch by watch.

- The people continued to praise God.

Nehemiah 12:25-26

Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers standing guard at the storehouses of the gates. These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra, the priest and scribe.

- God will come and return again!