

A Call to Active Faith

Nehemiah: God Restores His People

Neh. 1:1-11

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Big Idea: Rightly understanding God leads us to worship God through active faith.

An exercise in photography:

- 1) First a close-up: Nehemiah is a diary or autobiography for about a 13 year period. "This book is about Nehemiah, about his concern for his people, for the city of Jerusalem, and above all for God and his purposes for history, which are linked to his Word, his people, and their city." (Dempster, 41)
- 2) As we zoom out we see Nehemiah in the context of the post-exilic period. Ezra and Nehemiah are one volume in the Hebrew bible.
- 3) Zooming out again we see Nehemiah in the context of the Old Testament.
- 4) Finally we zoom out to see Nehemiah in the context of the whole Bible. When Jesus comes on the scene he radically changes everything.

Four qualities of active faith:

1. A concern for others. (2-4)
2. A right understanding of God. (5, 6, 10)
3. A willingness to repent. (6-7) "I need to hear this message again and again, because I drift into a peacetime mind-set as certainly as rain falls down and flames go up. I am wired by nature to love the same toys that the world loves. I start to fit in. I start to love what others love. I start to call earth 'home.' Before I know it, I am calling luxuries 'needs' and using my money just the way unbelievers do. I begin to forget the war. I don't think much about people perishing. Missions and unreached peoples drop out of my mind. I stop dreaming about the triumphs of grace. I sink into a secular mind-set that looks first to what man can do, not what God can do. It is a terrible sickness. And I thank God for those who have forced me again and again toward a wartime mind-set." (John Piper)
4. A longing for redemption. (8-10)