

## Nehemiah: FreeNotFree

### Week 12 – freedom comes from persevering

**Transition:** This is our final week in the study of Nehemiah. This far in the story, the Jews who returned to Jerusalem and Judah (thanks to Nehemiah, Ezra, and the other leaders), appeared to be well on the road to becoming healthy in mind and spirit. They renewed their covenant with God, were filled with a new sense of purpose, and felt secure because they believed that God was both with them and for them. As they realized the grandeur and uniqueness of the moment, in gratitude, they collectively held a celebration to honor what the Lord had done and worshiped Him.

**Context:** The last chapter of Nehemiah throws us a curve that we probably did not see coming. If this was a fairy tale, we would expect to see something along the lines of “and they lived happily ever after.” But for them, reality couldn’t be more different. Despite their being free to follow God and to worship Him in their homeland, a variety of things happened that spoiled the unity that was more fragile than anyone (including Nehemiah) realized. In the end, we see Nehemiah return once again to Jerusalem to do what he can to restore unity and holiness. Sadly, the book ends unfulfilled. If the restorations that Nehemiah set in place do not last, how will Israel ever follow God faithfully?

#### Opening Question:

- Have you ever left something in the care of someone who didn’t do a good job of taking care of what you entrusted to them? If so, share the story. How did it make you feel? If you’ve never had that happen, think of something you prize, imagine what it must be like to have it ruined, and share how you think you’d respond.
- How important is maintaining holiness in the church to you personally? How important is it to Jesus? (Explain your answer.) Assuming you think it’s important, how should a church go about practicing holiness and maintaining it?

#### Scripture/Storing: Nehemiah 13

#### Discipleship Questions:

- For each of the passages below, identify the root problem, why Nehemiah takes offence to it, and what actions he took to fix it.
  - Verses 1-3
  - Verses 4-9
  - Verses 10-14
  - Verses 15-22
  - Verses 23-27
  - Verses 28-29
- Of these issues that Nehemiah confronted and remedied, which one stands out the most to you (and why)?
- Of these issues, which one do you think is most prevalent in our churches today? Explain your response. What can churches do to remedy the problem?
- How does Nehemiah conclude what he did? Why do you think he keeps asking God to remember him?
- Why is persevering so difficult? Share a time when you persevered through something. How did you make it through? What would you recommend to someone who was in the early stages of persevering?
- The fixes that Nehemiah first instituted did not last long. Why do you think that is? How is this a “timeless” problem? How does Nehemiah point the way to Jesus?

**Prayer time:** Please leave ample time to pray. Pray that we will be a people who are known for persevering in Christ.