

Nehemiah: freenotfree
Week 5 – freedom comes from knowing

Transition: In our study of the book of Nehemiah, we have seen Nehemiah face a number of different battles. Initially, he battled his own internal concerns as he knew he could not leave his position as the king's cupbearer without the king's permission. Likewise, once he arrived in Jerusalem, he was immediately faced with numerous obstacles from foreigners who lived there who did not want the wall to be rebuilt. And then last week, we saw that Nehemiah also faced contentious battles that came from his own people.

Context: This week we are going to be observing how Nehemiah leads the Jews immediately after the rebuilding project has been completed. At this point in our study, it is important to remember that the rebuilding of the wall was merely a means to an end—it was not the ultimate reason why Nehemiah made the trek to Jerusalem. Rather, it was actually the starting point. By securing the wall, the Jews who resided within its walls were now free to once again live out their true identity as the people of God.

Opening Question:

- Have you ever researched your family's genealogy? If so, what did you discover? Why did you look into your family's history?
- Is it easy or difficult for you to delegate important matters to others? Explain. What factors do you consider when delegating something that is important to you?

Scripture/Storying: Nehemiah 7:1-65

Discipleship Questions:

- What does Nehemiah do once the wall has been rebuilt, and why does he do it (7:1-4)? Why are these actions a critical first step?
- What is Hananiah's position and how is his character described (v2)? What qualities are important to you when choosing a leader (and why)? What qualities are absolutely critical (the person shouldn't lead without them)?
- What does faithfulness actually look like in the life of a leader? What about God-fearing? How were these attributes evident in Jesus' life? In what ways can you be more faithful and/or God-fearing?
- Share a story of either when you delegated leadership responsibilities to someone or they were delegated to you, including how it turned out. If it did not go well, share what happened and what could have been done differently.
- Why do you think God moved Nehemiah (v5) to find the list of those who returned from the Babylonian exile and to enroll the people of his time on it (by genealogy)? Do biblical genealogies matter to you? Why or why not?
- How did Nehemiah and the leaders handle those who could not prove their lineage (either as Israelites or as members of the priesthood)? Why do you think they did this? What is your reaction to it? Is there a biblical principle from this that we should consider in the present day?
- What is God teaching you today through/from this passage?

Prayer time: Pray for our leaders.