Before We Build, We Must Seek

Preparing Our Hearts for God's Direction

Nehemiah 1:1–11 • Introduction and Section I

-- HAVE YOU EVER…

Have you ever started a project and realized you should have planned better?

-- OUR PURPOSE? WHY WE'RE HERE

Preparing Central Baptist Church to seek God's direction _____.

This is a shared _____.

Ephesians 4:11–16

"to equip the saints for the work of ministry, to build up the body of Christ" (v. 12)

"by the proper working of each individual part" (v. 16)

-- BEFORE WE DISCERN WHERE WE'RE GOING, WE MUST BE WILLING TO…

1. _____ where we are
2. _____ Him together
3. Accept _____ for the work ahead

Unless the Lord builds a house, its builders labor over it in vain; unless the Lord watches over a city, the watchman stays alert in vain. — Psalm 127:1

-- THE SETTING OF NEHEMIAH • HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

Location: Susa, Persia • Time: ~445–444 BC

Nehemiah 1:1–4

What did Nehemiah ask?

What did he learn?

How did he respond?

I. We Must Be Willing to See - **Nehemiah 1:1–3**

-- NEHEMIAH ASKED

> *"I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem." — Nehemiah 1:2*

Why do you think Nehemiah cared so much about what was happening in Jerusalem?

_____

_____

-- NEHEMIAH HEARD THE TRUTH

> *"The remnant in the province, who survived the exile, are in great trouble and disgrace. Jerusalem's wall has been broken down, and its gates have been burned." — Nehemiah 1:3*

Honest questions sometimes bring _____ answers.

> *The wounds of a friend are trustworthy. — Proverbs 27:6*

-- LET'S TALK ABOUT IT

Why do you think it is sometimes difficult for a church to honestly evaluate itself?

_____

_____

_____

-- HONEST EVALUATION

Honest evaluation is not an _____ on the church.
It's an expression of _____.

-- LOOK IN THE MIRROR 1ST

Before asking, "What needs to change in our church?"
ask, "What might God want to change in _____?"

Psalm 139:23–24

> *Search me, God, and know my heart; test me and know my concerns. See if there is any offensive way in me; lead me in the everlasting way. — Psalm 139:23–24*

I. We Must Be Willing to See

-- ASK YOURSELF

Am I growing spiritually?

Am I serving faithfully?

Am I participating in the mission Christ has given His church?

-- WE MUST BE WILLING TO SEE

Nehemiah was willing to…

Ask _____
Receive _____
Face _____

-- WHAT SHOULD WE ASK?

What is healthy?

What is weak?

Where is God already at work?

Where are we failing to reach people?

Where are people growing?

Where are they disconnected?

What ministries are producing fruit?

What ministries may need strengthening or rethinking?