

October 13 & 14, 2018



Promise: Covenant

Nehemiah 1:5 *"O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands,"*

1. In the Old Testament, God made a series of promises which we call covenants.

To Abraham, God promised descendants that would be uncountable.

Genesis 15:5 *He took him outside and said, "Look up at the heavens and count the stars — if indeed you can count them." Then he said to him, "So shall your offspring be."*

Genesis 12:2 *"I will make you into a great nation and I will bless you; I will make your name great, and you will be a blessing. 3 I will bless those who bless you, and whoever curses you I will curse; and all peoples on earth will be blessed through you."*

To Moses, God promised a destiny that was unimaginable.

Deuteronomy 11:24 *Every place where you set your foot will be yours: Your territory will extend from the desert to Lebanon, and from the Euphrates River to the western sea. 25 No man will be able to stand against you. The LORD your God, as he promised you, will put the terror and fear of you on the whole land, wherever you go.*

To David, God promised a dynasty that would be unstoppable.

2 Samuel 7:16 *"Your house and your kingdom will endure forever before me; your throne will be established forever."*

2. Nehemiah prayed to the LORD based on the Covenant. It said three things:

How they lived mattered to the LORD

Nehemiah 1:5 Then I said:

"O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you.

7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

Deuteronomy 4:1 *Hear now, O Israel, the decrees and laws I am about to teach you. Follow them so that you may live and*

may go in and take possession of the land that the LORD, the God of your fathers, is giving you.

Deuteronomy 4:25 After you have had children and grandchildren and have lived in the land a long time — if you then become corrupt and make any kind of idol, doing evil in the eyes of the LORD your God and provoking him to anger, 26 I call heaven and earth as witnesses against you this day that you will quickly perish from the land that you are crossing the Jordan to possess. You will not live there long but will certainly be destroyed. 27 The LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and only a few of you will survive among the nations to which the LORD will drive you.

If they forgot the LORD, they would be scattered.

Nehemiah 1:8 "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations,

This is what had happened to Israel in 722 BC at the hands of the Assyrians and to Judah in 586 BC at the hands of the Babylonians in 586 BC.

This is how Nehemiah came to be a captive and a cup bearer.

If they returned to the LORD, they would be gathered.

Nehemiah 1:9 but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

3. The LORD keeps His promises.

*Lamentations 3:19 I remember my affliction and my wandering, the bitterness and the gall.
20 I well remember them, and my soul is downcast within me.
21 Yet this I call to mind and therefore I have hope:*

*22 Because of the LORD's great love we are not consumed, for his compassions never fail.
23 They are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.
24 I say to myself, "The LORD is my portion; therefore I will wait for him."*

25 The LORD is good to those whose hope is in him, to the one who seeks him; 26 it is good to wait quietly for the salvation of the LORD.

4. We have been given a New Covenant.

2 Corinthians 3:3 You show that you are a letter from Christ, the result of our ministry, written not with ink but with the Spirit of the living God, not on tablets of stone but on tablets of human hearts.

*4 Such confidence as this is ours through Christ before God.
5 Not that we are competent in ourselves to claim anything for ourselves, but our competence comes from God.*

6 He has made us competent as ministers of a new covenant— not of the letter but of the Spirit; for the letter kills, but the Spirit gives life.

OLD COVENANT NEW COVENANT

Written on stone

Written on hearts

Letter of the Law

Spirit of the law

Letter kills

Spirit gives life

Hebrews 9:15 *For this reason Christ is the mediator of a new covenant, that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance — now that he has died as a ransom to set them free from the sins committed under the first covenant.*

Discussion Questions

Icebreaker Question:

1. If your house was on fire, list three things (not people) you'd want to save.

Digging Deeper:

1. Last week, you were challenged to pray and consider where God may be calling you to have a greater influence. Share this with your group.
2. Work together to remember as much of the historical background for the book of Nehemiah as you can.
3. What is a covenant?
4. Why did the people of Judah end up in captivity?
5. In what ways is God's faithfulness revealed in the book of Nehemiah?
6. What would Nehemiah or Jeremiah say to someone who was discouraged and doubted God's faithfulness?
7. What is the new covenant? How is it different than the old covenant?

8. Have you experienced "God's word being written on your heart?" Describe what that is like.

9. Have you ever experienced being led by God's Spirit? What was that like?

Living it Out:

1. Romans 8:5 says that we live by the Spirit if we set our minds on the things of the Spirit. This week, intentionally set your minds on the things of the Spirit by memorizing Romans 8:5 and taking it with you throughout the week.