

Small Group Study Guide

Unhappy with the Status Quo

Series: Nehemiah Rebuilding a Life of Faith

Nehemiah 1:1-11

From Sunday September 20, 2020

Appetizer:

Question: Have you ever been part of a house renovation? What was the best thing about it? What was the worst thing about it?

Have someone read Nehemiah 1:1-11

Pray: Lord direct our conversation this evening in a way that is pleasing to you and encouraging to others. Amen.

Question: What stands out to you in the passage? What interesting words stand out? What does Nehemiah's prayer say about the kind of person he is?

Main Course:

This series on Nehemiah is reflecting on how to rebuild lives of faith. We are always in a process of rebuilding our faith, whether it's a small renovation, or a desperately needed overall. In the passage we are looking at we see Nehemiah hearing news of a poor rebuild and he reacts with mourning, confession, and a determination to do something about it.

Question: Jeff suggested in this week's sermon that rebuilding our faith begins with being unhappy with the status quo. There is not always something wrong with the status quo, but if has been detrimental to our faith, well, something is not right. **What is it about the status quo (church culture and society as a whole) we find ourselves in that we should not be happy about?**

It was suggested that being unhappy with the status quo tells us a few things about rebuilding a life of faith:

1. We cannot rebuild what doesn't affect us.
2. We cannot rebuild what we do not own.

3. We cannot rebuild without making ourselves available.

In other words, being unhappy with the status quo means that we care about what's going on, are willing to see the way we've contributed to what is wrong with the world, and we are willing to do something about it. Let's reflect on these 3 points.

1. We cannot rebuild what doesn't affect us.

Question: Nehemiah wept when he heard the news of the walls of Jerusalem being in disrepair. How do we respond when we hear about some of the bad news that is taking place in our world? Have you ever experienced a coldness or a numbness to discouraging news? Why?

Question: Have you ever lamented something? What would it look like if you wrote that lament as a prayer? (Challenge the group to at some point this week write out a lament)

2. We cannot rebuild what we do not own.

Question: Nehemiah followed up his lament with a confession of sin—his sin—when it came to the state of a broken society. Confession of sin, personal sin, used to be a common occurrence in church life and society. Now the idea of confession is seen as harmful or judgmental. Why do you think confession is so difficult?

Question: Does it seem like Christians are recognizing their contribution to the tensions in society? Why or why not? What is a practical way that Christians can influence society through "owning" their own attitudes and actions? What would this look like?

3. We cannot build without making ourselves available.

Question: Nehemiah finished his prayer with asking for God's help in addressing the king. He was going to use his influence as a Cupbearer to help with the rebuild. A rhetorical question to reflect on: Is it possible to build lives of faith without making ourselves available to God? **Group question:** What does everyone do for a living or as a passion? How can we thinking missionally about the vocations we find ourselves in?

Dessert:

It's accountability time! Challenge everyone in the group to come up with a life mission statement as it relates to what they do.

For example, if someone is a carpenter, they may come up with a statement like, "I build houses to glorify God and to provide an opportunity for people to build a home and practice hospitality."

Or, using the same carpenter profession, they may say, "I use my gifts of carpentry to walk alongside people as a way to show them what life can look like when we dedicate all that we do to God."

The sky is the limit, and each statement is personal. There is no perfect life mission statement.

But we are all on mission. And we are called to build lives of faith—that's another way of saying we are called to make disciples. So how do you use what God has given you to bring glory to Him?

Prayer: Have each person pray for the person on their left, asking God to help them see the world through God's eyes, help them see where they have erred in their attitudes and behaviours, and empower them to use their God-given circumstances to make a difference in the lives of others.