Nehemiah 11,12 **11-10-26**

A People for the City

I. Announce:

A. Welcome to those watching online.

B. Slide1 **FHC:** Join us for our **foster** and **adoption** support group. Our team would love to meet you and offer any support they can. They meet on the 3rd Wed monthly, at 6:30pm, Agape Room.

C. Slide2 **At Risk:** Join us this Sun, 15th for our Nov ***At Risk*** mtg. We will be discussing our **JM Sunday** again, and will be spending time **praying** over the day. Meet us in the Agape Room at 3pm.

D. Slide3 **CFLC:** We will be partnering again this year with CFLC to buy Christmas gifts for local foster kids. Coming Sun, you will be able to choose a child by age and buy the gift that's on their "wish list." Then, bring it back to church on Sunday or during the week, unwrapped, by Dec 6th. It's a great way to involve your kids and grandkids as well! Also, they host a ***wrapping party*** at their office on Dec15th.

E. Slide4 **Greece Info Mtg:**

F. Slide5 **Veterans Day:** As we celebrated Veteran's Day today, and appreciate and honor all those who served, I know that we have a number of people in our church who continue to struggle from the **sacrifices** of being a veteran.

1. It can be particularly lonely when not everyone understands **that life** and **experience**. We wanted to let you know about **a couple great Christian resources** to give you a community of those who understand.
2. We have partnered with **Mighty Oaks** over the years and they have healing retreats *as well as* resources on YouTube for struggling veterans.
3. We also have **a group here** every Thursday night of **First Responders** who check in with one another and study the Bible together. It's not only for veterans but also **law enforcement, fire, and medical personnel - active or retired**. *We'll have some folks from there at a table in the back after service if you'd like to find out more about their group.*

G. Prayer:

II. Slide6a **Intro:** *A People for the City*

A. Big Idea: God does not just rebuild **structures**; He rebuilds **a people** who will ***live, serve, worship, and rejoice*** in His presence.

B. By the time we reach Nehemiah 11, *the **wall** is finished. The **gates** are hung. The **opposition** has been overcome. The **covenant** has been renewed.*

1. But there is still a problem. A rebuilt city with nobody living in it, is not much of a city. (Matter of fact it's creepy - empty cities of Chin@)

C. Jerusalem had **walls**, but now it needed **people**. *It needed families, priests, Levites, gatekeepers, worshipers, servants, leaders, workers.* In other words, the rebuilding project was never really about **stone**. It was always about **people**.

D. That is what ch's 11-12 show us: Neh.11 answers the question: **Who will live here and serve here?** Neh.12 answers the question: **What should we do when God has brought us this far?**

1. Slide6b And the **3-fold** answer is: Take your place. Do your part. And, Keep worship at the center.

III. Slide7a **1. BE WILLING TO GO WHERE YOU ARE NEEDED (11:1-2)**

A. 11:1,2 Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. And the rest of the people cast lots to bring **one** out of **ten** to live in Jerusalem the holy city, while **nine** out of **ten** remained in the other towns. 2 And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.

B. Slide7b Look at Map. Pie shape. Zion. David's city.

C. Jerusalem needed more people, so **1 out of every 10** was selected to move into the city. (vs.2 says, *And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem*).

1. **Ask!!!** They were drawing straws to **not** move inside the walls, hopefully to stay outside. **Why** wouldn't you want to go live inside the city walls?

a) It would become **a target** for foreign armies. (Which would concentrate their attacks on fortified settlements rather than scattered rural homes).

b) Most returning Jews were **agricultural people** who preferred the countryside with its villages in farmland.

2. That tells us something about the sacrifice involved. Moving into Jerusalem was not necessarily the comfortable choice. *Some would leave homes, land, extended family, and familiar routines.*

a) Yet some willingly said, *"I'll go."*

D. Application: Sometimes following God means asking a different question.

1. Not simply, *Where would I most like to be?* But, *Where am I most needed?*

2. God may place us somewhere because there is work to do there, people to love there, or something He wants to form in us there.

a) This fits **Missions** beautifully. Some people cross cultural, linguistic, geographic, and social **barriers** to reach people w/the gospel.

b) This also fits **our missional living**. Some change careers. Some step into a ministry they never expected. Some simply stay faithful in a difficult place because they know ***God** has them there*.

E. Illustration: Think of **first responders**. When everyone else is moving away from the problem, their calling often **takes them toward it.**

1. That is sometimes how *obedience* works.

2. Calling is not always about where I would choose to go. Sometimes it is about where God knows I am needed.

F. Slide7c Where has God placed you right now that may be more about **assignment** than ***comfort***? - Is there somewhere God may be asking you to step **in** *rather than* step **away**?

IV. Slide8a 2. TAKE YOUR PLACE IN GOD'S WORK (11:3–36)

A. I'm not going to read this long section. It lists all kinds of people: *summed up …*

1. People from Judah. People from Benjamin. Priests. Levites. Gatekeepers. Temple servants. Singers. Administrators. Families living in the surrounding towns and villages.

B. Most of these names mean very little to us. But they mattered to God.

1. This chapter reminds us that God's work is never carried by only a few visible people. - We tend to notice the ***Nehemiahs***. God notices **everyone!**

a) The **gatekeeper** mattered. The **singer** mattered. The **priest** mattered. The **family** who moved into town mattered. The **person** whose name appears once and then disappears from history mattered.

C. There are no **in**significant parts in the body of Christ: Some people **teach**. Some **serve** quietly. Some **pray**. Some **give**. Some **lead**. Some **welcome**. Some **repair**. Some **encourage**. Some **show up** week after week and simply **remain faithful**.

1. The church works best when everybody stops asking, *Who is going to do this?* and starts asking, **What is my part?**

D. Illustration: A **body** is an obvious biblical picture. *The **eye** cannot say to the **hand**, "I don't need you."* A healthy body functions because **very different parts** are doing **very different jobs**.

1. Slide8b God does not ask everyone to do the same thing. He does ask everyone to *do something*.

E. Q: What part has God given **you** in this season? - Are you comparing your role with someone else's instead of faithfully doing your own?

V. Slide9a 3. KEEP WORSHIP AT THE CENTER (12:1-26)

A. Before the dedication of the wall, ch.12 slows down & names *the priests & Levites*.

1. Why? Because **worship** was central to the life of Jerusalem.
2. The wall was important, but the wall was *not the point*.

a) **Protection** without worship would not have been enough. **Organization** without worship would not have been enough. A **successful building project** without devotion to God would still have missed the purpose.

B. Application: This is easy to forget in **ministry** and in **life**.

1. We can build schedules, teams, budgets, programs, buildings, plans, and systems. But the question has to remain *Is all of this leading us closer to God?*

a) Even good things can become *distractions* if God is no longer at the center.

C. **Illustration: A compass works** because **one direction remains fixed.** *If "true north" moves every day, the compass becomes useless.*

1. Slide9b **Worship** is that orienting center. It keeps everything else in its proper place.

D. **Worship** is ***the rival*** of **selfishness**. Worship is taking all of the focus off myself, and putting all of my focus on God.

1. Worship is not just an **activity**, but it's a **lifestyle**. It's an **identity**.

E. Their worship was ***Biblical, Vocal, Musical, and Joyful***, *according to David*.

F. Slide10a **1. Their worship was Biblical**. (12:24) *according to David* refers to David organizing worship in 1 Chron. Ch.'s 23-26. David organizes it to be **biblical**, like Moses had laid out in the law.

a) 1st 2 Commandments are really about worship: **Who** to worship (I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, out of the house of slavery) and **How** to worship Him (You shall have no other gods before me. You shall not make for yourself a carved image, or any likeness of anything that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the water under the earth).
Worship God, and do it in the right way!

b) So **biblical** worship is ***intelligent worship***, it involves the mind.

c) We worship according to **revelation**, not our own **imagination**.

G. Slide10b **2. Their worship was Singing** - the oldest form of music making. (12:27)

1. *Good or bad voice*, God has made you with ***an adequate instrument*** for you to praise Him! [*sing, song, singing, etc* = 200+ times. Antiphonal - group to group, 2 groups stood opposite each other vs.24].

H. Slide10c **3. Their worship was Musical** *with cymbals, harps, and lyres/zither* (stringed) (27); trumpets (35); musical instruments (36).

1. When you add **melody** and **music** to **words**, it will heighten the effect of the impact of those words. Dity/jingle/*sticks w/you*. [Cal Worthington & his dog spot] ***If*** *you want a car or truck, go see Cal.* ***If*** *you want to save a buck, go see Cal.* ***Give*** *a new car to your wife, she will love you all your life.* ***Go*** *see Cal, Go see Cal, Go see Cal.* [US Army Air Corps. He became an aerobatics champion, and served as a B-17 Flying Fortress pilot in the 390th Bomb Group, flying **29 missions** over Germany WWII]

I. Slide10d **4. Their worship was Joyful** *43 And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was* ***heard far away****.*

J. This is one of the most **joyful** scenes in Nehemiah. - **They dedicate the wall!**

1. ***The wall** that had once represented **disgrace** now becomes **a platform for praise.*** [Musicians come. Singers come. Priests come. Leaders come. Women and children come]

K. Nehemiah forms 2 great choirs. They walk in opposite directions along the top of the wall and eventually meet at the temple.

1. Think about that image. Earlier in the book, Tobiah had mocked them and said, essentially, *that if even a fox climbed on that wall, it would fall down.*

   a) Now 2 large choirs are walking on top of it. That is beautiful irony.

L. Q: Could someone looking at your life hear the ***"joy of Jerusalem"*** */ Murrieta, Temecula/LE/Wildomar/Menifee* - the evidence that **you are grateful** for God's faithfulness?

M. Q: What ***good thing*** in your life is most likely to crowd God out of the **center**? What would it look like to **re-center your week** around worship rather than simply activity?

N. Slide11 Let's Pull this Together: These **2 chapters** give us **3 simple invitations:** ***Go Where You are Needed. Take Your Place. Keep Worship Central.***

VI. Slide12a **JESUS CONNECTION**

A. **Nehemiah** rebuilt Jerusalem, filled the city with people, and dedicated the walls to God. But **Jesus** is doing something greater.

1. Peter says believers are *"living stones"* being built into *a spiritual house*.
2. Jesus is not merely rebuilding a city. He is building a people.
   a) And 1 day Rev.21 shows us the final city - the New Jerusalem, where God dwells with His people forever.

B. **So** the story does not end with Nehemiah's Jerusalem, it ends with Jesus making *all things new*.

1. Slide12b Nehemiah rebuilt a city for **God's people**.
   Jesus is building a people for **God's city**.

C. **The wall** was never the final goal - **The people** were. And **they still are**!

D. Keywords: Dedication. Wall. People.