

Servants Who Serve God's Purposes

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Date: 16 March 2025

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[0 : 0 0] But we're going to turn to our Bibles now to read together, and Paul Brennan was recently preaching through the book of Ezra, and he's going to carry on now with exactly that story, but into the next book called Nehemiah, although it's really all the same story.

It also involves Ezra, and it's all about the story of how the Israelites were brought back out of exile in Babylon and back to the land of Israel. So we're going to read in Nehemiah chapter 1.

If you don't have a Bible with you, there's some at the side, some at the front and the back. Stick your hand up or wander about, and somebody will put one in your hand, and you'll find it in those Bibles, those red Bibles, I think on page 398.

Ezra, Nehemiah, they come after the kings and the chronicles, and then we have these two books. So Nehemiah chapter 1, the words of Nehemiah, son of Hakaliah.

Now it happened in the month of Chislew, in the 20th year, as I was in Susa, the capital, that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah.

[1 : 0 7] And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. And they said to me, the remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame.

The wall of Jerusalem is broken down. All its gates are destroyed by fire. As soon as I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days.

And I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And I said, O Lord, God of heaven, the great and the awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.

Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant, that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel, your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you.

Even I and my father's house have sinned. We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.

[2 : 2 3] Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples. But if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though you are dispersed beyond the farthest skies, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place that I've chosen to make my name dwell there.

They're your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants, who delight to fear your name and give success to your servant today.

And grant him mercy in the sight of this man. Now I was cupbearer to the king. Amen.

And may God bless to us his word. Well, good evening, folks. And please have Nehemiah chapter one open in front of you, which Willie read for us a little earlier.

Nehemiah chapter one. And as Willie mentioned, we are beginning a new series in this book, Nehemiah. However, it's not really a new series because Ezra and Nehemiah are really one book.

[3 : 53] We concluded Ezra a couple of weeks ago and we're picking up where Ezra left off. In the original Hebrew Bible, it was one book, but somewhere along the line it got split into two. But we're going to consider them together and we're going to keep going through Nehemiah.

Now these two books together, they chart about 100 years in the history of God's people from around 530 BC to 430 BC.

Now here's the question that's probably bubbling your mind. So what? What has ancient history got to do with us today? What has this got to do with us here in Glasgow?

Two and a half thousand years later, 3,300 miles away from Jerusalem. Why are we reading this book this evening? Well, here's the significance.

These books are not mere history. They are books about the building of God's eternal kingdom. The message for us today is crucial because we learn in Nehemiah about the realities of building for God's everlasting church.

[5 : 03] We see in these pages the nature of opposition to the church. We see the nature of perseverance required for God's people to keep building the church.

We see the need for godly wisdom, for leadership. And we will see in these pages what it is to be a servant who gladly serves and works for God's kingdom purposes.

Which is the building of the church through the proclamation of the word. We're going to see what it takes. What's required. And since the very beginning of the Bible, God has been building his kingdom.

Building his church. And we are still engaged in that same project today. We are part of that church building effort. And that happens.

The church is built through the preaching of the gospel. By his gospel servants. That is how God is building his church today. But we're not there yet.

[6 : 11] We're not yet at the end line. We've not yet reached the end. We still await the full consummation of God's eternal kingdom. We await the return of the great master builder himself, Jesus Christ.

Who will usher in his eternal kingdom. And until that day. Until the day when Christ returns. We will be involved in this building work.

We can expect to face similar trials and hardships. As we read about here in Nehemiah. That we are likewise engaged. As Nehemiah was.

In relentless warfare. Relentless conflict. As we go about that same task. Of building the church. And so there is much for us to learn here.

Despite this being a long time ago. And many miles away. There is much for us here today to learn. Much to learn from Nehemiah. A servant of God. Who was committed.

[7 : 13] To building for God's eternal kingdom. And it's Nehemiah. Who is the focus here in chapter one. Nehemiah opens not with words.

About the great powerful king of the Persian Empire. There is no mention of the king. To the very last verse of the chapter. And even then it's just a reference to the king. You don't even know his name.

You've got to wait to chapter two. To find out who that was. The great Arctic Xerxes. The focus isn't on the king of this vast empire. But on his butler.

And why is that? Why is the focus on some random civil servant? Some cupbearer to the king? Well the thing is.

The Bible's agenda. Is not our agenda. The Bible's agenda. The agenda of the book of Nehemiah. Is an agenda determined by the ultimate author.

[8 : 08] Which is God himself. This is God's word. And therefore. It contains his priorities. His concerns. Not ours. And so here at the start of this book.

The focus. Is on a humble cupbearer to the king. So what then do we learn. About Nehemiah. Why is God placing him.

Front and center. At the beginning of this book. What is the message. For us here today. Well he's teaching us. Key things. About a servant.

Who is prepared. To serve God's kingdom purposes. Nehemiah. As we will see. Was prepared to drop everything. To leave his career. At the very center.

Of the empire. Serving the king. He was prepared to leave that. Traveled all the way to Jerusalem. And gave 12 years of his life. To serving God's kingdom purposes. Back in Jerusalem.

[9 : 05] And we learn a huge amount. About a servant. Who's willing to do that sort of thing. A servant of God. Who's willing. To serve God's purposes. And not his own. And we learn.

Three key things. About. Nehemiah's head. About his heart. And about his hands. So first. We see something about the heart.

Of God's servant. Verses one to four. The heart of God's servant. Who is concerned. For God's purposes. Now the questions.

That we ask. Reveal. A lot about ourselves. They reveal. As much about us. As we do about the person. We're asking the question of. Our questions.

Reveal. What is going on. In our heads. They reveal. The concerns. Of our hearts. What was the score. In the old firm. Or more importantly. What happened.

[10 : 01] When St. Mirren. Played mother well. Yesterday. The concerns. Of our hearts. Now I jest. Slightly. But the questions we ask. Reveal something about us. What question.

Does Nehemiah ask. Here. At the start. And the question he asks. Reveals his heart. And his question. Is prompted. By the arrival. Of his brother. Hanani.

There. In verse one and two. Now the year. Is. 445. B.C. Some 13. 13 years.

After the events. Of Ezra. So 13 years. After we last. Were in Ezra. We are here. Nehemiah chapter one. The location.

Is Susa. The center. Of the Persian Empire. Some 1,100 miles. From Jerusalem. Hanani arrives. From Jerusalem. In Susa.

[10 : 56] And he sees Nehemiah. What was uppermost. In Nehemiah's mind. As he greets. His brother. Hanani. What is at the forefront. Of his mind. In that conversation.

Not. Political questions. Not questions. About the journey. About his family. Not. Questions related. To his career. Even though. He had a very significant.

Place. In the. In the Persian court. He was very high up. In the civil service. Close access. To the king. None of those questions. No. What was his question? Well.

Two things. Really. Two questions. To Nehemiah. They were utterly. Selfless. Verse two. Look what he asks. I asked them. Concerning the Jews. Who escaped.

Who had survived. The exile. And concerning. Jerusalem. Questions about. God's people. Questions about. God's place. Questions about the Jews.

[11 : 51] And questions about Jerusalem. Above all. Other considerations. Questions. These were the matters. Of most importance. To Nehemiah. It's not that other matters.

Were unimportant. But the crucial thing. For God's servant. For Nehemiah. And for us today. Is always about. Right priorities.

Selfless. Priorities. That are wrapped up. With God's concerns. Not ours. Now by nature. We are utterly.

Self-centered. How do I know that? Because I am. And I'm sure you are too. We are wrapped up in ourselves. We think of ourselves.

First and foremost. Don't we? You don't need to be taught that. We're born. With that. Utterly self-centered attitude. I remember a friend.

[12 : 49] Playing a song to me. Some time ago. Perhaps you know it. It goes like this. You're so vain. I bet you think this song is about you. Don't you? And so I said to my friend.

They wrote a song about me. But it's. It gets to the heart of the matter. We are very self-centered. So much wasted energy.

So many foolish choices made. So many mistakes in ministry are made. Because of our self-centeredness. And a consequent failure.

to not distinguish between the most important and the importance. We fail to prioritize rightly.

Because we don't see things clearly. Being able to prioritize rightly to distinguish between the most importance and everything else. is key.

[13 : 46] It's key. Particularly as we think about building for the future. For God's church. How do we know what is of ultimate importance?

And it isn't something that we discern. But it's something that's already been declared. The task which is of ultimate importance.

Is the task. Of building Christ's church. It's the task of gathering God's people. Into God's place. It is all about making and growing disciples of Jesus Christ.

For eternity. It is about God. His people. It's not about me and my concerns. Jesus states it very clearly for us.

At the end of Matthew's gospel. He says, Go therefore. Make disciples of all nations. Baptizing them in the name of the Father. And of the Son. Of the Holy Spirit. Teaching them.

[14 : 43] To observe all that I have commanded you. That is to be the overriding priority. And concern of our lives. We are to build for that which is eternal.

Everything else. Is secondary to that. Isn't it? We are to build. For that which God himself. Treasures above all other things. And what is that?

What does God treasure? He treasures the people. He treasures his church. Seen in light of eternity.

Seen in light of salvation. And everything else. All other things suddenly find their right place. In our priorities. Nehemiah saw things that way.

He had God's priorities rooted in his heart. It bubbles out of him when Hanani comes. How is God's people? How is Jerusalem? And it sometimes takes very sober moments.

[15 : 45] For us to realize. What our priorities really are. I was watching. With tears in my eyes.

And a lump in my throat. The funeral service. Of a 19 year old boy. Last week. He was a member. At my brother-in-law's church.

In the United States. And he died. From a very aggressive brain tumor. And his mother. Gave an outstanding eulogy. And she said these words.

I could tell you. How well my son did in his studies. I could tell you. His future academic and career goals. But. What do those matter now? What do they even matter to any one of us.

In the big picture anyway. When all is said and done. What matters most. Is what happens next. Eternity. Is always right.

[16 : 42] Next to us. Nehemiah knew that. Which is why. His great concern.

Bubbles out of him. His question to Hanani. How. Are God's people. How's Jerusalem. Jerusalem. Nehemiah.

As a gospel servant. Was concerned. Above all else. For the kingdom of God. For God's people. The fact was.

Nehemiah. Valued the ruins of Jerusalem. The people in Jerusalem. Above the splendors. Of Susa. And he was about to put his excellent career. On hold.

To go back. To serve. God's purposes. You see. God's. Gospel servants. Are concerned. Above all. For the gospel. The advance.

[17 : 42] Of the kingdom. The salvation. Of men and women. Boys and girls. That's the great concern. Is it your concern? Is that. The great burden.

Of your heart. Are eternal realities. Often on your mind. Do you care. About the kingdom of God. The people of God. The churches of God.

Do you care for them so dearly. And so seriously. That they are never eclipsed. By your own ambitions. Your own career goals. Your own plans and pleasures. The concerns of Nehemiah's heart.

Are clear to us. Are clear to us. Aren't they? We see that not only in his question. But also his response. Demonstrates his concerns. To the news he receives. It's a very sobering report.

Isn't it? Verse 3. Nehemiah's asked the question. How are God's people? Verse 3. They said to me. The remnant there. Is in the province. Who had survived the exile. Is in great trouble and shame.

[18 : 41] The wall of Jerusalem. Is broken down. Its gates destroyed by fire. The news is crushing. To Nehemiah. He sits.

And weeps. And mourns. For days. It's not a passing upset. It's not a bit of bad news. To be shrugged off. No. This is a deep wound to Nehemiah.

He's deeply moved. Moved because of the situation. Of God's people. In God's place. You see. 90 years before this.

This conversation. 90 years earlier. The first exiles had gone back. We saw that. Remember. In Ezra. Rebuilding had taken place. The temple was eventually restored.

Sin amongst God's people. Had been dealt with. The prophets Haggai and Zechariah. Prophesied. They'd done the work. Ezra was there. Nehemiah was perhaps hopeful. That after nine decades.

[19 : 37] There'd be encouragements. Not so. The remnant. Are in trouble. Shame. The walls are still not rebuilt.

And in the face of such news. Such grief. God's servant does. What? God's servants always do. When faced with such news. He prayed.

God's servants. God's servants. God's servants. God's servants. God's servants. God's servants. We've seen his heart. Move with concern. For God's purposes.

Now we see a head. Which humbly prays. In line with God's purposes. He dedicated himself to prayer. prayer. And the dates in the text.

They tell us. That he spent four months. In prayer. Day after day. Nehemiah poured out his spirit. To the Lord.

[20 : 34] Now what we have in these verses. Is a sort of summary. I suspect. Of the accumulation of his prayers. It's a condensed version.

Of those prayers. That Nehemiah was pouring out. Day after day. For four months. And that was very much necessary. Before the great work.

That Nehemiah was about to go and do. For twelve years. This prayer. Proceeded all of that. And it's this unseen. Hard work of prayer.

That precedes. Every great advance of the gospel. I remember listening to Dick Lucas. Recently. And he saw. A very significant gospel work.

In the city of London. For many decades. Years and years. Of fruitful ministry. But he said that. Prior to that work. Beginning. Before that great explosion.

[21 : 29] Of fruitfulness. There was a small. Group of businessmen. Who prayed. For six years. Month by month. For a gospel ministry.

In the heart of the city. Six years. And then Dick arrived. Prayers answered. Gospel fruitfulness. Nehemiah was prepared. Prayed.

To wrestle in prayer. For months. Unseen work. It's crucial. Are we prepared to do it? Prepared to pray. To open our heart.

To seek him. To seek him. It's hard work. It's unseen work. But the thing is. All of us can do it. All of us can do it.

Four things to note. About Nehemiah's prayer. And these would serve. As a good. Model for us. As we pray. For the church. As we pray.

[22 : 24] In line with God's. Purposes. So four quick things. Under the second point. About Nehemiah's prayer. Number one. Nehemiah is clear. About the God. To whom he prays. Verse five.

The character of God. The character of God. Is the bedrock. Of his prayer. Isn't it? Look again. How he opens the prayer. Verse five.

Oh Lord. God of heaven. The great. And awesome God. His prayer begins. Where our prayers. Ought to begin. Not. Not with ourselves.

Not with our problems. But with the Lord. And who he is. The Lord Jesus himself. Taught his disciples.

To pray in such a way. Pray then like this. Said Jesus. Our father in heaven. Hallowed be your name. The Lord.

[23 : 24] Is awesome. He is the almighty creator. He is sovereign. Over everything. And everyone. We should tremble. As we come before him.

We should approach him. With reverence. With awe. But the amazing truth is. We can. Approach him. He is a noble God. Nehemiah continues.

Verse five. The great. And awesome God. Who keeps. Covenant. And steadfast love. With those who love him. And keep his commandments. So yes. God is great. And awesome.

He is the sovereign God. And therefore. He is a God. Worth praying to. There wouldn't be much. Praying to him. If he wasn't. Sovereign. And awesome. And powerful. God.

God. But he is also. An approachable God. Because he is a covenant. Making. And covenant. Keeping God. He has made wonderful promises.

[24 : 18] To his people. And so we can approach him. In faith. And that is what Nehemiah does. Let your ear.

Be attentive. He says. Your eyes open. To hear the prayer. Of your servants. Nehemiah is clear. Isn't he. About the. The character. Of the God. To whom he prays. That gives you.

And I. Great confidence. As we come on our knees. To him and pray. Great confidence. Because of who he is. Second thing. In Nehemiah's prayer.

He confesses. The sins of the people. Look at verse six. I now pray before you. Day and night. For the people of Israel. Your servants. Confessing the sins. Of the people of Israel. Which we have sinned against you.

Even I. My father's house. Have sinned. We have acted. Very corruptly. Against you. And have not. Kept the commandments. The statutes. And the rules. That you commanded. Your servant Moses. See God.

[25 : 16] Cannot be fooled. Nehemiah. In no way. Seeks to minimize. The sins of God's people. He says. We've acted. Very corruptly. We have not.

Kept the commandments. There's no excuse making. No defense. Offered. Nor is there any. Ducking of responsibility. On Nehemiah's part.

Notice the use of we. Nehemiah knows. That if there's to be any hope. Then he and God's people. Must begin.

With real repentance. With clear acknowledgement. Of sin. Clear confession of sin. Clear repentance from it. And that is what he does.

I think we are. Often clear. On the need for individual. Repentance. Each of us is.

[26 : 10] A sinner. In the sight of a holy God. We must repent of our sin. And seek forgiveness. From the Lord. But I think we are. Maybe less clear. On the need.

For corporate. Repentance. The Lord. Jesus himself. Addresses. The seven churches.

Remember. In Revelation. And he said. These very sobering words. To the church. In Laodicea. He said. I will spit you out of my mouth. For you say.

I am rich. I prospered. I need nothing. I. Not realizing. That you are wretched. Pitiable. Poor. Blind. And naked. See. The problem there. Was. A self.

Deluded church. Which needed. The living word. Of the Lord Jesus. To shake it up. To help it see the reality. To see its need. To repent. Corporately. Together. It is very sobering.

[27 : 05] As you read those words. And Nehemiah. Was very quick. To see. That this. Was a corporate. Problem. We are in this together.

And he knows. That the only hope. That he and God's people. Have. Is in God's grace. Mercy. And that is reflected. In the next aspect.

Of Nehemiah's. Prayer. He knows. The God. To whom he prays. He confesses. Their sin. But thirdly. He is confident. In the promises. That he relies upon. Nehemiah.

Isn't. Hoping for the best. This isn't. A prayer. With his fingers crossed. No. There is. There is no hope. In that sort of thing. No.

Nehemiah. Is confident. In his prayer. Confident. Not because of the way. In which he is praying. Confident. Not. Because of his own credentials. Or pedigree. But rather. He is confident.

[28 : 01] Because. Of the promises. God has made. Look again. At verse 8. Where we see the grounds. For Nehemiah's hope. He says.

Remember. The word. That you commanded. To your servant. Moses. Saying. If you are unfaithful. I will scatter you. Among the peoples. But. If you return to me. And keep my commandments.

And do them. Though your outcasts. Are in the uttermost parts of heaven. From there. I will gather them. And bring them to the place. That I have chosen. To make my name dwell there. They are your servants.

And your people. Whom you have redeemed. By your great power. And by your strong hand. God. So Nehemiah. Knew his bible. He knew the promises. That God.

Had made generations before. And he calls upon God. To remember. That's his great plea there. Isn't it? The start of verse 8. Remember. Not that God had forgotten.

[29 : 02] How could he? Rather. It's asking God. Please. Act in line. With your already revealed promises.

Please do what you said you will do. He knew the words. Opening. Deuteronomy chapter 30. That's where he's quoting from. Nehemiah's asking the Lord.

To do what he's promised to do. Should his people return to him. God has promised that he will again. Gather his people. And that is what Nehemiah's prayer is.

It's a return to the Lord. It's a prayer of repentance. He's flinging himself. Isn't he? Upon God's promises. He is reminding God of all that's happened in the past. This is your people.

Your servants. You bought them at a great cost. Redeemed by your great power. Your great hand. Surely. You won't let us fade away. Surely. You'll keep your promises Lord.

[29 : 58] And he will. Keep his promises. As we humbly trust. And seek him. It is God's promises alone.

That are the grounds. For our hope. Our confidence. We cling to them. We cling to God's promises. We pray them. And God will remember.

That's the great ground of his confidence. As he prays. It's not something he's cooked up himself. It's not his clever argument. No. His confidence.

Is on God's promises. Fourth thing. In Nehemiah's prayer. Nehemiah. Is concise. In his plea for the Lord's help.

After many. Many weeks. Of prayer. And thoughts. Nehemiah arrives. Is a crystal clarity. His petition. His request.

[31 : 00] To the Lord. Is simple. Look at the end. Of verse 11. Oh Lord. Let your ear. Be attentive. To the prayer. Of your servants.

And to the prayer. Of your servants. Who delight. To fear your name. To give success. To your servant today. And grant him mercy. In the sight. Of this man.

His simple prayer. Give success. To your servant today. Grant him mercy. In the sight of the king. As.

Nehemiah's prayed. Over all those months. He's become absolutely aligned. With God's purposes. He's prepared to act. In line with them. There isn't endless words.

Of persuasion. There's no. Passivity here. From Nehemiah either. Simple clarity. A concise plea. Readiness to take action. So we've seen Nehemiah's.

[32 : 00] Heart and head. Now we see his hands. With our third. And final points. His prayer reveals. A willingness. To serve.

For the sake. Of God's purposes. Now we've seen. That there is a crisis. As a whole. For the people of God. This is a group. Problem.

A corporate issue. But Nehemiah. Doesn't then say. Oh. Not my problem. Nothing to do with me. This is. The whole group problem. What can I do?

He doesn't say. Oh somebody else. Can deal with it. No. His instinct. As God's gospel servant. Is to ask. What can I do? What can I do?

He has looked. At his circumstances. He's considered. The position. That the sovereign Lord. Has placed him in. And he concludes. He has a possible role.

[32 : 58] To play. The final. Words. Of the chapter. State. His position. His role. He was. Cut bearer. To the king. Which is.

Grander. Than it sounds. This is quite the position. For a lowly. Exiled Jew. He had access. To the king. Access. That perhaps. No other Jew.

Had. And I'm making this comment. In verse 11. This is almost like. A throwaway comment. But it reveals something. Doesn't it? Nehemiah. Is perhaps recognizing. That the Lord's. Sovereign providence.

Is placing him. In such a place. For such a time. As this. High up. In the Persian. Civil service. Regular. Close. Access. To the king. As the cup bearer.

Who is very much. Trusted. He would be the one. Tasting the wine. Before given to the king. Making sure. It wasn't poisoned. A trusted man. He was in.

[33 : 54] Perhaps the best position. You could imagine. For someone. Who is going to plead. For the king's favor. For the remnant. In Jerusalem. And Nehemiah.

He's wrestled. Over many months. With the news. That's come from Jerusalem. Four months. Praying. Wrestling. And he's come to the conclusion. I must say something.

To the king. I must go. And speak. Give me. Success. In the sight of the king. Today. That's his prayer.

Nehemiah's resolved. To go. And ask the king. To reverse his policy. The king. Had years before. Declared. That the building. Of the wall. Should stop. Nehemiah's going to ask him.

To reverse that policy. And he's willing. Because. He's exercised. Wisdom. He's thought about. The situation. There was no.

[34 : 53] Divine word. From the Lord. To go and do this. Nehemiah's resolved. To do it. He's thought about it. He's prayed about it. He's seen the situation. He's understood. Where God has placed it. He's exercised wisdom.

Some recent notes. Some proverbs. From the daily reading notes. That we get. If you signed up for them. If you're not signed up. Do sign up. On the website. You get James. Philip reading notes. Every day. And he makes the point.

Better than I could. So let me read. From. These reading notes. And I think it could be applied. To Nehemiah's wrestling. In prayer. He says this. God gives wisdom.

In the context of our striving. Wrestling. And crying after it. This echoes Paul's famous words. In Philippians 2. Work out your own salvation. With fear and trembling.

For it is God. That works in you. Both to will. And to do. His good pleasure. We must recognize. That God's providential dealings. With us. In the way that he takes us.

[35 : 51] In this life. Through all its vicissitudes. And all its dark experiences. Inform our minds and hearts. And impart to them. The basic qualities. Of shrewd. Shrewdness. And balance.

This is what is sometimes called. Sanctified common sense. And one of the greatest lessons. That we need to learn. Is to recognize. That this is a gift. Of God.

Some people seem to think. That when they become a Christian. They no longer use their head. But have to look to God. For guidance. But to think like this. Is to put the whole matter.

Falsely. And in a distorted way. It is to suggest. That seeking divine guidance. And using your head. Are mutually exclusive ideas. But the fact of the matter.

Is that God's ideal way. Of guiding his children. Is through using their heads. Nehemiah used his head. He was willing.

[36 : 46] To put his hands. To God's. Gospel purposes. And I think there was great encouragement. Here for us. As we consider.

How can I. Be useful. In building God's kingdom. How can I. Play a role. In what God is doing. In his world. Through his church. Nehemiah wasn't a priest.

Or a scribe. He was a layman. A civil servant. And what we see. About Nehemiah here. Is not skills.

Or pedigree. But concern. For God's purposes. Character. Humility. A willingness. To take a stand. And any of us.

Can be that. Can't we? Any of us. Can be used. By the Lord. If we trust him. If we're prepared. To humble ourselves. To have our hearts.

[37 : 44] Shaped. With concern. For his. Glory. Any of us. Can do that. Any of us. Can be servants. Whose heads. Hearts. And hands. Are devoted.

To serving. The building. Of God's kingdom. These are difficult days. That we live in. Like the days. Of Nehemiah. And the church.

Needs. Men. And women. Like Nehemiah. Who. Are concerned. For God's glory. Above all other things. Concerned. For his church. Moved.

To pray. Prepared. To act. For the sake. Of building the church. So the question is. Will you. Step forward. Will you.

Align yourself. With God's purposes. Well let me pray. Before we sing. And welcome. Our new members in. Let's pray. Oh heavenly father.

[38 : 50] We. Are humbled. That you. The almighty. Sovereign Lord. Would. Invite us.

Not only. Into your family. For all eternity. But to be part. Of what you are doing. In your world. You call us to join with you.

In your gospel building project. Which will last. For all eternity. What a privilege. That we get. To join with you. With what you are doing.

So father. Please. Shape our hearts. That we would long. To serve your purposes. Would our hearts break. For our city.

Our nation. Which is so far away from you. And help us. All of us. To. Hear your call. To serve. In whatever ways we can. In whatever situations.

[39 : 46] You placed us in. Please help us. To be willing. To serve your purposes. That we would be a people. Willing. To walk. Not by sight. But by faith.

Help us we ask. In Jesus name. Amen.