

Orderly Service for God's Kingdom

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Preacher: Paul Brennan

[0 : 0 0] Paul Brennan is continuing his series in Nehemiah, and this morning he'll be preaching to us from Nehemiah 11 and 12. We do have visitors' Bibles available, so if you need one, please can! I encourage you to grab all of one so you can be following along. Or if you're sitting beside someone who's new and they need a Bible, please don't be shy to grab one for them as well. The reading can be found on page 406 of our church visitor Bibles.

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.

And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem. These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem, but in the towns of Judah, everyone lived on his property in their towns. Israel, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon's servants. And in Jerusalem lived certain of the sons of Judah and of the sons of Benjamin. Of the sons of Judah, Attiah, the son of Uziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of Shephethiah, son of Mahalalel, and of the sons of Perez. And Maaseah, the son of Baruch, son of Kohhazah, son of Haziah, son of Adiah, son of Jorib, son of Zechariah, son of the Shilohites.

All the sons of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were 468 valiant men. And these are the sons of Benjamin, Salu, the son of Meshulam, son of Joet, son of Padaiah, son of Kaliah, son of Maaseah, son of Ithil, son of Jeshiah, and his brothers, men of Vela, 928. Joel, the son of Zichri, was their overseer, and Judah, the son of Hassanah, was second over the city. Of the priest, Jediah, the son of Jorib, Jechan, Sarai, the son of Hilkiyah, son of Meshulam, son of Zadok, son of Marioth, son of Ahatub, ruler of the house of God, and their brothers who did the work of the house, 822. And Addiah, the son of Jehoroham, son of Pelaliah, son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pasho, son of Malkijah, and his brothers, heads of the father's houses, 242. And Amashai, the son of Azariel, son of Ahazai, son of Meshulamoah, son of Emma, and their brothers, mighty men of Vela, 128.

Their overseer was Zabdiel, the son of Haggadolim. And of the Levites, Shemaiah, the son of Hushab, son of Azikram, son of Hashabiah, son of Bane, son of Shabbathiah, and Jozebed, of the chiefs of the Levites, who were over the outside work of the house of God, and Metani, the son of Micah, son of Zabdi, son of Asaph, who was the leader of the praise, who gave thanks, and Bakbukiah, the second among his brothers, and Abda, the son of Shamuah, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun. All the Levites in the holy city were 284. The gatekeepers, Akkab, Talmud, and their brothers, who kept watch at the gates, were 172. And the rest of Israel and of the priests and the Levites were in all the towns of Judah, everyone in its inheritance. But the temple servants lived in Ophel, and Zihar and Gishpah were over the temple servants. The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi, the son of Bane, son of

[3 : 46] Heshabiah, son of Metaniah, son of Micah, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, over the work of the house of God. For there was a command from the kings concerning them, and a fixed provision for the singers, as every day required. And Pethahiah, the son of Meshavazabel, of the son of Zerah, the son of Judah, was at the king's side in all matters concerning the people. And as for the villages, with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath-Arabah and its villages, and Dibbon and its villages, and in Jishazabil and its villages, and in Jeshua and in Moladah and Beth-Pelet, in Hazashual and Beersheba and its villages, in Ziklag and Mekona and its villages, in Enrimon and Zorah and Jarmuth, Zanoah, Adolam and their villages, the Kish and its fields, and Ezekah and its villages.

So they encamped from Beersheba to the valley of Hinnom. The people of Benjamin also lived from Geba onward, and Michmash, Aijah, Bethel and its villages, Anathoth, Nob, Aniah, Hazer, Ramah, Githiam, Hadid, Zeboem, Nebalet, Lod and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. And certain divisions of the Levites and Judah were assigned to Benjamin. Now we're not going to read the whole of chapter 12, I'll summarize it as we go along. So these are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel, the son of Sheertal and Jeshua, Sariah, Jeremiah, Ezra and others. These were the chiefs of the priests and of their brothers in the days of Jeshua. And the Levites, Jeshua, Benui and others on the list were in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. Bakbukiah, Unni and their brothers served opposite them in the ministry. Jeshua was the father of Joachim, who was the father of Eliashib, followed by Joada, Jonathan and Jedua. And in the days of Joachim, we see in verse 12 to 21, the heads of the priestly families were recorded, men like Moriah for the family of Sariah,

Hananiah for Jeremiah, Meshulam for Ezra, Jehonanan for Amariah and others. In the days of the high priesthood of Eliashib, Joada, Johanan and Jedua, the Levites and priests were carefully recorded in the reign of Darius the Persian. The chiefs of the Levites include Hashabiah, Sherebiah and Jeshua, the son of Cardamiel. With their brothers, they led in praise and thanksgiving as commanded by David, the man of God, watch by watch. Metaniah, Bakbukiah, Abadiah, Meshulam, Talmon and Akkub were gatekeepers standing guard at the storehouses of the gates. And all these were in the days of Joachim, the son of Jeshua, son of Jezidak, and in the days of Nehemiah, the governor, and of Ezra, the priest and scribe. Well, amen. May God bless to us his words.

Well, good morning, folks, and good to see you this morning, whether you're here in Barstreet or at Kelvin Grave or Queens Park. It's great to see you. Well, please have Nehemiah 11 and 12 open in front of you. Thank you for reading, Joel. Rather you than me. Thank you also to Josh and Phil for reading that for us. But do you have that open? It'd be very helpful if you could have that there in front of you.

How would you describe the purpose of God's church? What are we all about? Well, the great purpose of God's people was, and always has been and always will be, to be a holy people, a people set apart, a worshipping people, a light to the nations.

[7 : 39] It's right there in Exodus chapter 19 verse 6. You shall be to me, says the Lord, a kingdom of priests and a holy nation. And it's been the goal of Nehemiah's ministry to re-establish God's people in God's place, fulfilling God's purposes, coming from exile, returning to the city, and re-establishing worship there in Jerusalem. And what we see in these chapters is that beginning to happen. The repopulation of the city, the settling in the lands, the service of the priests in the temple. This is beginning to look a lot like a functioning, fruitful people of God.

And what we see here in 11 and 12 flows out from the previous chapters. Remember the problem identified by Nehemiah back in chapter 7? Nehemiah, the city, Jerusalem, was empty. There was nobody there.

They had rebuilt the walls, but the city itself had nobody in it. It needed repopulating now that the walls had been rebuilt. And since that realization from Nehemiah, we have seen the unleashing of God's words on God's people. And God's word has had its effect, hasn't it? Confession of sin, that covenant of repentance we saw in chapters 9 and 10. God has done a deep work in his people. And they are now ready for service. When the rubber hits the road, would God's people sacrificially serve the Lord and his purposes or not? That's the lingering question. Would God's people take up the role of being God's people?

Was it only their words or would it be backed up by action? Real life service? Well, these chapters show us what happens. They answer that question. Would God's people serve? Would they step up and become that light to the nations? Well, we can take this section in three parts. Number one, verses 1 to 24 of chapter 11, here's the first thing that we see. We see in front of us costly service for the sake of God's kingdom. Costly service for the sake of God's kingdom. As we read these words, there is a clear willingness to make significant sacrifice for the sake of the service of the Lord and his kingdom purposes.

And these first few verses summarize what happened in terms of the repopulation of the city. Look at verse 1. Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of 10 to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while nine out of 10 remained in the other towns. And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem. So at the start of this chapter, the leaders lived there, but that was it. More were required if the city was to become a going concern with sufficient security in place, with a steady supply of people to work in the temple, to provide the numerous support functions to make the temple work. How would that happen? How are we going to have a city that could sustain worship in the temple for the Lord? Well, they cast lots.

[11 : 22] One in 10 would be selected to live in Jerusalem, a tithe of the people. Now that was a big ask to shift your family from wherever they were living to move into Jerusalem, uprooting your family, taking your belongings, moving to what is a shell of a city. You had the wall, but there was nobody living there. In many ways, that was, for some I'm sure, very exciting.

This was the center of the action. The temple was there, and you got to be part of the repopulation of the city. But remember, this place has also been the very center of all the attacks from St.

Ballard and Tobias and others. To move to Jerusalem was to put yourself under the microscope, to enter something of a pressure cooker, to stand in the firing line. And surely, if Jerusalem was a more attractive proposition to where they currently live, people would have moved already, wouldn't they? If Jerusalem was the best option, people would be moving there. But they weren't.

It was a costly move to make. It was inconvenient. That's one way to view it. On the other hand, viewed through the eyes of faith, not through fear, this move would be the privilege of their lives.

pioneers in the service of the Lord. Jerusalem is being repopulated again. After all those years of exile, this is hugely exciting. And when the crunch came, would the people's sympathies and intentions with regards to the need to re-establish worship in the city, would that be matched by a willingness to actually go? We've heard what they said last week, that great covenant of repentance.

[13 : 27] We're going to sacrifice ourselves. We're going to worship the Lord. But would that happen in reality? It's all very well to articulate it. But when the crunch came, would they go? Would they participate?

And the answer seems to be yes. Yes, they would go. The fact that lots were drawn could indicate that there was a real dearth of volunteers.

And so the lots would decide the unlucky few. Or it could be that there were too many volunteers. This was the fairest way to decide. Lots of people wanted to go.

We couldn't take them all. Might it have been in principle that all were willing to go? Either way, whichever way it was, moments like this are in reality the ultimate barometer in terms of assessing the spiritual health of God's people, of a congregation.

When moments like this arise, when people have to step up, it really is very revealing, isn't it? Of the true spiritual state of people's hearts. Either it reveals a spiritually vital people, ready to sacrifice, ready to live out their faith they profess.

[14 : 51] Or it reveals a spiritually anemic people whose love for the Lord has really grown cold, despite what they might say. But it would seem, I think, given all that we've seen in recent chapters, that this is a people gripped by the grace of God.

A people prepared to make real sacrifices. And perhaps there was sacrifice required from all. Certainly those who went made sacrifices.

But so too did those who remained. There can be a real cost, can't there? Involved in staying put. We need rather go with the adventure.

We need rather be a pioneer. But the bottom line is that there will always be a cost in the service of the Lord. Being prepared to count the cost to give of ourselves in the service of God is not an unusual thing at all.

In fact, it's the very core of what it is to be a follower of Christ. We are to take up our cross daily. He doesn't call us to a light of comfort. Rather, he calls us, doesn't he, to pick up our cross every day.

[16 : 10] And that plays out in reality. It's not a mere concept we give intellectual assent to. This really makes a difference in how we live our lives.

It means sometimes saying to your family, as the folks did here, look, we've got to move. We're moving.

Moving house. We're moving for the sake of the gospel. For the folks here in chapter 11, verses 1 and 2, it perhaps meant moving from Kiriath Arbor. Out in the countryside with its fields and rich farmlands.

Moving to Jerusalem. Giving up the space. Giving up the greenery. Saying goodbye to your neighbors. Pulling your children away from their pals. Perhaps it's a costly thing financially as well.

It's not going to be as good for you financially. Costly. There is a cost. But it's worth it. The rest of this section specifies who lived in Jerusalem.

[17 : 17] Who went. Look at verse 3 onwards. We have an orderly account of all those who lived in Jerusalem. So verses 4 to 6, it's those from Judah.

Verses 7 to 9, those from Benjamin. Verses 10 to 14, those amongst the priests. 15 to 18, the Levites. And verse 19, the gatekeepers. And we're also given numbers.

It's around 3,000 men. If you add in wives and children, perhaps. You've got a population of around 12,000. And that seems to solve the empty city problem that Nehemiah identified back in chapter 7.

There's your city. 12,000. But it's not simply a matter of getting the numbers. As if that's an end in itself.

The Lord isn't just interested in numbers for the sake of numbers. Numbers represent real people. The fact that this book repeatedly lists names.

[18 : 20] I imagine those leading the service would be glad when we finish Nehemiah. No more lists of names to read out. But the book is full of them. Lists of names. Long lists. But those lists demonstrate, don't they?

That the Lord cares for people. For named families. For individuals. And isn't that the wonderful reality? The Lord knows.

He knows his people. Not just the number. But he knows their names. And it's a diverse group as well, isn't it?

The list is carefully organized into different groupings. And each group had its own distinct roles and responsibilities. The city wasn't just crammed with priests. No.

There were priests. But there were also Levites and gatekeepers as well. We've got men from Judah. Look at verse 6. They're described as valiant men. Derek Kidner says that valiant men could be described as men of substance.

[19 : 27] Or outstanding men. It's not only a reference to physical strength. Although that would be needed at times in order to defend the city from enemies. But these were men of substance.

Men who took a lead. The men from Benjamin are described in verse 8 as men of valor. And that is a word closely associated with military context.

And further on from verse 10. We've got details of the priests and Levites and gatekeepers. And these glimpses of the people involved in the temple.

In the work of the house. They're very brief. But it's enough to indicate that there was real activity going on once again in Jerusalem in the temple. It was a real hive of activity.

The temple was back up and running. You can read more fully about it in 1 Chronicles chapter 9. Where we see all the different roles. All the different jobs required. The gatekeepers. Checking in and out of utensils.

[20 : 26] The preparing of the cakes. There's so much that goes into running the temple. And the picture here is of the people of God as one.

In all their diversity. Playing the roles they've been called to play. With all their unique gifts and skills. With the one goal of glorifying the Lord. Of serving him in the temple.

And it's a picture very familiar to us, isn't it? It's a picture we see in the New Testament as well. A church body. A diverse group. Each of whom has been uniquely gifted for the work of building Christ's kingdom.

It's what Paul speaks about in 1 Corinthians 12, for example. He says this. For just as the body is one. And has many members. And all the members of the body.

Though many are one body. So it is with Christ. For the body does not consist of one member. But many. Now you are the body of Christ. And individually members of it.

[21 : 27] And God has appointed in the church. First apostles. Second prophets. Third teachers. Then miracles. Then gifts of healing. Helping administration. And so on. Many different aspects.

Many different people. Many different roles. That's one of the real joys, isn't it? Of church life. To see all different sorts of people. Different people. Different gifts.

Serving together with one purpose. Each playing a unique role. In the corporate life of the church. That's the picture you have here.

In chapter 11. A diverse group. Serving together. For the glory of God. And that is what you would expect to see. As God's word is unleashed.

As we've been seeing that in recent weeks. God's word is unleashed on God's people. And as God's word is at work. This is what you'd expect to see, isn't it? A people together.

[22 : 21] Serving. In all their different ways. Prepared to sacrifice. To play their part. That's what we see here in chapter 11. But as well as the costly service.

We see secondly. Confident trust. In God's promises. That's the second half of verse 11. That final paragraph. In verse 25. We see their confident trust.

In the promises of God's kingdom. Now I love a bit of geography. I love a good map. And if I'd had the time. I could have produced a map for you this week.

But what we have in these verses. Is a map described. The focus shifts from Jerusalem. Note verse 25. To the villages. To the surrounding area.

So we're kind of zooming out. From Jerusalem. And we're seeing. The broader scope. Of the land. As for the villages. It says. And it goes on to detail.

[23 : 21] Where God's people were living. Well so what? You might ask. What's the significance of that? Well let me describe to you. Where these places are.

Kiriath Arbor. Verse 25. That's about 20 miles south. Of Jerusalem. Of Jerusalem. Beersheba. You see that in verse 30. That's about 45 miles.

Southwest. Of Jerusalem. And in verse 35. Oh no. Is northwest of Jerusalem. And it's almost. At the coast. So what you're seeing.

Is actually quite a big area. Around Jerusalem. In other words. These returned exiles. Are spread over. Quite a large area.

God's people. Are back. In God's place. Jerusalem. Jerusalem. Is repopulated. The temple. Is beginning. To function again.

[24 : 16] What does that remind you of? Going back through the centuries. We remember. God's. Great promises. To Abraham. Promises.

Of a people. And a place. Promises. Of his presence. In their midst. Christ. Specifically. God had said. To Abraham. Back in Genesis 12.

He says. To your offspring. I will give this land. And here we are. Centuries later. Centuries. During which. God's people. Have proved themselves. Unfaithful.

Time and time again. We saw that. So clearly. Last time. In chapter 9. That record. Of constant rebellion. Against God. Would God.

Hold. To his promises. Made to Abraham. That's the question. Will God. Do. As he's promised. Remember.

[25 : 12] What the people say. In chapter 9. Verse 33. You. Lord. Have been righteous. And all that's come upon us. For you have dealt. Faithfully. And we. Have acted wickedly. That's the God.

To whom we belong. Yes. God's people rebel. But God is faithful. To his promises. He's gracious. That's the God. To whom they belong.

He is faithful. He will keep his promises. And all that we need do. Is confront the reality. Of our sin. To confront.

The reality. Of our rebellion. And run back to him. To turn to him. And we know. That as we do that. He will be faithful.

To his promises. He will do. Just. As he's promised to do. And then we see that. Playing out here. In Nehemiah. They've repented. They've turned back to him. And what we see wonderfully.

[26 : 13] Is the repopulation. Of the land. Promised to Abraham. We're seeing these promises. Being fulfilled. In front of our eyes here. That is the significance. Of this geography lesson here.

As it was read. You might just. Let it pass over you. But this is real. There's real significance here. God promised them a land. He promised them people. And here they are. Even after exile.

Beginning to live. Across the extent. Of the land. That he promised to Abraham. All those years ago. Now. I may look.

And feel. Small. And feeble. I'm sure. The folk. Mentioned here. Did not feel. Impressive. Or important. As they lived.

In Kiriath Arbor. Or Beth Pellet. Or wherever it was. But the bigger reality. Going on here. Is that God.

[27 : 12] Was fulfilling his promises. That's the great reality. That we're being shown here. And that is often. How it goes. For the church.

Today. Even in our age. We can. Trust God. To fulfill his promises. He will do it. He is building his church. But it may not look.

Very impressive. It may not feel. Very important. Here we are. A small remnant. In a big city.

Of Glasgow. We represent. A tiny. Tiny fraction. Don't we. Of our city. A city of. 600,000. We're a tiny group.

Aren't we? Even if you put together. Every gospel church. In our city. We're still. A tiny remnant. But this. Is how God works. We're involved.

[28 : 07] In small things. We're going to. We're going to. But there is a day coming. When we will see the extent. Of God's glorious kingdom. We will see the full fruit.

Of our gospel endeavors. One day. Just consider the. Small works. That we've been involved with. As a church.

Over the past decades. Maybe you've been involved with them. Think about the. Apprenticeship program. Begun almost 20 years ago. Small beginnings.

But 20 years on. We've had over 50 apprentices. Through our training program. And just think about the fruitfulness. In all sorts of places. Think about Andy Ritson.

Launching off in Carlisle this week. Planting a church. Think about Stephen. Across in Edinburgh. Think about Andrew. About to go to Maxwell. Fruitfulness. Think about all the students.

[29 : 03] Who've been through. Release the word. Who've grown in their faith. Who are now serving faithfully. The Lord. Whether it's here. Or elsewhere. Think of all the children.

In junior church. And it may be years. Decades even. Before you see the fruit. Of your endeavors. As a junior church teacher. Now I don't say these things.

To puff us up. But actually. To give us. Perseverance. In the midst of what might look to be. Not that encouraging. At the time.

When starting a ministry. Like an apprenticeship program. Or when you're in the depths of November. Struggling through the book of Romans. With your release the word group. Who are half asleep. Maybe you're trying to marshal.

A squad of three-year-olds. In junior church. Chaos. It may not seem like much. But this is how the Lord. Builds his church. Trust him.

[30 : 01] To keep his promises. It may not look very impressive. It certainly didn't hear. These folks scattered. In small numbers. In these villages around Jerusalem. And beyond. But the big thing is.

God was keeping his promises. He was doing what he'd said he would do. And the final thing.

We see. Is. The generational faithfulness. That closes out this section. As we look on to the final part. In chapter 12. Here's the third thing we see.

We see continuity. Over generations. In service of God's kingdom. We have another list. And this list.

Details. Verse one. Look with me there. These are the priests. And the Levites. Who came up with Zerubbabel. The son of Shealtiel. It's a list of priests.

[31 : 02] And it's a list. That spans. Quite a long period of time. It begins. With those priests. Who came up with Zerubbabel. That is a reference.

All the way back. To the beginning of Ezra. The year. 538 BC. It's about 100 years. Before the events. Of chapter 12. So this list.

Goes back about 100 years. This is a list. Of all the priests. And their families. Who have served. In Jerusalem. Down through.

The decades. Now again. You may be thinking. We've had a geography lesson. Do we need a history lesson now? But there's real significance here. So what?

You might be thinking. Well here's the so what. Here we have a record. Of the remarkable continuity. Of the ministry. Of the priests.

[31 : 57] And the Levites. Those who ministered God's word. And enabled the worship of God. In the temple. It's a list. Of those Levites. And priests. Amongst the remnant.

In Jerusalem. Over many decades. Here's what James Philip. Said about this. All alike. From the early time.

To the later. Had a part. To play in. And contributed. To the final. Climactic work. Of the walls. Of Jerusalem. And their dedication. This is the force.

Of the inclusion. Of the earlier names. In association. In association. With the dedication. Of the walls. In verse 27. It was all one work. And the only difference.

Was. That the earlier workers. Were engaged. In foundations. Whereas the later. Were involved. In the superstructure. You see.

[32 : 49] Those initial. Levites. Back in Ezra's day. A hundred years before. They never saw. The walls rebuilt. They never lived. To see it. But they laid. Important foundations.

That enabled it. To then happen. Later on. Those. Serving. In Nehemiah's day. Were involved. In the same way. As those. A hundred years before. Were involved.

And I think. There was something. Thrilling. And galvanizing. About the realization. That we don't. Stand alone. We're not isolated. We have a heritage. We are not.

Somehow. A strange anomaly. In our dedication. To the Lord. His people. No. We stand. In a long line. Of faithful servants. As one writer. Put it.

We are both. Non-biblical. And ungrateful. If we despise. Or ignore. The record. Of those. Who have served. The Lord. Before our own time. In fact. That very realization.

[33 : 45] May keep us faithful. When under pressure. To be faithless. Remember. Your heritage. Church. I dug around.

The Tron Church. Archives. This week. With Richard's help. And I found. Some lists of names. Offers bearers. Who have come before us.

Who have labored. In the same tasks. That we. Many decades later. Now labor in. The same task. Let me read you. Some names. Names that.

Were as distant. To those in Nehemiah's day. As they read that list. As they are to us now. So the first list. Comes from October. 1937. The minister.

Of the Tron Church. Was the reverend. Dr. Cameron Reed. The assistant. Was Mr. Alan Harkness. The session clerk. Was Mr. A. Borthwick.

[34 : 47] The treasurer. Was Mr. Davidson Hall. The organist. Was Mr. Angus Small. Now I could keep reading. There's a long list of names. 1937.

Let me read you also. An obituary. Included in that list. For a certain. Gavin Ray. Thought it was quite touching. To read this. Let me read it to you. The Kirk session.

And the congregation. Of the Tron Church. Have sustained a great loss. By the death. After a very short illness. Of a very faithful member. In the person. Of Mr. Gavin Ray.

Mr. Ray. Was a very devoted. And faithful worker. In the service. Of his master. And gave most. Unselfishly. And unsparingly. Of his service. And his strength.

And his means. To further that cause. He was a faithful. And hard working elder. But a special interest. Lay. With St. Michael's mission. And with the.

[35 : 44] Foundry Boys. Religious Association. A branch of which. Met regularly. In St. Michael's Hall. Under his leadership. Through his influence. Many members. Of that association.

Were received. Into full membership. Of the church. He has left. Many friends. To mourn him. Among those. For whom he did so much. For he had won. Their admiration. And affection.

By the gentle. Kindliness. Of his nature. And perhaps even more. By the example. Of an unsullied. And upright life. His loss. Will be much felt.

In the church. And in his home. We would express. Our appreciation. Of his many services. And our severe. And our sincere sympathy. With those. Whose lives. His passing. Is left a blank. Which will not easily.

Be filled. Of him. It may well be said. Well done. Thou good. And faithful servant. Mr. Gavin Ray. 1937. Let me skip on.

[36 : 40] 14 years. To March. 1951. Here's the list. The minister. Was the Reverend. Lindsay Stewart. The session clerk.

Was Mr. Jack Patterson. The treasurer. Was Mr. James Aird. And the organist. Was a certain. Mr. Adam Hare. Whose daughter. We know well.

It is encouraging. Isn't it? To remember. Those who came. Before us. It is the foundations. That they have laid. That we build upon. Those names.

I just read about. And many others. For those. In Nehemiah's day. Who rebuilt the wall. And who saw. The repopulation. Of the city. What a thrill. To be there.

Seeing that happen. But with this list. Nehemiah is saying. Don't forget. Those faithful servants. Who've come before. Who laid the groundwork.

[37 : 35] Who never lived. To see this day. Don't forget them. God's faithfulness. Endures. Down through the generations. And we can be that. For the generations to come.

The sacrifices. We make today. Will benefit. The generations to come. They will benefit. Our children's children. Actually. The sacrifices. We make today.

For the sake of the gospel. For the witness of the church. They endure. For eternity. Don't they? Because the work. That we are engaged in. It's not just about.

Building this local church. It's not just about. The Tron church. Is it? It's something. Much much bigger. We point people. To the Lord. Jesus Christ.

Christ. We do that. By witnessing. To the gospel. To the life. The death. The resurrection. Of Jesus. Calling people to repent. And join his eternal family. That's what we're about. That's what they were about too.

[38 : 33] As they. Made costly sacrifices. As they went to Jerusalem. As they served. In the temple. As they were a light. To the nations. That's what they were about.

That's what we were about. Calling people to the Lord. It's the very same task. Those leaders. In the Tron church. Were about. In 1951. And 1937. And before that.

It's the same task. They're about here. In Nehemiah. And that. Is the great privilege. Of our lives. Isn't it? As we consider again. The wondrous cross.

The great grace. That the Lord. Has shown. To us. A love. So amazing. We realize again. That that love. Shown to us.

That grace. Demands a response. It demands. My soul. Your soul. My life. Your life. My all. Your all. As we see again.

[39 : 31] The grace shown to us. What can we withhold. From serving him. So will you tread. Where saints.

Before you have trod. Will you. Make sacrifices. Will you trust. God's promises. Will you stand.

On the shoulders. Of the faithful servants. Who have gone before you. Those. Are the searching questions. That this passage. Puts to us.

This morning. Will we serve. For the sake. Of the witness. Of the church. Let me pray. And then we'll sing.

To close. Our time together. Lord. What an encouragement. To know.

[40 : 26] That we are not alone. In the Christian life. Not only. Have you given us. One another. But you've given us. Faithful servants.

Down through the generations. Upon whom we can look. We can see their example. And even stretching back. Thousands of years. To read of these folk.

And Nehemiah. These lists of names. People. Who are willing to go. People willing to sacrifice. Willing to serve. And so Lord. As we read their names.

Would you encourage. Our hearts. To likewise. Give of ourselves. In light of all. That you've given to us.

So Lord. Please help us. To be those. Who respond. To your call. Not in fear. But in faith. Help us. We ask. In Jesus name. Amen.