**What Role Will You Play in God’s Redemptive Story – Nehemiah 1**

Have you ever wanted to be an actor? What would it be like to be chosen for a lead role in a blockbuster film?

What if each one of us had an opportunity to play a significant role in the best script ever written, with the best director of all time?

There is no greater story, no greater script, than God’s redemptive story!

 All of history is an unfolding of “His-story” of redemption!

God is the writer, the director, & the main actor in this redemptive story, but He has written us into His-story! What role will we play???

We can only begin to understand our place in “His-story”, if we first come to know the script. – what comes before, what will follow, what the plot line is.

Just like an actor needing to know the whole script in order to understand his/her place in it, we need to know God’s redemptive story, front to back, if we hope to find our place in it! Thankfully, it is readily available to all of us!

Nehemiah is a great example of a lead role in God’s story because he knew the script, understood the plot line, and He knew who the director was!

**Who was Nehemiah?** He was a Jew, one of God’s chosen people, but living under Persian rule, exiled from God’s chosen city, separated from the people of God, and far removed from the glory days of Israel.

**What had transpired?** God had chosen a people for Himself & He had blessed them, but they turned away from Him and as a result God’s blessings were removed, & their status as a great nation was lost!

They were exiled from their land and Jerusalem was destroyed, and it’s walls were burned to the ground!

**Where is Nehemiah?** Nehemiah is over a 1,000 mile journey from Jerusalem in Susa! He is living in the household of the King of Persia as his cupbearer. If Jerusalem was the center of God’s activity in the world then Nehemiah must have felt that he was at the furthest point on earth away!

**When did all of this take place?** The period of Nehemiah’s life that this book highlights is almost 500 years before the coming of Christ, & 141 years

after the fall of Jerusalem. If there ever was a time that seemed meaningless for God’s people, this was it.

**Why did all of this happen?** God had established a covenant relationship w/ His people, but they broke that covenant, & now they were living with the consequences of it. This is the backdrop to Nehemiah’s part in God’s script!

God had a plan, He was directing the script, & Nehemiah had a part to play!

But before we get to that, does anyone else feel like we are living today in what seems to be a very similar time, with similar circumstances of Nehemiah’s day?

**Who?** Have you ever felt alone as a Christian, like you were the only one?

 “What can one person in Brunswick, Ohio do to make a difference?”

 “Who am I that God could do something extravagant through me?”

**What?** Does it ever feel like the church, the people of God, are more

 scattered now than ever before?

**Where?** Have you ever asked, “God, where are You?”

 How often do we feel far removed from God’s activity in the world?

**When?** We are in 2018, 2000 years after the first coming of Christ & who

 knows how many years away from His second coming.

 Does what happens in 2018 even matter in God’s big picture?

**Why?** Why does it seem like the church is not having much of an impact on

 the world today? Could it be a result of us breaking covenant once

 again w/ God? These are the kinds of questions that this book prompts!

What example does Nehemiah leave for us to follow?

* Nehemiah cared about the things that God cares about! Vs. 2
* His heart broke for the things that breaks the heart of God. Vs. 4
* He turned to the One who could do something about it. Vs. 4
* He claimed the covenantal promises of God! Vs. 5
* He prayed expectantly, fully believing that God would hear & respond to his prayer. Vs. 6
* He confessed his sin and the sins of God’s people! Vs. 6-7
* He believed God would be faithful to His redemptive story! Vs. 8-10
* Nehemiah asked God for an opportunity to be in the script! Vs. 11

What role will you play in God’s redemptive story? He’s not done yet!

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What role will you play in God’s redemptive story? He’s not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ yet!

**Sermon Based Questions for January 7, 2018**

1. Have you ever wanted to be an actor? What would it be like to be chosen for a lead role in a blockbuster film?
2. What do you think of God’s blockbuster script of redemptive history that we are all a part of? Do you see all of history being “His-story”?
3. How does knowing God’s redemptive story, as revealed through His Word (the Bible), help us find our place in it?
4. What reasons might Nehemiah have had for thinking that God had abandoned him and abandoned the Jewish people?
5. What reasons might Nehemiah have had for thinking that God was truly still at work and could be trusted for the future?
6. Which of the 5 W’s – Who, What, Where, When, Why, stuck out to you most about Nehemiah’s situation?
7. Which of the 5 W’s of Nehemiah’s day can you see being most similar to our day?
8. Nehemiah left a great example for us to follow in CH. 1 of how we ought to live into God’s redemptive story. What stood out to you the most about Nehemiah’s actions?
9. Which of the bullet points do you need to apply to your life so that you might live more effectively into God’s redemptive story?

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