

2-25-18 A Strong Godly Presence in this World - Nehemiah 7

The work on the wall was finally done, but the work of rebuilding the city of God, & the people of God, was just beginning – an even greater task!

But Nehemiah wasted no time! With the finishing touches on the wall complete, he immediately appoints the gatekeepers, singers & Levites. -Vs 1

These were all positions within the temple! For now it was time to revive the worship of God, in the house of God, by the people of God, in the city of God!

The wall was never the end goal, it was simply a means of restoring a people set apart by God, to be about the purposes of God in this world!

The “Church” today serves that same purpose! The world needs the people of God to unite together & be a light, a beacon of hope, for all to see!

What was needed then, is what is also needed today, and **it is more than bricks & mortar**! We must build more than just a temple/church building in our city. We must have more than just a rebuilt wall or the freedom to practice religion in the place we reside!

We need the people of God to be a strong presence in this world by:

- Having faithful and God-fearing leaders!
- Being a covenant people who are fully devoted to God!
- Having a willingness to truly give to the work of God!

• **Having faithful and God-fearing leaders**

Nehemiah realized that to lead these people, it would require more than just one man! So he gave charge over Jerusalem to Hanani & Hananiah.

The passage tells us in Vs. 2, that Nehemiah selected these 2 individuals because they were more faithful & God-fearing than most men.

Faithfulness to God & to God’s people is the first criteria of a good leader. And a healthy fear of God (reverence, respect, obedience) is also essential!

Today in our church we have 2 groups that lead us as a congregation in a similar way! **Elders & Deacons are our Hanani & Hananiah.** And we too hold up faithfulness & the fear of God as the requirements for such offices!

I have been asked, “How does someone get nominated for elder or deacon?”

It is not a popularity contest, it’s a decision made by our current, & greater, elders **based upon a person’s character, commitment, & gifting.**

We use 1 Timothy 3:1-13 & Titus 1:5-9 as a character reference. Faithfulness in worship, Bible Study, serving in a ministry & financial giving speaks of a person’s commitment. & discovering a person’s S.H.A.P.E. reveals giftedness

Nehemiah knew the importance of faithful & God-fearing leaders, so do we!

• **Being a covenant people fully devoted to God!**

The list that Nehemiah found of those who returned to Jerusalem under Zerubbabel revealed those most devoted b/c they were the first to return!

With nothing for them to return to, their covenant commitment to God still led them back to Jerusalem & back to be numbered among God’s people.

What does such a covenant commitment to God look like today? And are we too numbered among God’s people? How did Nehemiah/we know?

For Nehemiah, it was a genealogy list! **For us, it is our church membership list!**

A person making a public profession of faith & declaring the membership covenant in the church today is comparable to a person giving proof of their Jewish lineage in Nehemiah’s day.

Nehemiah knew it was critically important to know who he could rely on. It is equally true today, therefore we have a membership list! **Are you on it?**

• **Having a willingness to truly give to the work of God!**

Did you notice how this genealogy list was categorized? By heads of family, by city, by role (the priests, Levites, the temple servants), & by their gifts.

Why would these categories be important both then and now?

- If the head of the family is with us, **the rest of the family usually follows!**
- If there’s a core group of people in a city, there can be a presence there!
- If we can identify people’s God-given roles, they can address the needs!
- If there’s a record of giving, there’s a record of those who sacrificed for the cause! **Giving is tied to the heart!** Those who give towards the causes of God, truly have their treasure/heart in God’s Kingdom! – **Matthew 6:21**

To have a strong Godly presence in this world will require the “Church” to have faithful & God-fearing leaders, be a covenant people fully devoted to God, & have a willingness to truly give to the work of God’s Kingdom! **Let us rise up!**

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