

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of March 29, 2015

This Week's Focus: Nehemiah is planning for the future of Jerusalem.

This Week's Text: Nehemiah 7

*God had never elected Israel only to be engrossed in "navel-gazing"—only to receive the blessing for herself. She had been called and elected for service unto the nations of the earth. Certainly with Abraham, and then most decisively with Moses, the stage had been set for a whole nation to be involved in a ministry of being priests and witnesses to all the peoples of the earth. The covenant that David received was not to be selfishly squandered on themselves, but it was to be "a charter for all humanity." That same point was affirmed by Isaiah as he again repeated this truth: it was to be "a covenant for the people and a light for the Gentiles." **Walter C. Kaiser, Jr***

*But you are a chosen race, a royal priesthood, a holy nation, a people for his own possession, that you may proclaim the excellencies of him who called you out of darkness into his marvelous light. Once you were not a people, but now you are God's people; once you had not received mercy, but now you have received mercy. Beloved, I urge you as sojourners and exiles to abstain from the passions of the flesh, which wage war against your soul. Keep your conduct among the Gentiles honorable, so that when they speak against you as evildoers, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day of visitation. **1 Peter 2:9-12***

Related Texts: 2 Corinthians 13:5-6; 1 Peter 2:9-12; Matthew 6:19-25; Psalm 2:11; Hebrews 7:23-24, 9:11-12

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- What in the text/sermon was most illuminating or helpful? Why?
- Nehemiah 7 transitions the book from the reconstruction of Jerusalem's wall to the revitalization of God's people. What is the story unfolding in chapter 7?
- According to verse 1, what is the first thing Nehemiah did after the completion of the wall? Why do you think he included the singers and Levites in this task?

- Nehemiah installed his brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor as leaders over Jerusalem. What characteristics did they possess that qualified them as good leaders?
- Integrity (faithfulness) is often defined as doing the right thing even when no one is looking. Is this an adequate understanding of integrity?
- What does it mean to fear God? What is the opposite of the fear of God?
- Discuss how the fear of God produces worship while unhealthy fear induces torment and paralysis.
- What did Nehemiah command the leaders to do in verse 3? What did he mean, and why did he make this declaration?
- Good, dependable, trustworthy, and godly leadership was important for Israel's protection and provision.
 - Discuss the need for godly spiritual leadership in the life of the church.
- According to verse 5, why did Nehemiah assemble the people by genealogy? Today, how can we discern if an idea comes from God or from ourselves or some other source?
- Why was the genealogy important? Reference verse 61 and 64-65.
 - It is important to know our identity. Reference 2 Corinthians 13:5. How can we know that we are in the faith, that is, that we belong to God?
- What was Israel's mission as the people of God? What is the church's mission today? Reference Matthew 5:13-16 and 28:18-20.
- Verses 70-72 indicate that the people of Israel gave generously to Nehemiah's task. What motivated them to give? As Christians, we are also told to give generously. What should motivate our giving? Reference 2 Corinthians 9:9-13.
- Israel completed the reconstruction of the walls of Jerusalem in 52 days. Discuss how this temporal work points to the greater eternal work of Jesus Christ. How else does Ezra/Nehemiah point to the work and glory of Jesus Christ?

Next Week's Text: Romans 1:1-4