

Group/Individual Study

Series: Nehemiah: Names that Matter

Passages: Nehemiah 7, Luke 10:17-20

REFLECT on the message heard Sunday, 2/25

Jerusalem has good news and bad news by this point in the book. The good news is that the temple, the fortress, and the wall are now in place -- life as God's people can resume. The bad news is that all aspects of life now have to be "jump started" after so many decades of chaos. Chapter 7 tells about how God led Nehemiah to reestablish the community in the way He wanted.

1. Read Nehemiah 7:1-7. Nehemiah had to appoint leaders again for society to function. What was it about Hananiah that qualified him for leadership in Nehemiah's eyes? (v.2) How does this speak to you?
2. Why do you think that security with the gates was such a big deal? (v.3) Our lives also have to be protected by "gates" which keep out harmful things? What harmful things do you feel God wants you to "close the gates of your heart to" in this season of life? Relative to your marriage/family? Your emotional life? Your work world? Other?
3. What do you think Jesus meant by saying we are to be in the world but not of the world? What does this look like when we get it right?
4. By the end of Nehemiah 7 over 40,000 of God's chosen people have been found in the genealogical record as having returned from captivity. Sunday's message talked about how that genealogical record was a "model" of a much more important book that God holds; the Lamb's book of life. What is the Lamb's book of life? What does the Bible teach us about whose names God lists in this book?
5. In Luke 10:17-20, the 72 that Jesus had sent out to do His work return rejoicing at the spiritual power that had flowed through them. Jesus tells them not to rejoice at that experience, but rather to rejoice in that their names are in the Lamb's book of life. What other type of recognition, validation, or acknowledgement to you find yourself tempted to seek unduly? Why is the Lamb's book of life more important than these?
6. At first glance Nehemiah 7 can look like a long, boring list of names of people we don't know. Yet God knew each person by name. What does it mean to you that God knows you by name? Spend time thanking him for knowing even the number of hairs on your head -- and accepting you completely.