

Unwavering Resolve: Restoring The People Beech Haven Church 6/28/26

Do you have a dream goal? If your life were a story, it would be the climax.

Story/Intro- 2-3min

What we are about to find out together is that we should be all in for God's story. **That means we are no longer pursuing our own story; we need to lay aside our own plans and preferences and reshape our identity, or rather let God reshape our identity to align with his plans and purposes for our lives. Why? Because**

SLIDE 1. God's rebuilding is not complete until His people are restored to His purpose.

What we are going to find out is that Nehemiah was never about rebuilding the wall but rebuilding his people. And after looking at Nehemiah chapter 7, we will all be confronted with a question...the same question when I felt like my story was not fulfilling, that there had to be more.....

Will you allow God to reshape your identity and priorities to align with His purposes rather than your plans? Will you purpose to be all in on God's story? Because what you will find is our best story is in God's story, and that story is yours and mine and all of ours.

Intro: Nehemiah, burdened after hearing from his brother Hanani that the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed, burdened with this mission in exile under Persian rule, asked the king Artaxerxes to return and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. 52 days later, they rebuilt the entire wall that we hear about at the end of chapter 6.

SLIDE 2. 7 When the wall had been rebuilt and I had the doors installed, the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites were appointed. (we worship) 2 Then I put my brother Hanani in charge of Jerusalem, along with Hananiah, commander of the fortress, because he was a faithful man who feared God more than most. (maybe against his plans)

**SLIDE 3. 5 Then my God put it into my mind to assemble the nobles, the officials, and the people to be registered by genealogy. I found the genealogical record of those who came back first, and I found the following written in it: Then verse 6 tells us
6 These are the people of the province who went up among the captive exiles deported by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Each of them returned to Jerusalem and Judah, to his own town.**

SLIDE 4. (All the verses) Then, verses 7-62 are all about the people. Mentioned twice also in Ezra.

How are we supposed to pull truth from a chapter like this? This is the one you skim when you're doing your devos. How is this supposed to challenge us to be part of God's story, not our own?

God did not decide to spend the entire chapter after the wall is built to talk about how wonderful the wall is, but rather to tell of the faithful people who laid aside their story for God's and returned from Babylon. Those who left their story for God's.

This list of names represents only about 5% of the Jews.

1 million jews stayed in Babylon

Only 5% returned

That would be just about 25 people from our church.

And their names are mentioned twice in God's word for eternity.

They sacrificed and took on a harder life to be in God's will, to be a part of his story instead of their own. They were established, with jobs and families, in Babylon.

Would you be the 5% that would return to Jerusalem to be closer to God?

Worldly hardships of a city without a wall.

95% stayed 70 years in Babylon; they stayed instead of going to the rundown Jerusalem, a city without walls. It seemed safer to stay in Babylon, but in reality, it's safer in God's will than our own.

a. These are the people... who returned to Jerusalem and Judah: This list was important because each of these people was important to God, in that they did what so few of their fellow Jews did — they took the trouble to return to the promised land after they had already set down roots for seventy years in the Babylonian empire.

i. These are people who had a pioneer spirit; they were willing to endure hardship and discomfort because they had a call from God that was more important than their own comfort. Life was easier in Babylon, but it was better in Jerusalem!

ii. In this list, several things were important.

- Each individual was important (specific names were mentioned).

You Matter to God

Because what we find is that

There is an even bigger reason these names matter

SLIDE 5. IT WAS NEVER ABOUT THE WALL.

It was about God's story and our call to be part of it, WHICH IS FAR GREATER THAN WHAT WE CAN CONCEIVE.

Let's go to the scripture to support this claim. And to do that, we will go to a prophecy.

The rebuilding of Jerusalem was never the climax of the story.

It was preparation.

SLIDE 6. Daniel 9:25–26 (Another captive of Babylonian years before) Look to see where God's story begins to unfold and how we are called to be part of it.

"Know and understand this: From the issuing of the decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem until an Anointed One, the ruler, will be seven weeks and sixty-two weeks. It will be rebuilt with a plaza and a moat, but in difficult times.

After those sixty-two weeks the Anointed One will be cut off.....

Notice:

- A decree to restore and rebuild Jerusalem.
- "Imagine standing in Jerusalem as Nehemiah finished the wall. You think you've reached the climax. The city is rebuilt. The mission is accomplished. Yet God is saying, 'I'm not finished. The wall is not the destination. The wall is the runway. Something far greater is about to land.'"
- The coming of the "Anointed One" (Messiah).
- The Messiah being "cut off."

The key point is that **69 weeks = 483 years** from the decree to rebuild Jerusalem until the coming of the Messiah. We see Jesus as the fulfillment because He arrived during

The period Daniel predicted and was then "cut off" through His crucifixion.

Daniel gets a prophecy that says God will rebuild Jerusalem and not just the city, but rebuild the people, and how will God do this? through the messiah, Christ the King.

Luke 19:37–38 (CSB)

Jesus enters Jerusalem as the Messiah:

Now he came near the path down the Mount of Olives, and the whole crowd of the disciples began to praise God joyfully with a loud voice for all the miracles they had seen:

"Blessed is the King who comes in the name of the Lord. Peace in heaven and glory in the highest heaven!"

The wall wasn't the important thing; it was the people. Coming together to live on God's promises, that was what was important. The wall being built by Nehemiah paved the way for the prophecy to be fulfilled that the messiah came to live the perfect life and die for our sins. The Savior, Emmanuel, that is the story I want to be part of.

It was never about the wall; it was about the people and our call to be part of this story. Will you be part of God's story?

We get so distracted by the wall.

What is another confirmation that Nehemiah was not about the wall but about much more?

Jerusalem's temple and Jerusalem was prophesied that it would be destroyed. John 2:19-21 He is the temple and will be raised up in three days.

SLIDE 7. And in Revelation 21:22;25, this new Jerusalem: I did not see a temple in it, because the Lord God the Almighty and the Lamb are its temple. ²⁵ Its gates will never close by day because it will never be night there.

Because God's glory will shine. And his presence is security.

God doesn't need walls; in fact, we will all be worshiping one day in a city that does not need gates. In the same way, we won't need a king because God will reign. And it won't be for a certain tribe or nation, but this city will be for all people who call upon the name of the Lord.

SO this long list of names is documenting God's promise and how He uses people.

SLIDE 8

God will use you; the only question is how

Gospel: Do you want to be part of this?

These are our people who went before us.

Continue the work. Continue to be part of God's story. It didn't end at the wall.

Has God called you to spectate, no, to build! Not a wall of preferences or pride, but to build in the Kingdom of God.

The Messiah is "cut off" through His death on the cross. For what purpose? For us! It was never about the wall, the list of names shows that, Daniel Phoebe and Jesus' claims show that.

it is about God restoring His covenant people. The rebuilding of Jerusalem prepared the way for the fulfillment of Daniel's prophecy and the coming of the Messiah. When Jesus arrived, He revealed that the temple ultimately pointed to Him. He foretold the destruction of the earthly temple and declared that He would raise the true temple—His own body. Through His death and resurrection, God began building a new people rather than merely restoring a city. One day, the New Jerusalem will descend from heaven, where God Himself will dwell with His people. Its walls symbolize perfect security, its gates are never shut, and God and the Lamb reign forever as King.

This list of names documents God's promises and God's faithfulness through ordinary people.

These are our people.

These are the people who went before us.

People who chose God's story over comfort.

People who chose obedience over convenience.

People who believed God was doing something bigger than themselves.

And now the same invitation stands before us.

What part are you going to play in the story? Will you be the 5% or the 95% left out?

Will you allow God to reshape your identity and priorities to align with His purposes rather than your plans? Will you purpose to be all in on God's story?

Of every bad decision you have made, you sold yourself on it

The retirement story won't satisfy; the relationship, only God's story.

I have my life to Jesus when I was 10, and then in my 20s, you took it back?

Building your own wall

Just because you come to church and stare and rob a job or I for an hour doesn't make you all in on God's story

My call to ministry story

You know what is amazing about this

Christ modeled laying aside his preferences on countless occasions, once when he taught us to pray, THY KINGDOM COME, THY WILL BE DONE; then again in the garden the night before he was killed, in prayer, living out what he taught: “ Lord, if at all possible take this cup from me, yet not my will, but yours be done”

SLIDE 9. Will you lay aside your story to be part of God's?

Because you will find out that it is your story, the best version of your story.

God is still building His people.

The question isn't whether God has a story.

The question is whether your plans, preferences, ambitions, and comforts will be surrendered to His.

Will you build your kingdom?

Or will you spend your life helping build His?

In the next weeks, we will talk about how the people fell away, reform was needed, and then eventually the wall was destroyed; in reality, it shows us our inability to fulfill ourselves, and one day a new Jerusalem that won't need gates or a temple will come, and we have the option to be part of it. To be part of God's ultimate story, not our manmade walls.

If you haven't taken that first step

Maybe you're off track and have been following your own narrative, which in itself isn't a bad thing, but it's when it drifts from what God wants and when it drifts from God's will that maybe you need to take a step of faith in the direction that the 5% took, leaving their homes and preferences and pride and pursuing God.

One day when we stand in the New Jerusalem, nobody will be talking about the walls Nehemiah built. Nobody will be talking about the kingdoms we built. We will be celebrating the King who built a people for Himself.