

The MBC Weekly

No More Excuses!

14 years after Ezra led the Jewish exiles to rebuild the Temple, in Jerusalem, Nehemiah shows up to lead in the rebuilding of the walls. Children had been born during this time. In fact the oldest would be approaching their teen years! And, because the walls & many of the houses had been leveled by Babylon, during the siege, these kids had been raised among the ruins of Jerusalem. There were no boundaries between Israel—the people of God—and, the people of other false gods that surrounded them. So, God sent Nehemiah to help! After inspecting the city, he met with the priests, nobles & other officials; and, said to them: "...You see the trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been burned down. Come, let's rebuild Jerusalem's wall, so that we will no longer be a disgrace" Nehemiah 2:17. He was concerned over what the broken wall represented—that God's people were blending in with the local population & they were losing their distinctness as God's people! God couldn't glorify Himself through a people that were no longer holy! A people who were not set apart to Him! In Nehemiah, chapter 8, the Word of God is read aloud to the

people; and, as He always does, the Holy Spirit uses the Word of God to point out their sin & to bring them deep conviction over it. So, in chapter 9, they're found weeping and confessing their sin to God. Remember, that, to "confess" our sin means that we agree with God about it! So, they're making no more excuses! They confess! They agree with God that what they've done is sin against Him! And in chapter 10, Nehemiah leads these Jewish exiles to make 3 promises! These are "back to the book" kind of promises! Promises to obey 3 commands that God had given Israel way back under Moses. First, they promised to no longer intermarry: "*We promise not to give our daughters in marriage to the peoples around us or take their daughters for our sons*" (v.30). Second, they promised to keep the Sabbath: "*We will not buy from the neighboring peoples on the Sabbath or on any holy day*" (v.31). And, third, they promised to maintain the temple: "...*we will not neglect caring for the house of our God...*" (vs. 32-39). Great promises, right? They have great intentions, don't they? But, they illustrate how fragile our decisions, for God, typically are; because, chapter 13 reveals their failure to keep those promises!

Broken Promises

They were intermarrying with the unbelievers around them: "...*In those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab...*" (vs.23-28). They were breaking the Sabbath: "...*men from Tyre were...selling...in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah...*" (vs. 15-22). And, they were neglecting the Temple (vs. 6-13). So, Nehemiah said: "...*I rebuked the officials; and, asked them: 'Why is the house of God neglected?'''* (v.11). All of which leads me to ask, "*How does that happen? How can they renege on their promises to God so quickly; even, with the best of Godly leaders to follow?*" The answer? Even the best of men cannot liberate people from the cause of their bondage! Only God can do that! The cause of their bondage was sin! A brokenness they share with us! We are totally depraved! We cannot depend on a pastor; or, church programs to deliver us! Only God can liberate us from our bondage to sin!

"Greeting Team"

For Sunday, February 28

Remember: Meet in the coat room @ **10:30 am** for brief prayer & then go "welcome" people! NOTE: Keep an eye on the auditorium for those who slipped past!

Greeters this week:

Curt Mastbergen Sun Noon;
Josh Tackett Sunday Night

- 1st— Erickson Thursday PM:
Jen Hagler Thursday PM
- 2nd— Terry Embke Sunday Night;
- 3rd— Randy Ehlers Sunday Night;
Donna Ehlers Monday Morning
- 4th— Curt Mastbergen Sunday Noon;
Tackett Sunday Night

Small Groups @ MBC

- Are Committed To Multiplying—
- While Numeric Growth Alone Does Not Make An Effective Small Group, Failure To Grow
- Numerically Can Be A Sign Of An Ineffective Small Group

-Guide To: Small Group Ministry @ MBC

Announcements

1. Transgenderism? Read: www.thegospelcoalition.org/reviews/irreversible-damage-abigail-shrier/
2. Looking For A Good Podcast? Checkout "Life And Books And Everything." Very timely stuff!