



“Worship in the Hope of Renewal” Nehemiah 12:27-47

This passage of Nehemiah is the climax of the entire book. The wall was built so the city had protection from enemies. So Nehemiah organized an elaborate praise ceremony for the inhabitants of Jerusalem. Nehemiah 12:27-43 describes the ceremony. Nehemiah organized two choir processions to walk the city walls toward the temple. There they praised God, and the sound of their voices was so great that it could be heard far away. Nehemiah 12:44-47 describes the ministry of the priesthood in the temple. The text makes the point that the priests and Levites followed the pattern followed by David and Solomon.

This week’s study teaches us that even though life can be difficult, the hope God gives is reason to praise. Worship flows from lament mixed with hope.



KNOWING GOD

The wall in Jerusalem was finished in a mere 52 days, so Nehemiah organized a worship ceremony to give praise to God. Read **Nehemiah 12:27-47**. How did the ceremony affect the people of God?

The temple and wall were completed, but the restoration project in Jerusalem was still unfinished. Israel was nowhere near its former glory. How could God’s people rejoice so passionately when there was still so much undone?

Read **Isaiah 52:7-10**. This prophecy was recorded long before the destruction of Jerusalem and the exile of God’s people had even taken place. But the prophecy looks forward to the day when God’s people would return to Jerusalem and begin the process of restoration. In what ways might Nehemiah’s ceremony of worship build on Isaiah’s hopes?



GROWING TOGETHER

“Worship is grounded in proper lament.” Do you agree? If so, share how God has used painful experiences in your life to bring you toward praise.

What are some areas in your life where you currently feel pain and sorrow? In what ways do you lament? Is it hard to find hope in the midst of your struggles? If so, explain.



SERVING OTHERS

God has called each of us to love and serve each other. We are called to support each other in our struggles. When we are going through trying times, how do we need to be comforted, challenged and encouraged? How can believers comfort, challenge and encourage others who are struggling?

For many, fear is an obstacle to genuine sharing--fear that if you're honest with your struggles, people will not understand – or worse, will condemn you. What are the obstacles you face in being willing to share or to reach out to others?



IN YOUR FAMILY...

(a) *Something to talk about:* Can we praise God honestly when we do not feel like it? How can we go from sorrow to praise if God doesn't remove the sorrow?

(b) *Something to do:* If you haven't done so already, find someone you can be honest with--someone you can share your stories with, and someone who can share his/her stories with you.

SERMON NOTES