

'Building Blocks of Faith Series'

Sermons in the Book of Nehemiah

Message 11 - 'Names and Numbers' Nehemiah 7:4 - 73



As this amazing book continues, we are faced with a turning point. So far, the focus of the book has been the material and practical building of the walls at Jerusalem. Now even in this, total dependence on the 'great God of heaven' has been essential. Yet, as we have seen, the work was completed, and Nehemiah was able to identify the main contributors, as well as set things in order. We considered the following:

1. Available to be Named - The people listed in the previous verse have been described as 'God's bridge' from the defeats of the past to the hopes of the future. They have been described by some commentators as being part of the chain that saw the continuous working of God's redemptive purpose, being part of the events that laid the way for the coming of the Saviour, Jesus Christ. For the Jew, these genealogies were so important because it linked them to their rich past, but also allowed them to look forward to the hope of the future as they saw it at this point. A failure to prove your authenticity was then to be treated as a second-class citizen, and also to place in jeopardy all that the Lord had given and would give to Israel. A question for you, if you had to prove your lineage to enter into God's city, could you do it? The Bible is very clear, there are two destinations when we die, one is heaven, and one is hell. Only those who have been adopted into God's family can enter heaven. The only way to do this is to trust in the Lord Jesus Christ, John 1:11-12, 'He came to His own, and His own did not receive Him. But as many as received Him, to them He gave the right to become children of God, to those who believe in His name'.

2. Available to Worship - Despite challenges to the work, because the emphasis had been right, the people had been able to rejoice in God's provision, acknowledging Him as the author of all their blessings. Do we see the need for such an attitude? All the blessings we have received have been consequences of His grace. Yet, the gift of His grace is the greatest blessing of all, anything that takes away from this, shifts the emphasis away from the glory that is due to His name. A result of a right placement of motivation in a life sees the people moved to sacrifice, not only spiritually but materially. The leaders lead by example in their giving. They also followed the biblical structure for worship, making sure that the instructions received for temple worship and those who were to be involved were followed. How essential that our attitude to structure and worship is Bible based, not preference based. In our own worship, we must do it appropriately before the Lord, but we must be those who are lifted in our hearts, and not bound in a dead orthodoxy. How sad that those who have experienced God's grace (whilst necessary to approach worship correctly) fail to give themselves in praise and worship, sometimes favouring a dirge! Surely, if we are believers and experienced the goodness and grace of God, we should rejoice!



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs