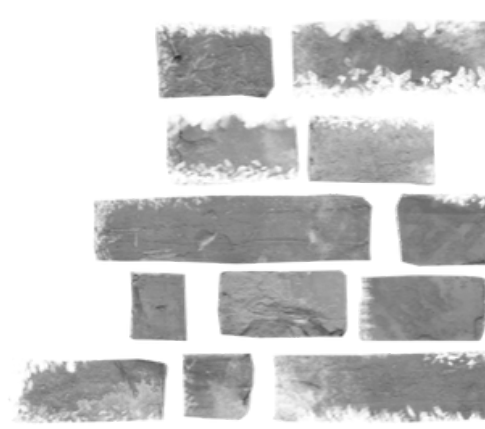


RUBBLE TO RESTORATION



CAN THEY BRING THE STONES BACK TO
LIFE FROM THOSE HEAPS OF RUBBLE—
BURNED AS THEY ARE?

NEHEMIAH 4:2B

NEHEMIAH



Sometimes our world can feel like it has been invaded by a giant wrecking ball. We are left with scattered pieces and broken walls all around us, vulnerable to the elements and our enemies. We can be left wondering, will we ever be able to rebuild our lives?

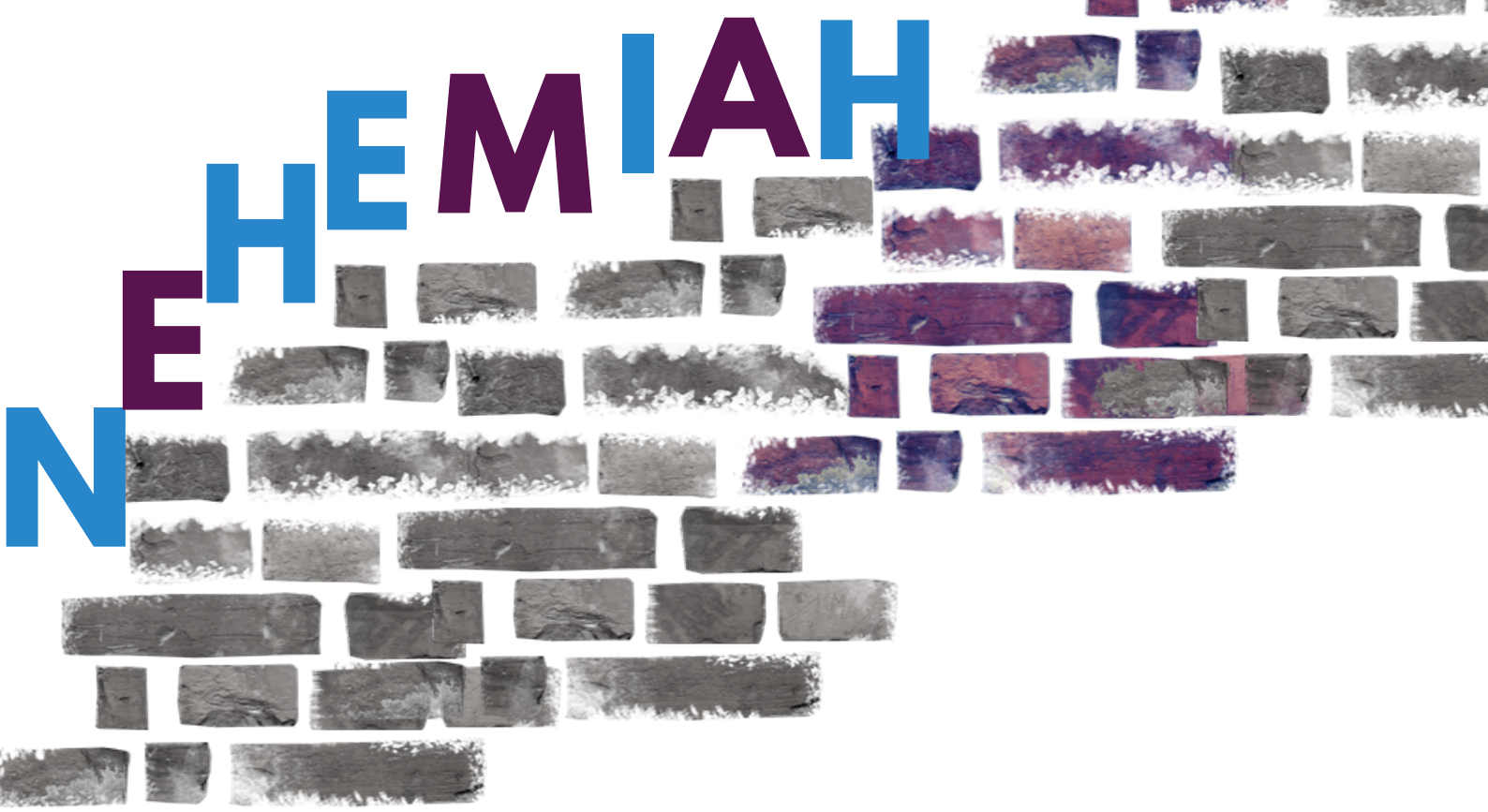
There are many stories throughout the bible which show us how God brings restoration. In Nehemiah we see how one man's faith rebuilt a nation. As we prepare to rebuild our lives in this new world, there are lots of lessons we can learn from Nehemiah.

His Calling,
His Challenges,
His Community &
His Covenant.

Join us as we dive into the word to hear what God has to say.

This is a wonderful book, are you ready for some wonderful insights ?

Majors Di and Andrew



Who is Nehemiah?

The Hebrew name Nehemiah means Yahweh has comforted. Before we even begin reading the book of Nehemiah, his name reveals that the words we will read will bring comfort. Nehemiah offers tremendous hope and so much more.

Nehemiah was an official in the Persian court of King Artaxerxes. He served as the king's cup-bearer (Nehemiah 1:11), which placed him in a special position to speak to the king and request favours. What is interesting here is that he was not a spiritual leader or a prophet. Nehemiah's fasting and praying triggers change. He quickly acquires the king's permission to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city of his forefathers.

Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem around 445 B.C. as the provincial governor of Judah to oversee the repairs. He immediately surveys the damage to the entire city on his well-known night journey around the walls (Nehemiah 2:12-15).

Through the process of restoring and dedicating the wall, we glean many lessons from Nehemiah on prayer, leadership, overcoming enemies, restoring hearts, integrity, and holiness.

He gave up a comfortable wealthy position in Persia to do God's will. In doing so, faced great opposition and basically did a lot of hard work. Nehemiah reminds us that there is a place for everyone in God's kingdom and everyone has a job to do. God uses everyone in unique and wonderful ways to accomplish his purposes.



Nehemiah

Week 1 - Calling

As we head into week one, we want you to read at your own pace. Over this week we encourage you to read chapters 1&2. We have highlighted some key scriptures for you to reflect on as you read, but to understand them you will need to read the whole chapters.

Jerusalem was considered the Holy city and was very important to the Jewish people. Having the gates and walls in ruins was not only a great disgrace, it also left the people vulnerable to their enemies.

This week we look at the calling on Nehemiah's life. This was to be the greatest challenge of his life.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer. We see this straight up, for as soon as he hears the news about the Jewish survivors and the state of Jerusalem's walls and gates, he mourns for days. Fasting and praying over this dreadful situation.

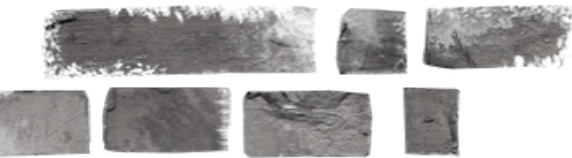
Nehemiah was also a very courageous man. Approaching the king for favours was not for the faint of heart. However, he relied on God for his courage and also for all of the resources that he needed. Taking nothing for granted and only taking what he needed.

When he returns to Jerusalem, he discovers that the people there lacked leadership, they were disorganised and overwhelmed by the task of rebuilding, so did nothing. Nehemiah turned up and took them back to basics. The task wasn't just about rebuilding the wall it was about rebuilding the people.

So, let's jump into week 1 and see what God has in store for us.

"When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. "
Nehemiah 1:4

The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."
Nehemiah 2:4 &5





Day 1

21st of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 1

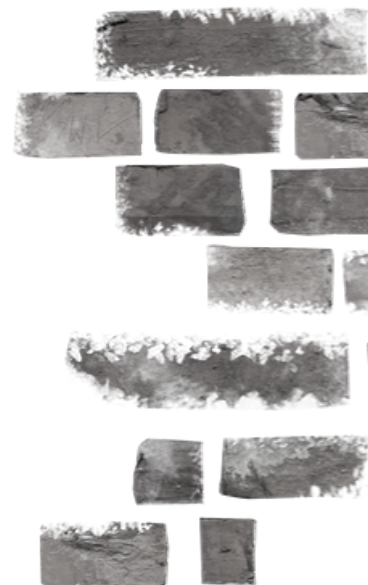
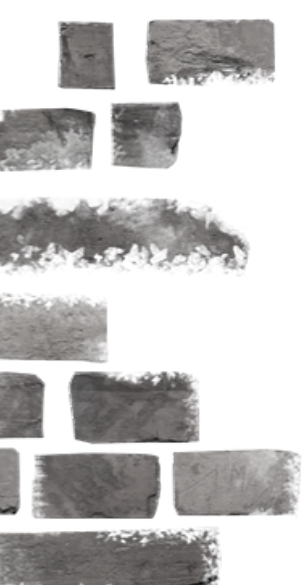
"They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire."
Nehemiah 1:3

Reflection

Bad news! Nehemiah receives the terrible news that the Holy City was in ruins. Not only was this a massive disgrace, but left the city vulnerable to attack from their enemies. Even though Nehemiah lived in Babylon his heart was still with his homeland. He wept at this news and prayed and fasted for days. We only have to turn the TV on to see bad news. It is very easy to become numb to the issues of the world that we just keep surfing the channels until we find something that we want to watch.

Questions

Do we become overwhelmed by the enormity of the challenge before us?
Do we join in with the doubters and blend in with the voices articulating the problems ?
Or are we moved to action just like Nehemiah?
What is an issue that has pierced your heart ?
What makes you weep?





Day 2

22nd of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 1

"Then I said, "O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps his covenant of unfailing love with those who love him and obey his commands, listen to my prayer! Look down and see me praying night and day for your people Israel. I confess that we have sinned against you. Yes, even my own family and I have sinned!"
Nehemiah 1:5&6

Reflection

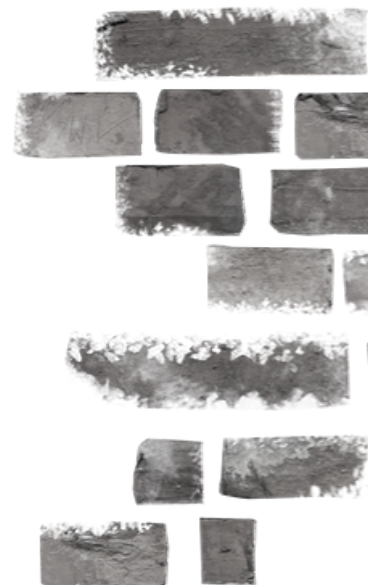
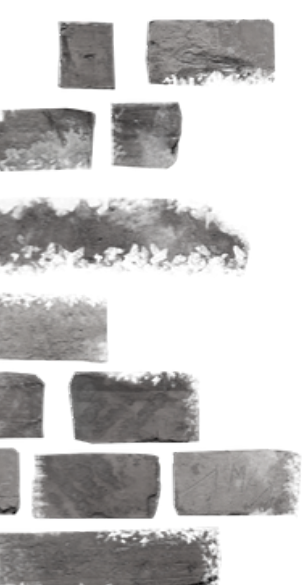
Nehemiah fasted and prayed for days expressing his sorrow for Israel, but he starts with an open confession before God. Admitting that he had failed along with his people. This is true leadership not passing the blame but taking responsibility. Even though Nehemiah wasn't living in the city, he admitted he wasn't perfect but that he was willing to be used by God to see restoration. Take a moment to confess before God.

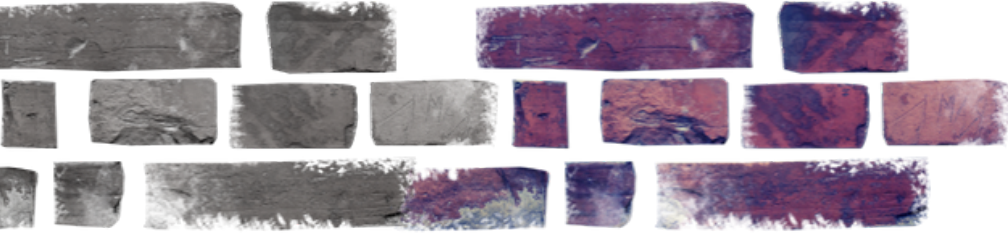
Questions

Do you feel unburdened now?

Now breathe!

Now take some time to really talk with God openly about what is on your heart.





Day 3

23rd of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 2

"The king asked, "Well, how can I help you?" With a prayer to the God of heaven,"
Nehemiah 2:4

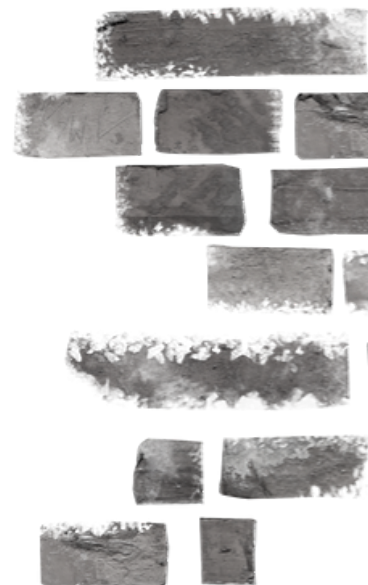
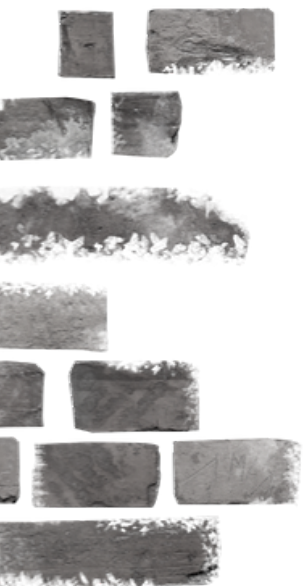
Reflection

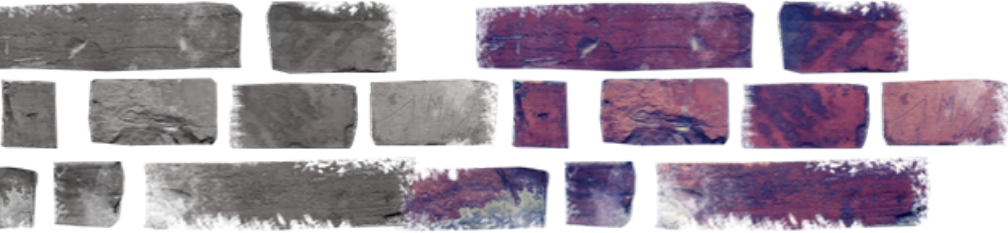
Yesterday we read Nehemiah's heartfelt prayer, today we see that he was a true man of prayer. Just prior to speaking with the king, he throws up a very quick prayer. Sometimes when we are facing a big decision or even put on the spot, we just need to take a brief moment with God. It's not the length of the prayer that is important here but the discipline of turning to God in that moment that is important.

Questions

When faced with something big how do you approach it?

Can you think of times that if you had just stopped for a moment and connected with God, things could have looked differently?





Day 4

24th of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 2

"I also said to the king, "If it please the king, let me have letters addressed to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, instructing them to let me travel safely through their territories on my way to Judah." Nehemiah 2:7

Reflection

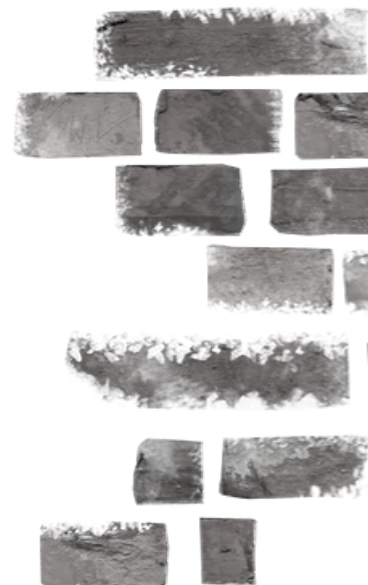
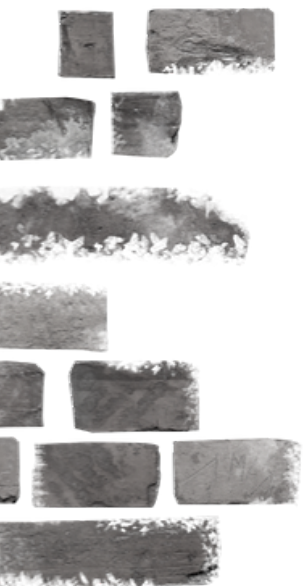
Here we see Nehemiah's amazing courage. Having received a positive answer initially from the king, he goes all out to ask him for what he needs. Pushing the boundaries as far as possible. Sometimes when we have issues, we are afraid to ask for help from the right people. Nehemiah shows us that courage pays off. That sometimes the answer to our prayers comes in asking others for help.

Questions

Do you have the courage to ask for help when you need it ?

Is there an area in your life that requires help from others? Do you believe that God can answer our prayers through other people?

Write down a time when you have seen God use someone to answer a prayer?





Day 5

25th of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 2

"I slipped out during the night, taking only a few others with me. I had not told anyone about the plans God had put in my heart for Jerusalem. We took no pack animals with us except the donkey I was riding." Nehemiah 2:12

Reflection

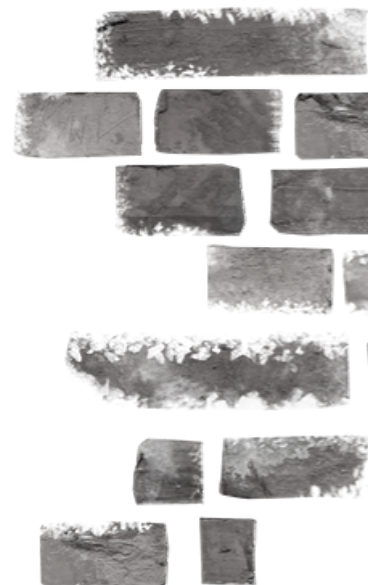
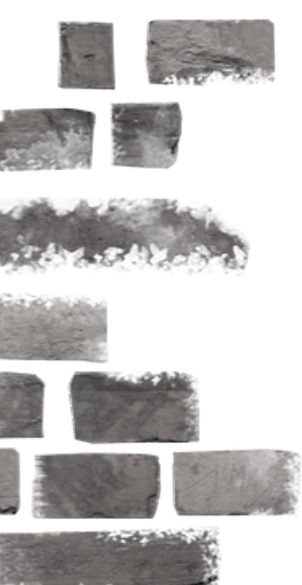
Check out Nehemiah's strategic thinking here. He knows that he has to have a plan before talking with the Jewish people. If news gets out about his plan with a disorganised tribe it could be disastrous. Even more damaging could be the impact from his enemies. Sometimes in our enthusiasm to "do good" we get ahead of others and the will of God. Nehemiah stays true to his calling and considers the right response.

Questions

Have there been times in your life when you have acted too quickly?

What has been the result?

Is there something in your life right now that you need to start thinking about a little more strategically before responding?





Day 6

26th of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 2

"But now I said to them, "You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and end this disgrace!" Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king. They replied at once, "Yes, let's rebuild the wall!" So they began the good work."
Nehemiah 2:17&18

Reflection

This tribe had been living in rubble for quite some time. Nehemiah comes and long and suddenly they are onboard with the idea of rebuilding the wall. Why hadn't they done that before? They had been living in the rubble, it's not like this was some sort of new revelation. This part of the story shows that renewal often begins with one persons vision, the enthusiasm for that vision and God's timing. Too often we are scared to challenge people and even ourselves about our dreams for God's will in our lives and communities. Nehemiah came with enthusiasm, leadership and a God given call to see restoration to this tribe.

Questions

Are you living among rubble?

Do you lack enthusiasm for what God wants for you?

Do you lack vision for your life and community?

Are you waiting on God's timing?





Day 7

27th of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 2

I replied, "The God of heaven will help us succeed. We, his servants, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem."

Nehemiah 2:20

Reflection


Here we see the opposition starting to cause trouble. They assumed that Nehemiah was rebelling against the king. They didn't know that Nehemiah already had permission and support from the king. They were stirring up trouble from their lack of information. Nehemiah didn't even enter into that conversation, simply pointing them to God's will. He had the king's approval and more importantly God's approval. There will always be people who oppose us, they will twist things, assume things and even deliberately disturb what we are trying to achieve. Like Nehemiah we can make the decision not to engage in their pettiness and point their objections towards God.

Questions

Do you have people in your life who don't agree with you?

How do you handle their criticism?

Is your response one that points to God?





Nehemiah

Week 2 - Challenge

As we head into week two, remember to read at your own pace chapters 3&4 as you following along with the highlighted scriptures.

Here Nehemiah is right in the middle of his greatest challenge. He is faced with rubble and a disorganised tribe plus enemies nipping at the heels.

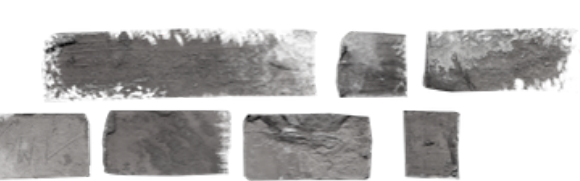
Jerusalem was considered the Holy city and was extremely important to the Jewish people. To have the walls and gates in rubble was not just a great shame but it also left the people exposed to their enemies and danger.

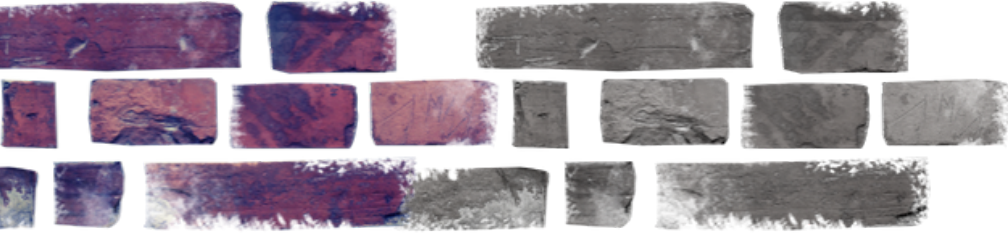
This week we look at how Nehemiah faces the greatest challenge of his life. He is not overwhelmed by this task and never sways from his calling from God as he sets about rebuilding this city.

So let's jump into week 2 and see what God has in store for us.

"Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zakkur son of Imri built next to them."
Nehemiah 3:1&2

"Hear us, our God, for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads. Give them over as plunder in a land of captivity. Do not cover up their guilt or blot out their sins from your sight, for they have thrown insults in the face of the builders. So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. "
Nehemiah 4:4-6





Day 8

28th of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 3

"Then Eliashib the high priest and the other priests started to rebuild at the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set up its doors, building the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and the Tower of Hananel."
Nehemiah 3:1

Reflection

It is interesting that the high priest is the first person that gets in and helps. This is truly love in action. We then read that they dedicated the work as they went along. Nehemiah is not mucking around here and puts God first in everything they do. He is reminding the people who seem to have lost their way spiritually, that they need to be worshipping God in everything they do. Nehemiah was using a practical need to help rebuild a deep spiritual need. It is easy sometimes to lose sight of why we do what we do. We serve and worship a wonderful God. Sometimes the rubble in our life is a reflection of our disconnection with him. God desires more for us than to live in rubble.

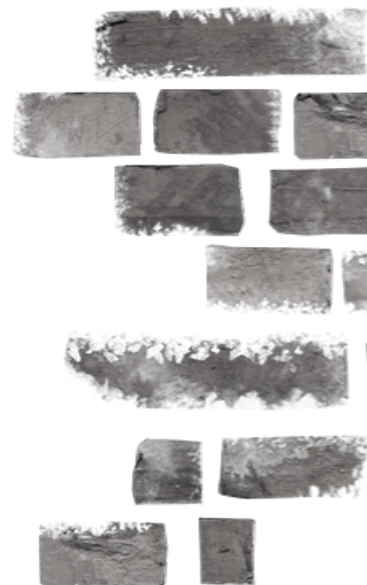
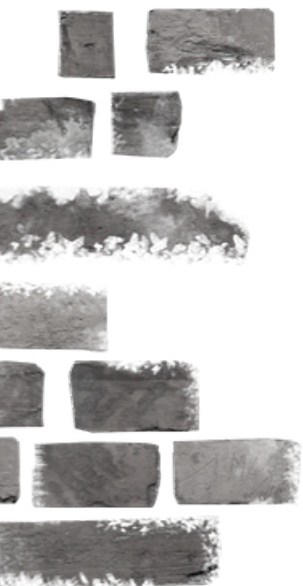
Questions

Do you need to take a moment and rededicate your life to God?

Has worshipping him taken a back seat in your life?

Can you see a link between the areas of your life that are in rubble to your disconnection with God in those areas?

How can you worship God today?





Day 9

29th of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 3

"Next were the people from Tekoa, though their leaders refused to work with the construction supervisors."
Nehemiah 3:5

Reflection

Can you believe that there would be people who just refused to help? That they would desire to continue to live in rubble or happy to watch others do the work? Well it's not so hard to believe, it is the old saying 20% of the people doing 80% of the work. Nehemiah just ignores them and doesn't give them any more of his time. He lets their actions speak for themselves. It doesn't take long to get a reputation and here we are today, still reading about their laziness. This is a good reminder, if you are not going to help with the work get out of the way. Nothing is unseen by God and others, and so the question is what do you want to be remembered for?

Questions

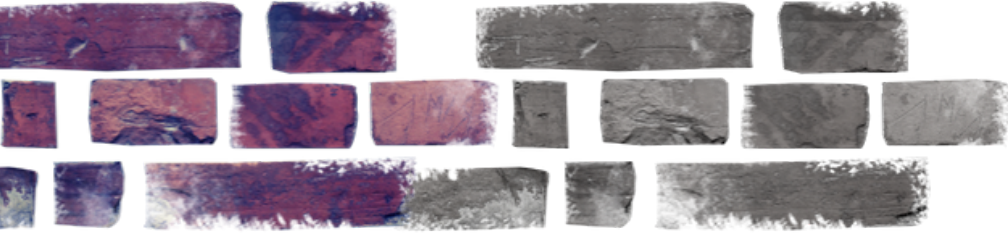
Are there people in your life who just sit on the sidelines criticising, but don't want to help with the solution?

How do you react to these people ?

Is it time to say step up or step out of the way?

Is there an area where you are being lazy?





Day 10

30th of September 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 3

"The next repairs were made by the priests from the surrounding region. After them, Benjamin and Hasshub repaired the section across from their house, and Azariah son of Maaseiah and grandson of Ananiah repaired the section across from his house."
Nehemiah 3:22&23

Reflection

Nehemiah is so clever here, do you notice how he gets people to repair the parts of the wall closest to their own homes. People tend to be highly motivated when they are directly impacted. Makes sense then that people would feel a sense of pride in making sure their section of wall is completed to the highest standard. They wouldn't have had to travel far to do their repairs and would have felt safe knowing their section of the wall would be secure under threat of an attack.

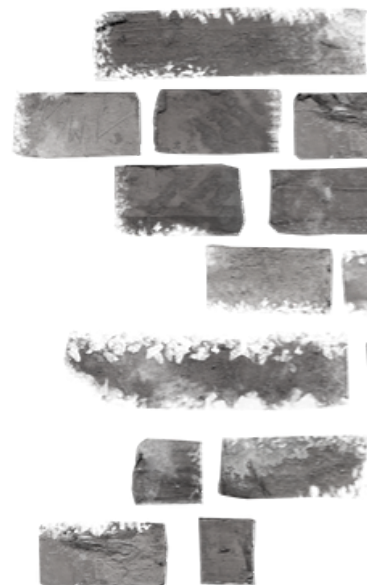
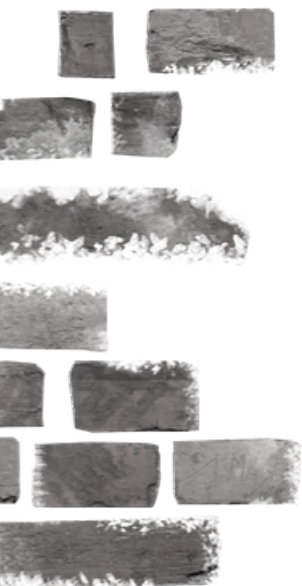
It is a good reminder to us that we need to keep an eye on our own homes. What happens in our homes matters, how we care for it and those who live with us.

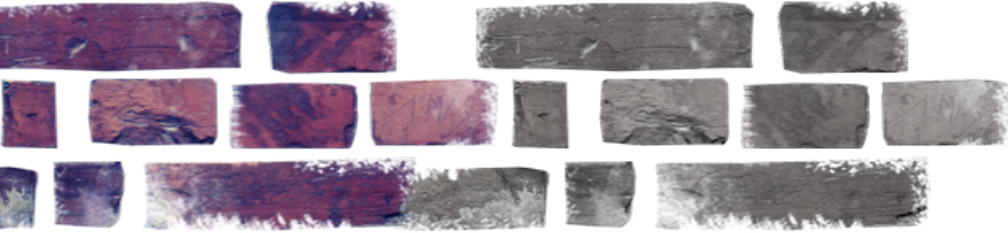
Questions

How do you care for your home?

What are the relationships like in your home?

Are you investing in your household?





Day 11

1st of october 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 4

"... in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"
Nehemiah 4:2

Reflection

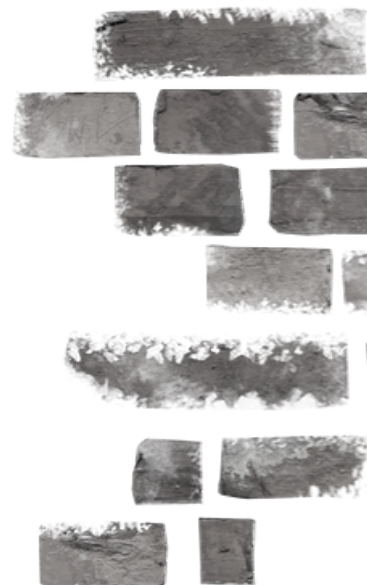
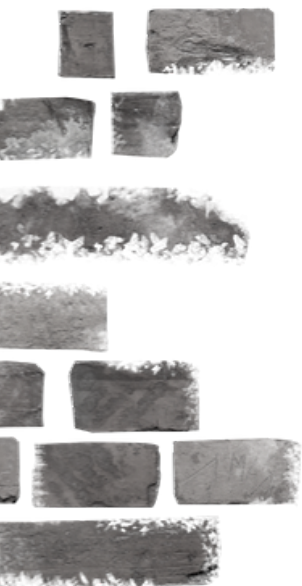
This verse stands out ! Discouragement is one of Satan's most powerful weapons. People can come along and try and mock, discourage and even intimidate us. The tasks God has for us can at times seem overwhelming and if we are not careful about who we listen to, we can get discouraged and give up.

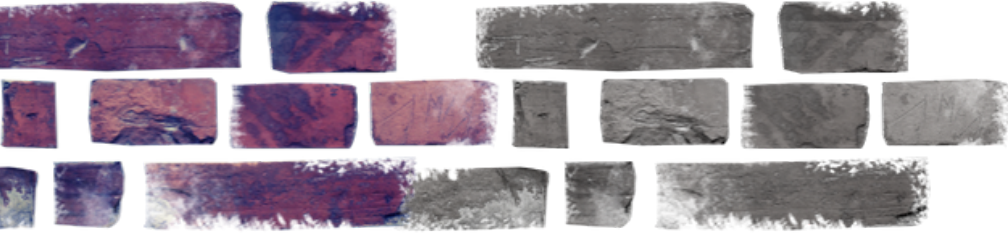
Questions

Do you feel discouraged?

Are you listening to the wrong voices?

Take a moment right now to ask God to remove all the negative thoughts or voices in your life?





Day 12

2nd of october 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 4

"They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat."
Nehemiah 4:8&9

Reflection

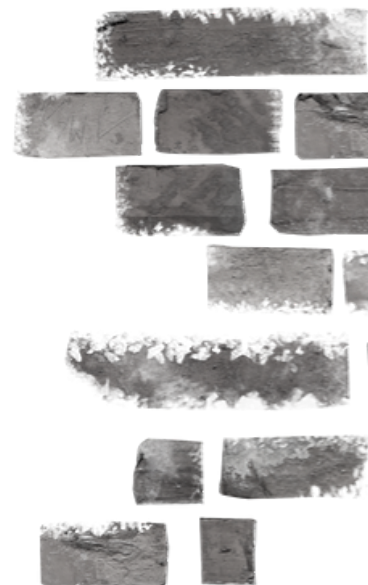
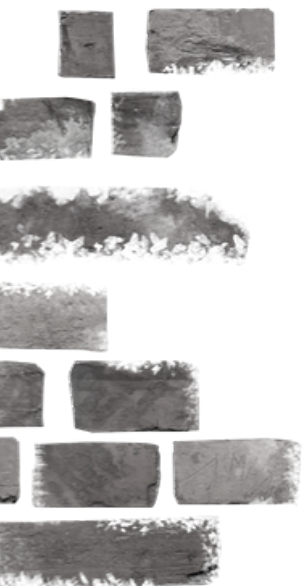
Nehemiah again turns to prayer. It is a consistent theme throughout this book. He was really showing the Jewish people that they needed to rely on God for protection. God wants us to involve him in our everyday lives. In our planning, preparation and in the way we work and live. If we are serious about living for God, we need to have consistent communication with him

Questions

How is your prayer life?

How often do you communicate with God ? When you face opposition do you pray or complain?

In what ways have you seen God help you through prayer?





Day 13

3rd of october 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 4

"From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows and armour. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me."

Nehemiah 4:16-18

Reflection

Do you have a battle plan? Nehemiah quickly discovered he had to have a plan. Working on the wall was important but they also needed to be ready for battle. Whilst today we may not be under physical attack we should never forget we are in a spiritual battle. It is very real, and we need to have a plan and a team. It is irresponsible of us to not be thinking like this as it will leave us vulnerable to the enemies plan.

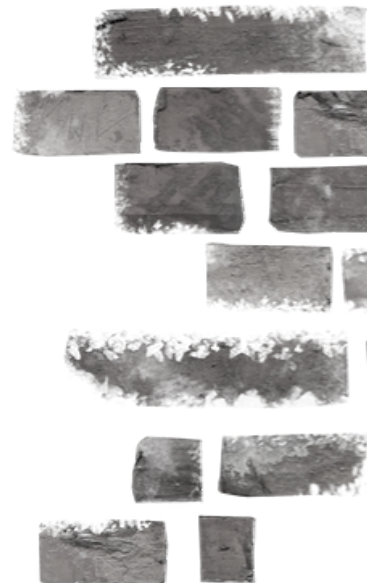
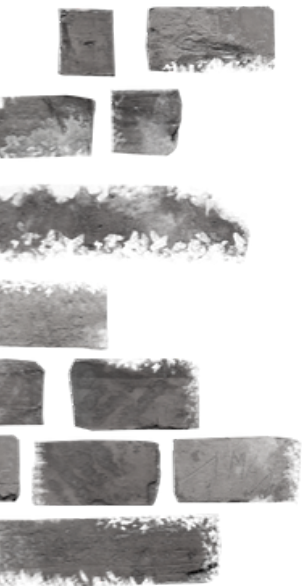
Questions

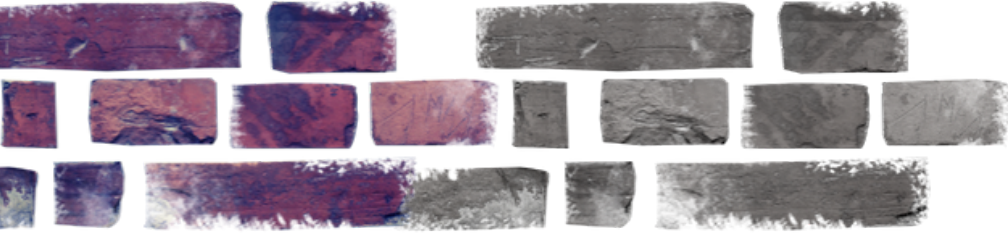
What is your battle plan?

Who is supporting you?

Are you working but also aware of the danger that lingers around?

Are you putting on the armour of God every day ? Ephesians 6:11





Day 14

4th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 4

"Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water."
Nehemiah 4:23

Reflection

Can you imagine not changing clothes ? What this verse highlights is that Nehemiah and his crew took their responsibilities very seriously. They were always ready for attack, they were not about to back down or leave themselves exposed. How often in life do we half do something. God wants us to take seriously the responsibility of building his kingdom in this world. It is not a place for lukewarm half-heartedness. God needs strongly committed people to partner with him in the battle.

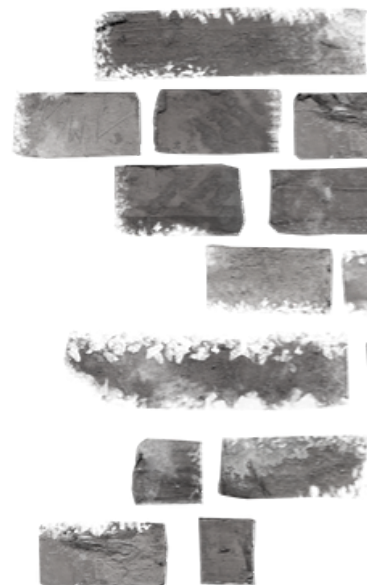
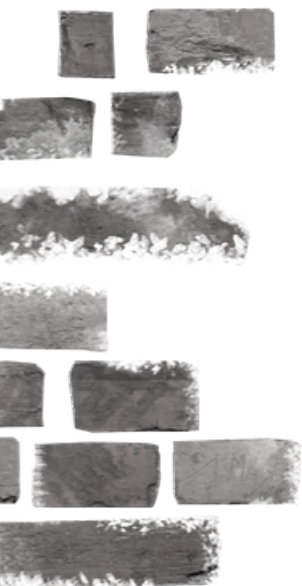
Questions

Are you serious about the task of building the kingdom of God?

What are you prepared to do ?

What are you prepared not to do?

Take a moment to check your heart with God today?





Nehemiah

Week 3 - Community

Week 3 we look at chapters 5-7. Here we start to get a glimpse of Nehemiah's community. Nehemiah knew that his role wasn't just about rebuilding the wall, he had to also rebuild the community.

Justice for this community meant organisation through systemic change. He cared about the people as well as the work. There were sacrifices to be made and Nehemiah certainly didn't shirk from making his fair share.

After completing the wall, Nehemiah worked with Ezra, the priest to reconnect the people with God. He knew that the Tribe had some work to do on their rebellious and stubborn hearts.

The people had disobeyed God's laws and they needed to come back to that. In chapter 7, Nehemiah records the names of all of the people who were there and who were committed to rebuilding the houses within the walls.

There are a lot of names, each significant. How would you feel to see your name written there? What would you want to read about yourself? Let's see what God has for us this week.



6 When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry.

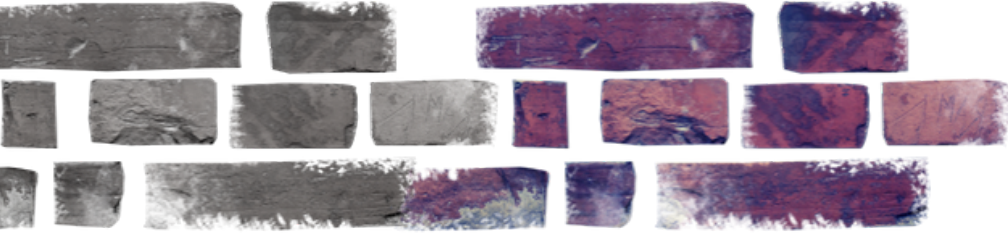
9 So I continued, "What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?"

Nehemiah 5: 6&9

But I said, "Should a man like me run away? Or should someone like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!"

Nehemiah 6:11





Day 15

5th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 5

"When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, "You are charging your own people interest!" So I called together a large meeting to deal with them."
Nehemiah 5:6&7

Reflection

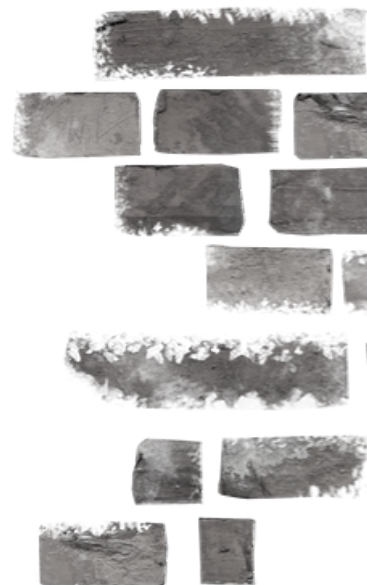
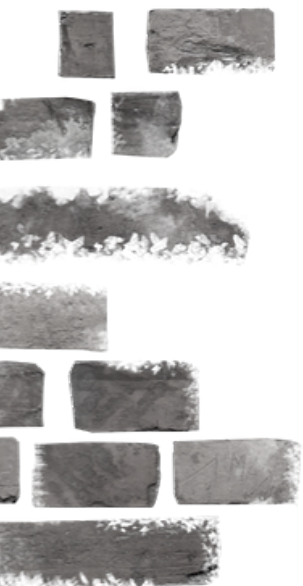
Nehemiah had to deal with way more than just the practical work of repairing the wall. He was now helping to repair a broken community. He cared about people and so this wasn't just about repairing a wall it was about helping those who needed it the most. He hears the concerns from within the community and sets about ways of correcting the injustices. Just as Nehemiah highlights the importance of helping those within the community, God is calling us to see those around us in need and do something about it.

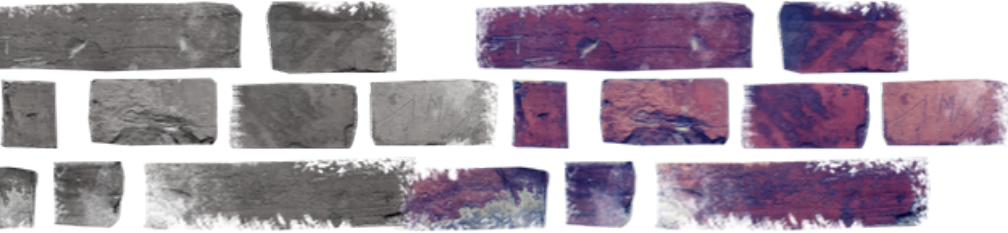
Questions

Do you see the community around you?

What are the needs?

How are you helping?





Day 16

6th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 5

"So I continued, "What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?"
Nehemiah 5:9

Reflection

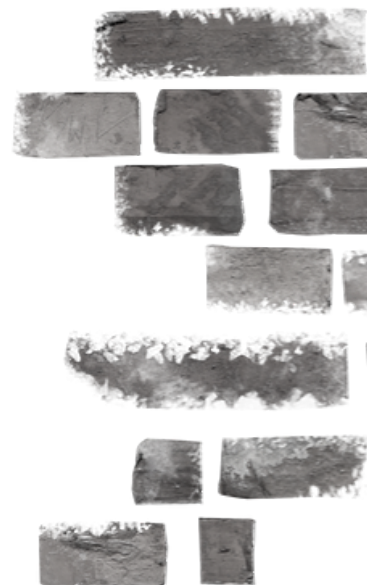
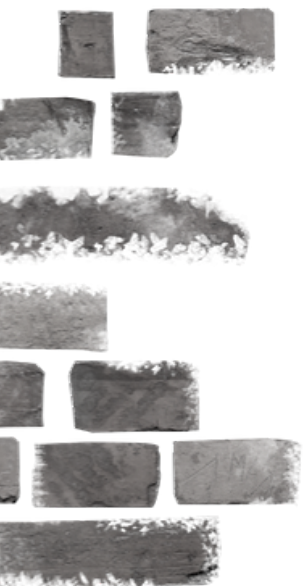
These are very strong words from Nehemiah "what you are doing is not right". So often we skirt around issues, instead of speaking straight to the heart of the matter. When we see injustice we need to find a strong choice. Too often we shy away and it just keeps happening. Nehemiah doesn't mince words and is crystal clear on the course of action to put things right.

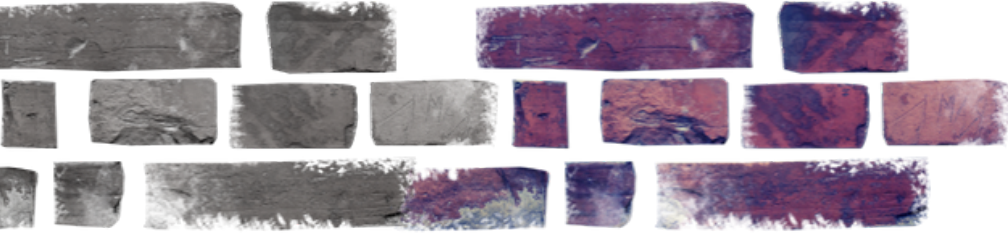
Questions

What injustice do you see?

Where can you use your Voice?

Do you need to have some courage to find your voice?





Day 17

7th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 5

"Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor."

Nehemiah 5:14

Reflection

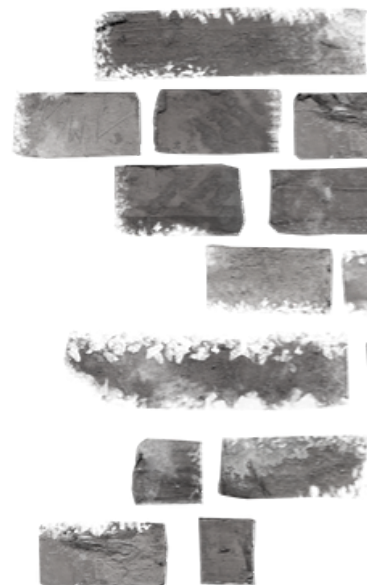
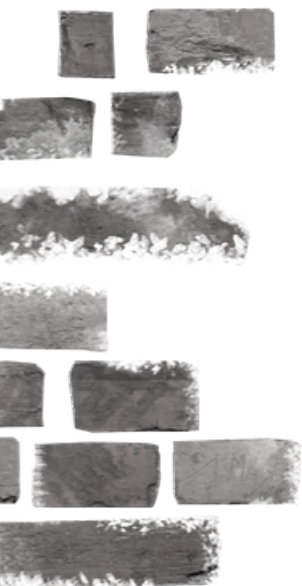
We really get a glimpse of Nehemiah's heart here, even when he was entitled to something, he gave it up. What does that mean? He was leading by example, just because he could do something didn't mean that he would. Nehemiah was telling the wealthy Jewish people to stop oppressing the people. They were all in this together and they needed to work together and support each other.

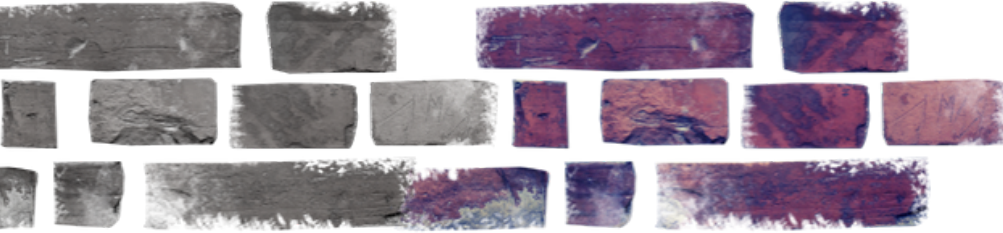
Questions

Is there something you are currently doing that on reflection, would be better if you didn't ?

Is there an area in your life that you can be leading others in?

Can you be leading by example in some way ?





Day 18

8th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 6

"I sent him this reply: "Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head." They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed." But I prayed, "Now strengthen my hands."
Nehemiah 6:8&9

Reflection

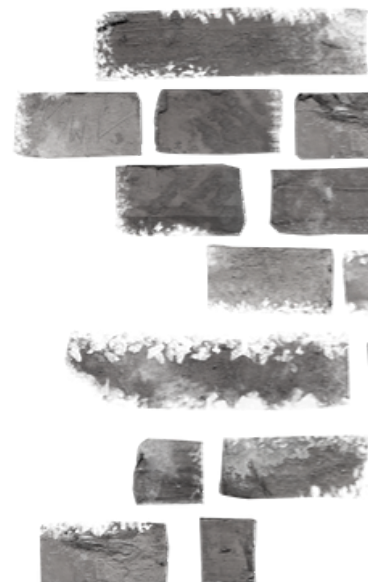
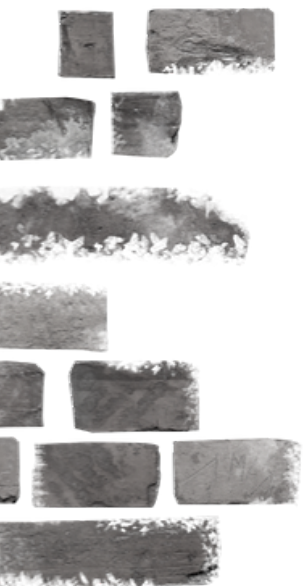
Nehemiah's enemies were playing mind games with his team. They were trying everything they could to stop them from working. However, Nehemiah was having none of that, what does he do? He prays "strengthen my hands". How often when the enemy tries to stop us from doing God's work, do we just give in or say get me out of here, I don't feel safe. We can learn a lesson from Nehemiah, in these times we need to turn to God for strength.

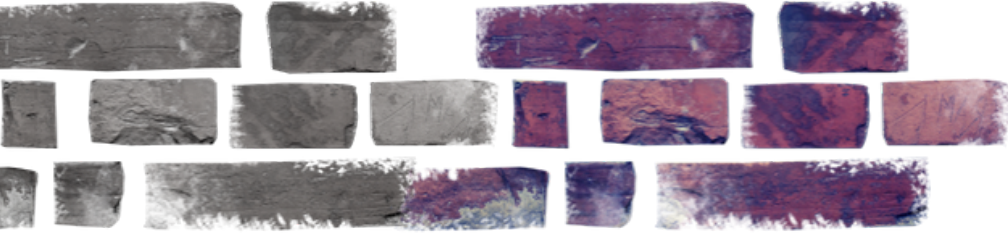
Questions

Are there times that the enemy tries to get in your head?

How do you fight against the games he plays ?

Is prayer the first option ?





Day 19

9th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 6

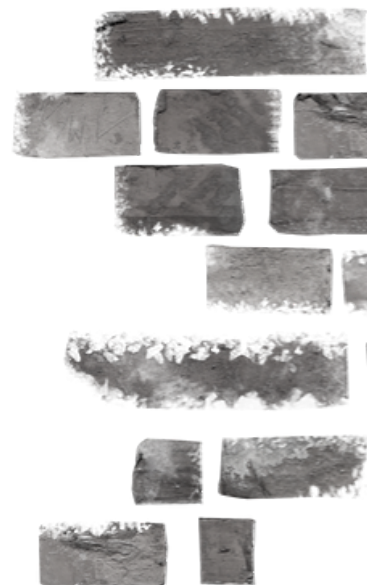
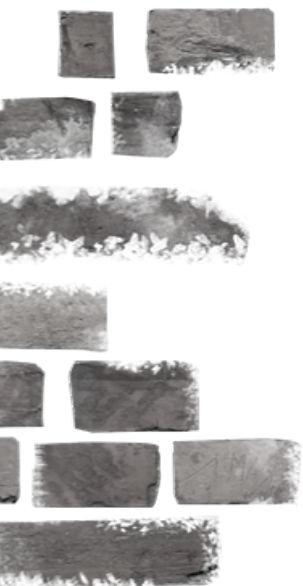
"But I said, "Should a man like me run away? Or should someone like me go into the temple to save his life? I will not go!"
Nehemiah 6:11

Reflection

Should I stay or should I go? This was the question before Nehemiah. He was not going anywhere, because it was not in his nature to run away from danger. Imagine what the people would have seen through Nehemiah's stance not to leave. He was fearless, courageous and maybe a little stubborn. However it showed the people they could trust him and gave them great courage. I wonder if there have been times when others have looked to you for such courage? Did you run or did you stay?

Questions

Think about those who could be looking to you, name them ?
Can you show them courage in some way?
Are you brave enough to stick at God's work?





Day 20

10th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 6

"When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realised that this work had been done with the help of our God."
Nehemiah 6:16

Reflection

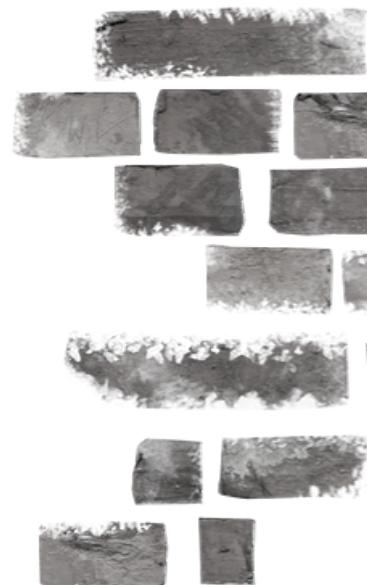
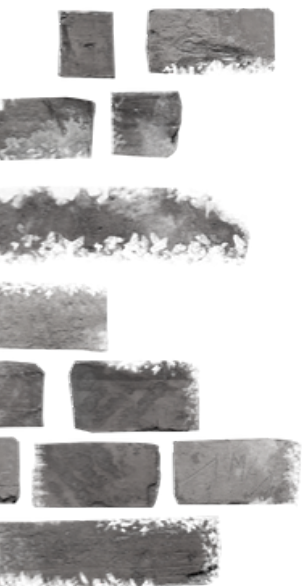
Victory! The mind games didn't work. They said it couldn't be done, the job was too big and the problems too great, but Nehemiah's bravery and courage pay off. However he is not boasting about himself - he is pointing the victory to God. Everything Nehemiah did was to bring God glory. Is there something in your life that others say cannot be done, it is too big? Is it time to push into God to claim the victory?

Questions

Name something you want to see God bring victory to?

Have you told yourself it is too big, it cannot be done?

Does your life glorify God ?





Day 21

11th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 6

"I said to them, "The gates of Jerusalem are not to be opened until the sun is hot. While the gatekeepers are still on duty, have them shut the doors and bar them. Also appoint residents of Jerusalem as guards, some at their posts and some near their own houses."
Nehemiah 7:13

Reflection

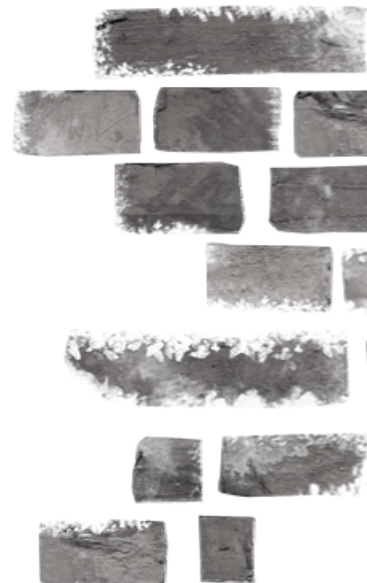
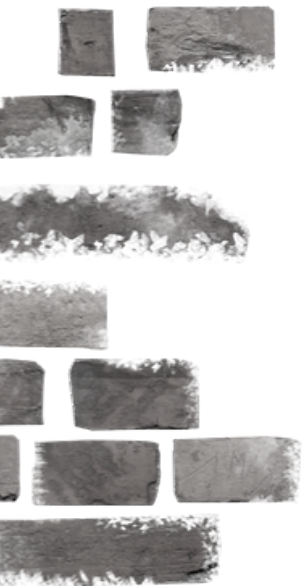
The wall was finished but the word wasn't done. Each family was tasked with protecting a section of the wall which was next to their home. Nehemiah could have just relaxed and dropped his guard because they were now protected by the wall. However he knew that it would take more than a wall to protect the people. The people needed to maintain the wall and care for each other. This would stop enemies from finding ways into the community. Sometimes we give up too soon, we think we are done and that leaves us vulnerable. A community that cares and maintains will thrive.

Questions

In what way can you care and maintain your community?

Have you left somethings unfinished?

Do you need to bring some order to your world?





Nehemiah

Week 4 - Covenant

Hold on for the ride with week 4 as it's a big one. You have a bit more reading to do this week. We are going to journey through chapters 8-13. Again, read at your own pace. We have highlighted some scriptures for your reflection, but to get the deeper picture, reading the whole chapters is the key.

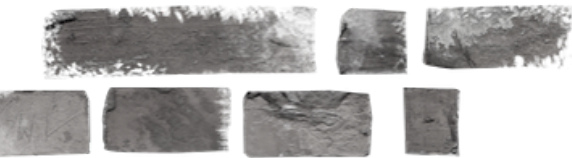
It's a bit of a rollercoaster ride this section. The wall/gate project is finishing and the community is confronted with how far they had moved away from God. They have to go through the process of repentance, healing and restoration. Look out for the curveball in chapter 13. It appears nothing much has changed, however there is a continual need to bring restoration and reform.

Let's see what God has for us this week.

2 So on the first day of the seventh month Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, which was made up of men and women and all who were able to understand. 3 He read it aloud from daybreak till noon as he faced the square before the Water Gate in the presence of the men, women and others who could understand. And all the people listened attentively to the Book of the Law.
Nehemiah 8:2-3

"Stand up and praise the Lord your God, who is from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, and may it be exalted above all blessing and praise. 6 You alone are the Lord. You made the heavens, even the highest heavens, and all their starry host, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them. You give life to everything, and the multitudes of heaven worship you.
Nehemiah 9:5&6

Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. 8 I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. 9 I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.
Nehemiah 13: 7-9





Day 22

12th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 8 & 9

"Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."
Nehemiah 8:9-10

Reflection

We go from weeping to rejoicing in just a few verses. The people wept openly when they realised that they had moved so far from God's ways. But Ezra said you should be rejoicing because you have had a new revelation.

So let's celebrate, however there is something special about this celebration, it is connected to their giving to God. God loves a cheerful giver and here he would have been smiling from ear to ear. The people came together as one and offered their gifts to God and shared with joy, each others company.

Questions

Is God wanting you to have a new revelation?

Have you wandered far from his ways in your life?

Are you giving God what is rightfully his?

Are you joyful in giving to God ?

How can you celebrate God today?





Day 23

13th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 8&9

"On the second day of the month, the heads of all the families, along with the priests and the Levites, gathered around Ezra the teacher to give attention to the words of the Law. They found written in the Law, which the Lord had commanded through Moses, that the Israelites were to live in temporary shelters during the festival of the seventh month."

Nehemiah 8:13&14

Reflection

During the seven-day festival of shelters, the people lived in booths made of branches. This was a practice in remembrance of their rescue from Egypt (the new normal) and their time in the wilderness. This was to make them reflect on God's protection and guidance during those years. A time to remember where they came from so they could appreciate where they were now. How often do you take the time to think back on your life and appreciate God's protection? To see where God has been in your life and give thanks for his goodness.

Take a moment to just sit and reflect, just allow God to bring things to your mind.

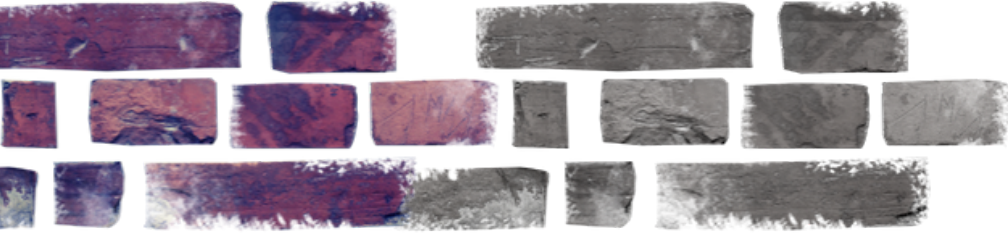
Questions

What came up?

Write it down.

Now pray a prayer of thanks





Day 24

14th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 10&11

"In view of all this, we are making a binding agreement, putting it in writing, and our leaders, our Levites and our priests are affixing their seals to it"
Nehemiah 9:38

Reflection

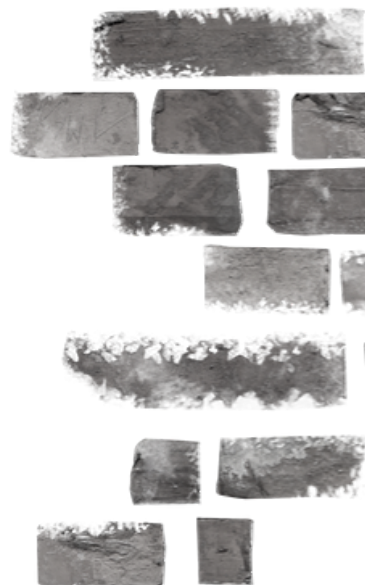
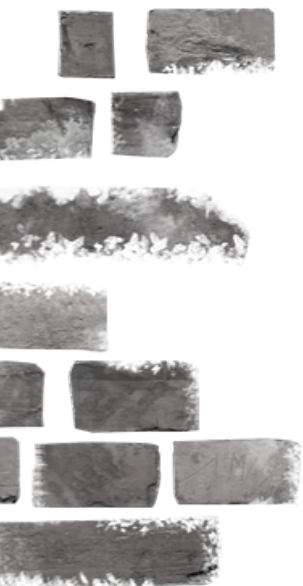
Cross my heart ! Here the people have been confronted by their disobedience to God. They have confessed and repented and are now making a new promise. They are taking seriously their relationship with God and their responsibility to that relationship. We live in a time when we are under a new covenant, the one that was made with Jesus' death and resurrection. Jesus said in Matthew 22:36-40 that all the laws hang on two things. Love God and love others.

Questions

Do you need to confess that you may have not taken your relationship with God seriously?

Have you moved away from the greatest commandment?

How do you love God and love others at the moment?





Day 25

15th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 10&11

9 The people and the Levites must bring these offerings of grain, new wine, and olive oil to the storerooms and place them in the sacred containers near the ministering priests, the gatekeepers, and the singers. "We promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God."
Nehemiah 10:39

Reflection

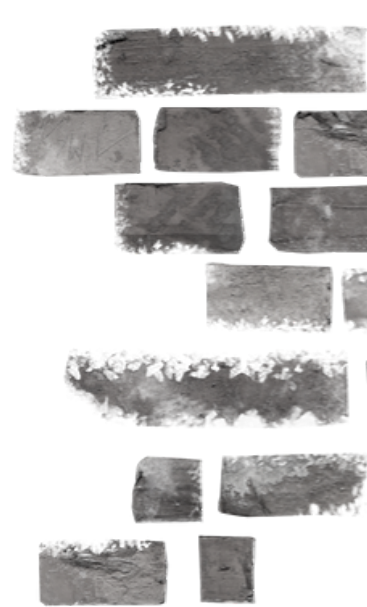
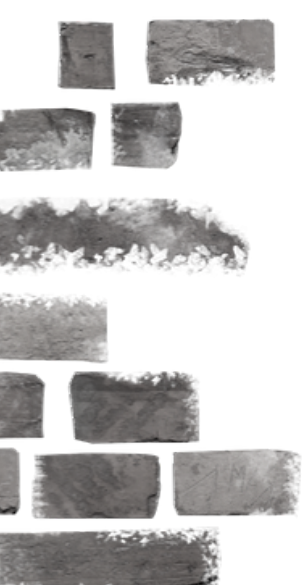
Here the people not only promised God, they committed to support His work. They came with their offerings which was part of their sacrifice to God, but also helped support the work of the temple. We have a practical God who cares about us and he is relying on us to be so in-tune with His spirit to meet the needs of His people. He has given us all the resources we need to fulfill his plan here on earth - it is up to us to be generous in Spirit.

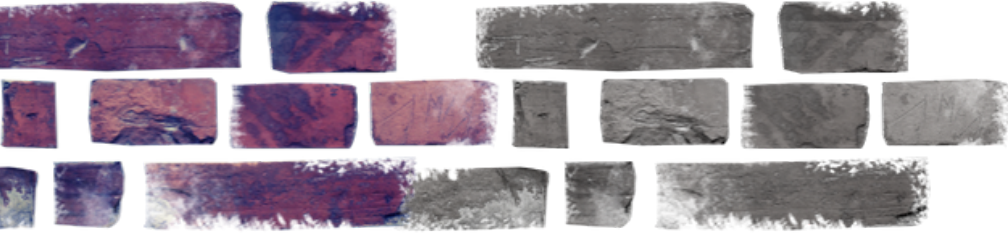
Questions

Have you over looked your responsibility to God's work?

In what way are you bringing your sacrifices?

What resource has God given you that it is time you shared?





Day 26

16th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 12 & 13

"I had the leaders of Judah go up on top of the wall. I also assigned two large choirs to give thanks. One was to proceed on top of the wall to the right, toward the Dung Gate."
Nehemiah 12:31

Reflection

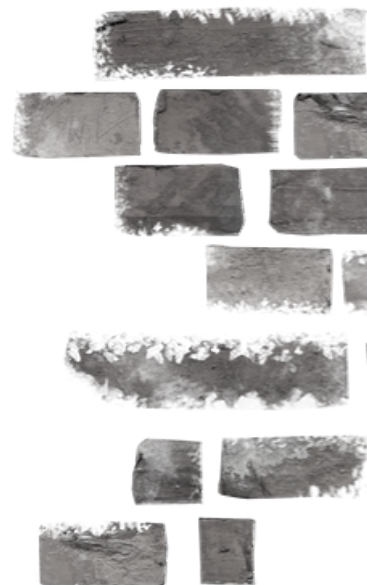
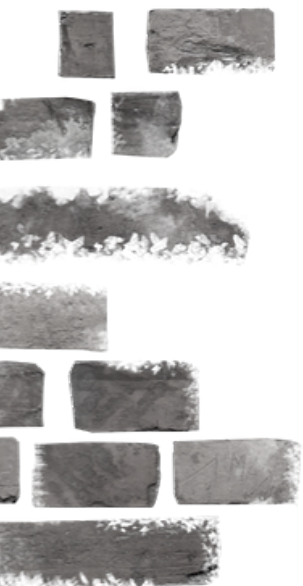
Imagine this scene for a moment. All these people on top of the wall praising God, singing their hearts out, playing their instruments, worshiping God in such spectacular fashion. They had worked hard, renewed their relationship with God and now it was time to really celebrate. All was right in their world. When we see restoration in our communities and in our relationship with God it brings a sense of wholeness that we can't contain. We can do nothing else but worship and praise God. We don't need to stand on a wall and have a big band and choir to praise God we can do it right where we are.

Questions

Is there area in your life that needs restoration?

Is there something in your surrounding community that needs restoration?

When was the last time you really praised God?





Day 27

17th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 12 & 13

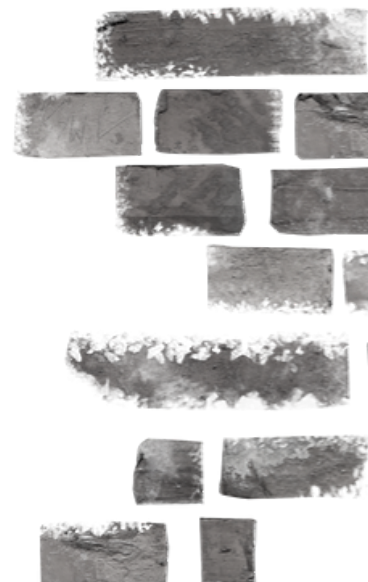
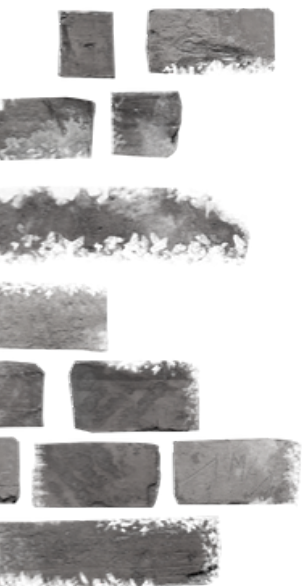
"I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense."
Nehemiah 13:8&9

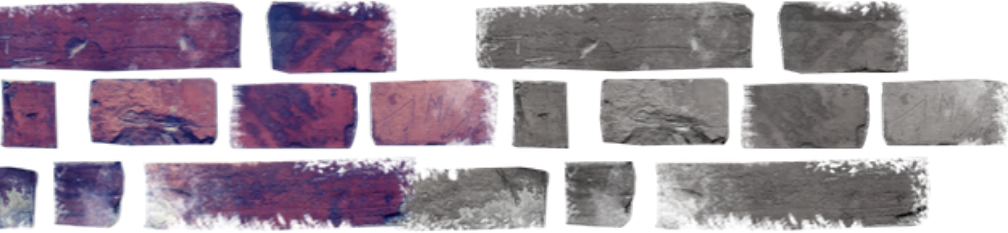
Reflection

Can you believe what is happening here? After 12 years Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem to find that one of his enemy's from when he was building the wall, has now been given his own room in God's temple. To say Nehemiah was unimpressed is an understatement, and he sees it as a breaking of the covenant they had made with God. It was so offensive that he had to purify the rooms where he had been. How often do we let the enemy back in even when we know it is dangerous and they bring corruption to our lives? Like Nehemiah, when that happens, we must remove it and purify ourselves before God. We need a clean slate.

Questions

Is there something that you have allowed back into your life that is of the enemy?
Take a moment to take stock of your thoughts and actions and see if God is asking you to address them?
Do you need to be purified?





Day 28

18th of October 2020

Scripture: Nehemiah 12 & 13

"Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy. Remember me for this also, my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love."
Nehemiah 13:22

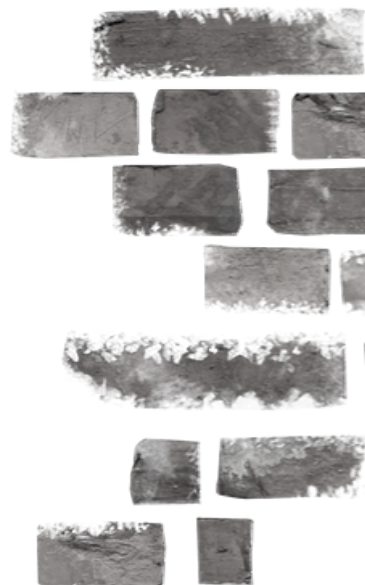
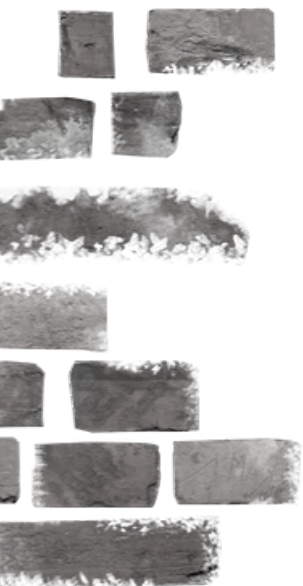
Reflection

It wasn't enough to just purify the rooms, Nehemiah needed those who were left in charge of making the decisions purified too. Leadership is a hard and challenging journey. In the words of Spiderman "with great power comes great responsibility". Sometimes we get it wrong, it is hard and painful to admit, but admit we must. That is the power of Godly leadership - being humble enough to admit our wrongs and come back to God.

Questions

As a leader in your world is there something that you have responsibility for that requires purification?

To see total restoration to a community, it starts with the leaders. In what way can you bring restoration?





Isn't Nehemiah a wonderful book? It goes from Rubble to Restoration. The leadership of Nehemiah teaches us so much. When I look around our world, I see rubble everywhere. Places, situations, principalities and powers that many say can't be changed or overcome. But Nehemiah teaches us they can in God's strength.

Will it be easy – No
Will there be opposition – Yes
Will the enemy want to stop us – Yes
But it can be done, if we come with a repentant and humble heart.

Wanting to see God's will prevail and working together to achieve that goal, anything is possible. It all starts with the calling God puts on our heart's, a need so big we cannot ignore. To see the challenges so that we assess them and put strategies to achieve success. Then work with those around us, the community which God has given to us. We covenant with God to see him glorified through us.

It starts with the renewal in us!

We hope that you have been encouraged and that God is stirring your heart as we look to the rubble of our world to bring restoration.

Blessings
Major's Di and Andrew