

# RESOLVE

W E E K 0 7







# 13 NEHEMIAH'S FURTHER REFORMS

At that time the book of Moses was read publicly to the people. The command was found written in it that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God, <sup>2</sup> because they did not meet the Israelites with food and water. Instead, they hired Balaam against them to curse them, but our God turned the curse into a blessing. <sup>3</sup> When they heard the law, they separated all those of mixed descent from Israel.

<sup>4</sup> Now before this, the priest Eliashib had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was a relative of Tobiah <sup>5</sup> and had prepared a large room for him where they had previously stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, and the tenths of grain, new wine, and fresh oil prescribed for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, along with the contributions for the priests.

<sup>6</sup> While all this was happening, I was not in Jerusalem, because I had returned to King Artaxerxes of Babylon in the thirty-second year of his reign. It was only later that I asked the king for a leave of absence <sup>7</sup> so I could return to Jerusalem. Then I discovered the evil that Eliashib had done on behalf of Tobiah by providing him a room in the courts of God's house. <sup>8</sup> I was greatly displeased and threw all of Tobiah's household possessions out of the room. <sup>9</sup> I ordered that the rooms be purified, and I had the articles of the house of God restored there, along with the grain offering and frankincense. <sup>10</sup> I also found out that because the portions for the Levites had not been given, each of the Levites and the singers performing the service had gone back to his own field. <sup>11</sup> Therefore, I rebuked the officials, asking, "Why has the house of God been neglected?" I gathered the Levites and singers together and stationed them at their posts. <sup>12</sup> Then all Judah brought a tenth of the grain, new wine, and fresh oil into the storehouses. <sup>13</sup> I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses the priest Shelemiah, the scribe Zadok, and Pedaiah of the Levites, with Hanan son of Zaccur, son of Mattaniah to assist them, because they were considered trustworthy. They were responsible for the distribution to their colleagues.

<sup>14</sup> Remember me for this, my God, and don't erase the deeds of faithful love I have done for the house of my God and for its services.

<sup>15</sup> At that time I saw people in Judah treading winepresses on the Sabbath. They were also bringing in stores of grain and loading them on donkeys, along with wine, grapes, and figs. All kinds of goods were being brought to Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. So I warned them against selling food on that day. <sup>16</sup> The Tyrians living there were importing fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them on the Sabbath to the people of Judah in Jerusalem.

<sup>17</sup> I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, “What is this evil you are doing—profaning the Sabbath day? <sup>18</sup> Didn’t your ancestors do the same, so that our God brought all this disaster on us and on this city? And now you are rekindling his anger against Israel by profaning the Sabbath!”

<sup>19</sup> When shadows began to fall on the city gates of Jerusalem just before the Sabbath, I gave orders that the city gates be closed and not opened until after the Sabbath. I posted some of my men at the gates, so that no goods could enter during the Sabbath day. <sup>20</sup> Once or twice the merchants and those who sell all kinds of goods camped outside Jerusalem, <sup>21</sup> but I warned them, “Why are you camping in front of the wall? If you do it again, I’ll use force against you.” After that they did not come again on the Sabbath. <sup>22</sup> Then I instructed the Levites to purify themselves and guard the city gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.

Remember me for this also, my God, and look on me with compassion according to the abundance of your faithful love.

<sup>23</sup> In those days I also saw Jews who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. <sup>24</sup> Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples but could not speak Hebrew. <sup>25</sup> I rebuked them, cursed them, beat some of their men, and pulled out their hair. I forced them to take an oath before God and said, “You must not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters as wives for your sons or yourselves! <sup>26</sup> Didn’t King Solomon of Israel sin in matters like this? There was not a king like him among many nations. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, yet foreign women drew him into sin. <sup>27</sup> Why then should we hear about you doing all this terrible evil and acting unfaithfully against our God by marrying foreign women?” <sup>28</sup> Even one of the sons of Jehoiada, son of the high priest Eliashib, had become a son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. So I drove him away from me.

<sup>29</sup> Remember them, my God, for defiling the priesthood as well as the covenant of the priesthood and the Levites.

<sup>30</sup> So I purified them from everything foreign and assigned specific duties to each of the priests and Levites. <sup>31</sup> I also arranged for the donation of wood at the appointed times and for the firstfruits.

Remember me, my God, with favor.

## SERMON NOTES

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# LIFE GROUP DISCUSSION GUIDE

## RHYTHM REMINDER



Repentance

### LEAN IN

When you're feeling disappointed or discouraged, what helps you reset and rest?  
People, prayer, food, sleep? \_\_\_\_\_

### LOOK DOWN

What does Nehemiah's repeated phrase "Remember me, my God, for good" (v. 31)  
tell us about his motivation and his hope? \_\_\_\_\_

### LOOK OUT

How can Christians live out a balance of active love for the world (like Nehemiah)  
*and* deep dependence on God? \_\_\_\_\_

### LOOK IN

Where in your life are you feeling restless right now—like something just isn't how  
it's supposed to be? \_\_\_\_\_

WEEK 7

# IF I HAD MORE TIME

WITH SPECIAL GUEST

**CHRISTINE CAINE**



^  
**LISTEN TO  
THIS WEEK'S  
EPISODE  
HERE**



*Sometimes the  
Lord calls you into  
places that make no  
sense economically,  
strategically, or  
humanly—but He  
shows up.*

**CHRISTINE CAINE** is a speaker, author, and activist who has been serving the local church globally for over 30 years. She and her husband, Nick, founded the anti-human trafficking organization, The A21 Campaign, which works at the local, domestic, and international level to end modern-day slavery. She also founded Propel Women, an A21 initiative dedicated to coming alongside women all over the globe to activate their God-given purpose.







by Lexi Ragan

# What We Long For

*"...yet our God turned the curse into a blessing." (Nehemiah 13:2, ESV)*

Reaches for what lives  
out of reach. Stretches oneself  
to the possibility of what feels  
far from even a finger's grasp—

presence permeates one's desires  
for light that surpasses insight,  
for now, we say, *not yet*, still  
a burning inside exhausted chests

tells us we are close enough  
to keep on reaching as joy  
echoes miles behind us, lingering  
from Jerusalem's singers.

*Longing, we say, because desire  
is full of endless distances,  
though we know eternity is far  
from untouchable, closer than*

a traveling prayer, so until then,  
we ache for unity, inside and out.  
Sheer peace preserved that won't  
be breached before night falls

down; frankly, I am tired  
of evil, of its residue when  
the upright have trail-blazed  
reparations in faith! Yet You

have covered our messes with  
blessings that break like oil over  
dirty feet. How only You are able to turn  
ill-will into invitations of healing

that flow in noticeable doses,  
the remnant are desperate for  
holiness to cure all

dissension, such tension—

put back  
together  
what broke  
like lost  
bricks and mortar  
put us  
back together  
together put  
us back...

Until then, we link arms  
and wait in expectation  
for ruins to be made right.

And what do we pine for most?  
Oh, only to be remembered by  
the One who fashioned Heaven;

this much we know.

~ ~ ~

by Erica Kim

# Called to Lead, Invited to Rest

Enneagram Type 3. Eldest Daughter Syndrome. Type A Personality. These are the labels the world puts on people like me. In simpler terms: ambitious, responsible, overachieving, perfectionistic—and highly likely to burn out.

That drive within me has often felt like an old friend...and sometimes like an enemy. It keeps me going, pushes me toward excellence, and helps me lead effectively. But it also robs me of rest. It whispers that my worth is tied to what I build, solve, or achieve. It tells me that stillness is laziness—that pause equals failure—and guilt and shame flood in when I try to slow down.

I think Nehemiah would understand.

After rebuilding Jerusalem's wall against impossible odds, you'd think he could finally rest. But in Nehemiah 13, he returns to find that spiritual decay has crept back in. The people had slipped into old sins, the temple was neglected, and compromise had taken root in the community. Nehemiah could have said, "I've done enough." Instead, he took up the harder work—not of stones and gates, but of hearts and habits.

His story reminds me that leadership isn't just about vision and execution. It's about faithfulness in every season, even the draining ones. And it's about remembering who the true Builder is—our Almighty God.

In recent years, I've come to realize that my restlessness isn't all bad. God has used it to propel me into important callings—whether it's stepping into new roles in my career, serving here at Mariners on the Creative Arts team, or guiding my two young girls in a world that sometimes feels like it's falling apart. Like Nehemiah, I often feel a holy discontent—a sense that there's more to be done, more to repair, more to rebuild. I believe God honors that drive when it's rooted in love, humility, and obedience.

But it's a double-edged sword. Left unchecked, restlessness becomes a subtle form of striving. I begin measuring my worth by my output. I lose the ability to simply be—to sit with God, to enjoy stillness, to celebrate what He's





*The Book of the Law is Abandoned*  
Original Artwork by Cedric Dennis

already done. My soul starts running even when my body is still. And I forget: the goal is not just to lead well—but to lead from a place of rest. For me, that's so much easier to say than to do.

In Nehemiah's final chapter, we see him as a tired, seasoned leader—correcting injustice, confronting compromise, and calling people back to holiness. There's no celebration. No applause. No victory lap. Just quiet, gritty faithfulness. I believe his refrain in chapter 13—"Remember me, my God"—isn't a request for recognition. It's the prayer of someone who knows he's not the main character in the story. God is.

God interrupted all our striving. He didn't send a strategy—He sent a Savior. Jesus didn't come to give us a to-do list; He came to say, "It is finished." The birth of Christ is a declaration that we no longer have to hustle for meaning. That we can rest—not just in the rhythm of sleep or Sabbath, but in the deeper soul-rest that only comes from knowing we are already loved, already chosen, already enough, because of Him.

The end-of-year season is filled with busyness and chaos, but the birth of Jesus reminds us to stop striving. The work that matters most has already been done. The walls may crumble again. The people may drift. But the foundation has been laid, once



▼  
*Nehemiah 13:15-18*

Original Artwork by  
Tamara Czerwiak

and for all, in Christ. It was secured not just in His birth, but in His death on the cross, where every ounce of striving was met with grace, and every burden was finished in Him.

I don't want to lose my restlessness. It's a foundational part of who I am. I believe God placed it there for a reason. It keeps me alert to the needs around me and aware that the world is still broken and beautiful and in need of redemption. It gives me urgency, energy, and passion to pursue good work and meaningful change.

But I also don't want to be mastered by it.

So this season, my resolve is this:

To let God use my restlessness—but to let Him *define* my rest.

To *lead* with diligence, but *live* with grace.

To show up faithfully, but stop believing the lie that everything depends on me.

Like Nehemiah, I want to finish well—not just the work I've been called to, but the way I've walked with God in the process. I want my identity to rest securely in Him, not in striving, and to live in the truth that I am already loved, already known, and already enough, in Him.

Foundation of Agapē  
Original Artwork by Kimmy Johnson





City Gates

Original Artwork by  
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