

THE JOY OF BEING USED BY GOD

NEHEMIAH 11-12

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE - MAY 5, 2024

SCRIPTURE READING

Nehemiah 11-12 ESV

The Leaders in Jerusalem

11 Now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem. And the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to live in Jerusalem the holy city, while nine out of ten^[a] remained in the other towns. 2 And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem.

3 These are the chiefs of the province who lived in Jerusalem; but in the towns of Judah everyone lived on his property in their towns: Israel, the priests, the Levites, the temple servants, and the descendants of Solomon's servants. 4 And in Jerusalem lived certain of the sons of Judah and of the sons of Benjamin. Of the sons of Judah: Athaiah the son of Uziah, son of Zechariah, son of Amariah, son of Shephatiah, son of Mahalalel, of the sons of Perez; 5 and Maaseiah the son of Baruch, son of Col-hozeh, son of Hazaiah, son of Adaiah, son of Joiarib, son of Zechariah, son of the Shilonite. 6 All the sons of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were 468 valiant men.

7 And these are the sons of Benjamin: Sallu the son of Meshullam, son of Joed, son of Pedaiiah, son of Kolaiah, son of Maaseiah, son of Ithiel, son of Jeshaiiah, 8 and his brothers, men of valor, 928.^[b] 9 Joel the son of Zichri was their overseer; and Judah the son of Hassenuah was second over the city.

10 Of the priests: Jedaiah the son of Joiarib, Jachin, 11 Seraiah the son of Hilkiyah, son of Meshullam, son of Zadok, son of Meraioth, son of Ahitub, ruler of the house of God, 12 and their brothers who did the work of the house, 822; and Adaiah the son of Jeroham, son of Pelaliah, son of Amzi, son of Zechariah, son of Pashhur, son of Malchijah, 13 and his brothers, heads of fathers' houses, 242; and Amashsai, the son of Azarel, son of Ahzai, son of Meshillemoth, son of Immer, 14 and their brothers, mighty men of valor, 128; their overseer was Zabdiel the son of Hagedolim.

15 And of the Levites: Shemaiah the son of Hasshub, son of Azrikam, son of Hashabiah, son of Bunni; 16 and Shabbethai and Jozabad, of the chiefs of the Levites, who were over the outside work of the house of God; 17 and Mattaniah the son of Mica, son of Zabdi, son of Asaph, who was the leader of the praise,^[c] who gave thanks, and Bakbukiah, the second among his brothers; and Abda the son of Shammua, son of Galal, son of Jeduthun. 18 All the Levites in the holy city were 284.

19 The gatekeepers, Akkub, Talmon and their brothers, who kept watch at the gates, were 172. 20 And the rest of Israel, and of the priests and the Levites, were in all the towns of Judah, every one in his inheritance. 21 But the temple servants lived on Ophel; and Ziha and Gishpa were over the temple servants.

22 The overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzzi the son of Bani, son of Hashabiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Mica, of the sons of Asaph, the singers, over the work of the house of God. 23 For there was a command from the king concerning them, and a fixed provision for the singers, as every day required. 24 And Pethahiah the son of Meshezabel, of the sons of Zerah the son of Judah, was at the king's side^[d] in all matters concerning the people.

Villages Outside Jerusalem

25 And as for the villages, with their fields, some of the people of Judah lived in Kiriath-arba and its villages, and in Dibon and its villages, and in Jekabzeel and its villages, 26 and in Jeshua and in Moladah and Beth-pelet, 27 in Hazar-shual, in Beersheba and its villages, 28 in Ziklag, in Meconah and its villages, 29 in En-rimmon, in Zorah, in Jarmuth, 30 Zanoah, Adullam, and their villages, Lachish and its fields, and Azekah and its villages. So they encamped from Beersheba to the Valley of Hinnom. 31 The people of Benjamin also lived from Geba onward, at Michmash, Aiya, Bethel and its villages, 32 Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, 33 Hazor, Ramah, Gittaim, 34 Hadid, Zeboim, Neballat, 35 Lod, and Ono, the valley of craftsmen. 36 And certain divisions of the Levites in Judah were assigned to Benjamin.

Priests and Levites

12 These are the priests and the Levites who came up with Zerubbabel the son of Shealtiel, and Jeshua: Seraiah, Jeremiah, Ezra, 2 Amariah, Malluch, Hattush, 3 Shecaniah, Rehum, Meremoth, 4 Iddo, Ginnethoi, Abijah, 5 Mijamin, Maadiah, Bilgah, 6 Shemaiah, Joiarib, Jedaiah, 7 Sallu, Amok, Hilkiyah, Jedaiah. These were the chiefs of the priests and of their brothers in the days of Jeshua.

8 And the Levites: Jeshua, Binnui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah, and Mattaniah, who with his brothers was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. 9 And Bakbukiah and Unni and their brothers stood opposite them in the service. 10 And Jeshua was the father of Joiakim, Joiakim the father of Eliashib, Eliashib the father of Joiada, 11 Joiada the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan the father of Jaddua.

12 And in the days of Joiakim were priests, heads of fathers' houses: of Seraiah, Meraiyah; of Jeremiah, Hananiah; 13 of Ezra, Meshullam; of Amariah, Jehohanan; 14 of Malluchi, Jonathan; of Shebaniah, Joseph; 15 of Harim, Adna; of Meraioth, Helkai; 16 of Iddo, Zechariah; of Ginnethon, Meshullam; 17 of Abijah, Zichri; of Miniamin, of Moadiah, Piltai; 18 of Bilgah, Shammua; of Shemaiah, Jehonathan; 19 of Joiarib, Mattenai; of Jedaiah, Uzzi; 20 of Sallai, Kallai; of Amok, Eber; 21 of Hilkiyah, Hashabiah; of Jedaiah, Nethanel.

22 In the days of Eliashib, Joiada, Johanan, and Jaddua, the Levites were recorded as heads of fathers' houses; so too were the priests in the reign of Darius the Persian. 23 As for the sons of Levi, their heads of fathers' houses were written in the Book of the Chronicles until the days of Johanan the son of Eliashib. 24 And the chiefs of the Levites: Hashabiah, Sherebiah, and Jeshua the son of Kadmiel, with their

brothers who stood opposite them, to praise and to give thanks, according to the commandment of David the man of God, watch by watch. 25 Mattaniah, Bakbukiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Talmon, and Akkub were gatekeepers standing guard at the storehouses of the gates. 26 These were in the days of Joiakim the son of Jeshua son of Jozadak, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra, the priest and scribe.

Dedication of the Wall

27 And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, harps, and lyres. 28 And the sons of the singers gathered together from the district surrounding Jerusalem and from the villages of the Netophathites; 29 also from Beth-gilgal and from the region of Geba and Azmaveth, for the singers had built for themselves villages around Jerusalem. 30 And the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and they purified the people and the gates and the wall.

31 Then I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks. One went to the south on the wall to the Dung Gate. 32 And after them went Hoshaiah and half of the leaders of Judah, 33 and Azariah, Ezra, Meshullam, 34 Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, and Jeremiah, 35 and certain of the priests' sons with trumpets: Zechariah the son of Jonathan, son of Shemaiah, son of Mattaniah, son of Micaiah, son of Zaccur, son of Asaph; 36 and his relatives, Shemaiah, Azarel, Milalai, Gilalai, Maai, Nethanel, Judah, and Hanani, with the musical instruments of David the man of God. And Ezra the scribe went before them. 37 At the Fountain Gate they went up straight before them by the stairs of the city of David, at the ascent of the wall, above the house of David, to the Water Gate on the east.

38 The other choir of those who gave thanks went to the north, and I followed them with half of the people, on the wall, above the Tower of the Ovens, to the Broad Wall, 39 and above the Gate of Ephraim, and by the Gate of Yeshanah,[e] and by the Fish Gate and the Tower of Hananel and the Tower of the Hundred, to the Sheep Gate; and they came to a halt at the Gate of the Guard. 40 So both choirs of those who gave thanks stood in the house of God, and I and half of the officials with me; 41 and the priests Eliakim, Maaseiah, Miniamin, Micaiah, Elioenai, Zechariah, and Hananiah, with trumpets; 42 and Maaseiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzzi, Jehohanan, Malchijah, Elam, and Ezer. And the singers sang with Jezrahiah as their leader. 43 And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.

Service at the Temple

44 On that day men were appointed over the storerooms, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the Law for the priests and for the Levites according to the fields of the towns, for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. 45 And they performed the service of their God and the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David and his son Solomon. 46 For long ago in the days of David and Asaph there were directors of the singers, and there were songs[ff] of praise and thanksgiving to God. 47 And all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah gave the daily portions for the singers and the gatekeepers; and they set apart that which was for the Levites; and the Levites set apart that which was for the sons of Aaron.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION?

In what ways recently have you seen God at work in your midst, either in your own life or in the life of someone around you? How have you seen God reveal His glory? How have you seen His hand in motion? Share a story.

SERMON RECAP

There is no joy like the joy of being used by God. Listen to and celebrate some of what God has done across all of McLean Bible Church:

- Since 2020, the Lord has raised leaders that serve 118 Church Groups, serving about 2,100 people.
- During the past year, we have celebrated 121 baptisms.
- Over the past three years, 1300 people have become formal members of this church.
- During the past year, 125 members have been sent on 16 short-term mission trips.
- Six (6) new long-term missionaries have been sent to Southeast Asia, Central Asia, and the Middle East.
- Over the past year, through financial partnership, \$560,000 has been given to support 42 global partners around the world. Close to 70 percent of those funds are supporting work among those with little to no access to the gospel!

These figures represent stories of real people who are being transformed by a real God.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does the passage say?

1. Read Nehemiah 11-12 aloud as a group. Before interpreting or applying the passage, share observations about it.
 - In general terms, who was involved in the events of this passage, and where did they live?
 - What occasion brought this diverse crowd together, from near and far? (Nehemiah 12:27)
 - In what ways did the participants celebrate the wall's dedication? What forms did the celebrations take?

- What levels of joy were reflected in the celebrations at the dedication? (Nehemiah 12:27, 31a, 43)
2. How would you explain or summarize today's scriptures in your own words?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?

1. What stands out to you most as you read and consider today's passage? Based on your observations, what is the main point God is making through this passage?
2. In broad terms, consider the significant circumstances in the immediate context of the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 8-10, 12:30; cf. Psalm 24:1-4)? Also, recall the attributes of God reflected in Nehemiah 9:6-15, 17, 19-21, 27-36. What contribution might each of the following contextual elements have made to the celebrations of Nehemiah 12:27-47? How might their combination have further enriched and elevated the gladness and thanksgiving in these celebrations?
 - The reading and understanding of the law (Nehemiah 8)
 - The confession of sin (Nehemiah 9)
 - The recommitment to God's Law (Nehemiah 10)
 - The purification of the priests, Levites, people, and the wall (Nehemiah 12:30)
 - The recognition and remembrance of the Lord's faithfulness (Nehemiah 9:6-15, 17, 19-21, 27-36)

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

1. In addition to the ways already noted during the 'icebreaker' discussion and this week's sermon, how have you seen the Lord's hand at work, locally and/or globally, specifically in and through McLean Bible Church (MBC)? How about in your Church Group? With each testimony given, take time as a group to observe the ways in which, in the story, the Lord demonstrated--
 - His faithfulness and trustworthiness
 - His authority and transformational power
 - His encouragement and edification of His church
 - His other visible fruit (if applicable)
2. Reread Nehemiah 8:9-12. What feeds your personal joy in the Lord? In other words, what reliably prompts or provokes your remembrance and enjoyment of the Lord and His holiness? Are there any ways you can continually remind yourself (or each other) about how the Lord has faithfully worked in the past?
3. On the other hand, what diminishes or distracts you from your remembrance and enjoyment of the Lord and your recognition of His holiness? How might you minimize or eliminate these distractions?
4. Going forward, how might you cultivate the propensity to continuously look for, observe, and rejoice in the Lord's everlasting presence and work, in your own life and in the stories and lives of others? How might you more instinctively recognize and express thanksgiving for His faithfulness to His character, purposes, and work? And how might you encourage this disposition in others?

LEADER NOTES

SUMMER CAMP | Registration is now open for MBC summer camps! Check out mcleanbible.org/events for more information and to register.

- High School Camp - Watermarks Camp from July 13-17
- Middle School Camp - NorthBay Adventure Camp from August 1-4
- Kid's Quest Camp - Skycroft Conference Center from August 5-9