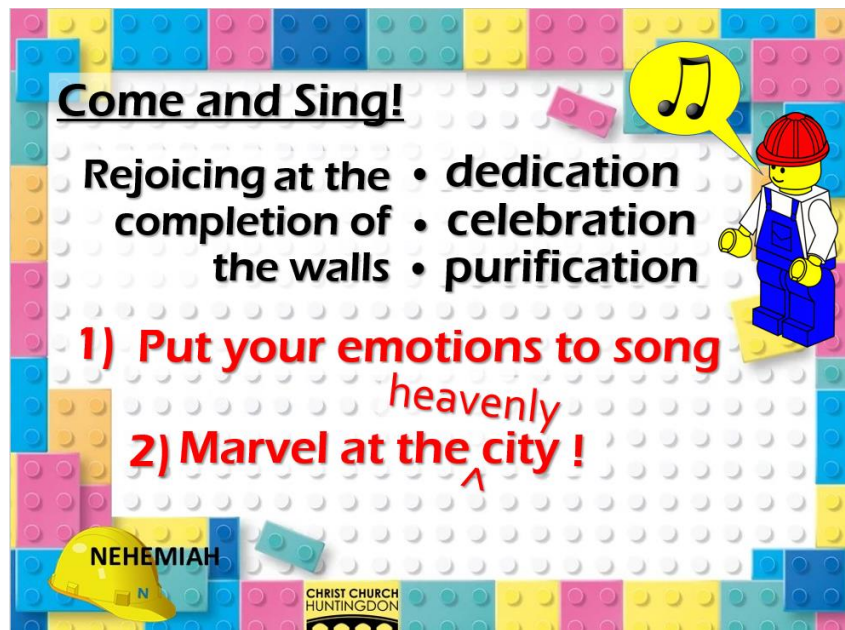


Dig Deeper into Nehemiah 11-12 for personal study and Life Groups...



Dig Deeper: Here are some questions to think more deeply about Nehemiah 12:27-47 for yourself or in small (zoom!) groups this week... For those who have time on their hands and want to dig even deeper into the strange lists earlier in these chapters, turn to page 2. There's also an overview of these chapters for you to read in your own time.

1. How would you describe the tone of this section?
2. The note of purification (v30) leads us to the cross where Jesus made the sacrifice to cleanse us from our sins (1 John 1:9). Why do even our most joyful of days need purification? What implications does this have for you at the moment?
3. If you were to write a song or poem about how you are feeling right now (assuming you had those gifts), what kind of tune (or imagery) would you use?
4. What effect do you think meditating on heaven "surveying the heavenly Jerusalem" would have you on your outlook? How can you do it?
5. (If time). We didn't get to v44-47 in the sermon, but we see the people making contributions to the Temple, and taking seriously the corporate service of God. What might the equivalent for us be in this time of limited interaction?

Resources...

- Click [here](#) for a lovely map of Jerusalem in Nehemiah's day to get your head around the different gates! Sign up [here](#) for 30 days free in the ESV study Bible (where this picture is from).
- "[Be careful what you sing about](#)" - 3 mins by Keith Getty about the lady behind "All things bright and beautiful".
- Beautifully produced [30 min video](#) responding to the Coronavirus by Aussie pastor friend mentioned in the sermon who has been thinking about heaven more. See last 3 mins for teaching about Revelation 21. The Boathouse Church, Putney.

Overview of the second half of the book (rebuilding the people)....

Ch 8: the people gather to “Open the Book” and joyfully worship God with **feasting**.

Ch9-10: The Israelites gather for another half day of worship, this time with **fasting**. The Levites (priestly family) lead the people in a long prayer reviewing God’s dealings with the people over time, despite their sin. They recommit to God with a binding agreement to recommit to God’s ways.

Ch 11-12: Nehemiah lists the people and priests who have settled in the city. As the city walls are officially dedicated Nehemiah calls together two choirs to celebrate and give thanks. It is possible that the dedication of the wall is a “flashback” and though recorded here happened before the events of chapter 11.

Ch 13: A disappointing ending to the book in some ways, as Nehemiah has to reform ways that have slipped since the people recommitted themselves to God.

Dig even Deeper....

“All Scripture is God breathed” (2 Tim 3:16) and therefore incredibly relevant, even strange lists of old, hard to pronounce names from the Old Testament (aren’t you glad you didn’t have to read out this reading in church?!). Some notes and **application questions in red for “life in lockdown”....**

11:1-36 Nehemiah reviews the people living in the city (a mix of leaders, volunteers and those chosen by lot), others were in the villages nearby. Mainly they are from the 3 key “remnant” southern tribes of Judah, Benjamin and Levi (others were dissipated by the first Assyrian exile of 722BC and absorbed into the “Samaritans”). v6 Men of standing (=valiant men) suggests that they still need a strong defence force- they are still in “lockdown” and facing potential threats (just like we are)!

12:1-26 Nehemiah registers the Priests & Levites. We start (v1-7) with a list of the original 22 (out of 24) heads of the Levites (1 Chron 24: 7-19) when they first came out of exile. These names stand as “house captains” (cf Harry Potter!) and compare well with lists in Neh 10:2-8. Then there’s the first generation of Levites at the start of the exile (v8-9), The high priestly family (v10-11), the heads of the second generation (v12-21), and the family heads in the times of various high priests.

Some lessons for today:

- **It’s an ordered and active society.** There are family heads, people with tasks and roles. The 22 names in 12:1-7 are spoken of as the “rota” of priests, just like we have a rota at church! **What is your role and task under God at home and at church during these strange lockdown days?**
- **It’s a worshipful society.** So much so that 10:23, the singing is under the King’s command, and the Temple work must continue. **Are you prioritising personal worship (your own “quiet time” with God) & corporate worship (Sunday livestream and zoom lifegroups) as much as you could?**
- **It’s a society where real people in history count.** Even little people whose names might normally be lost in history are registered people¹ **How does this encourage you that you matter, at a time of greater isolation and anonymity?!**

Final encouragement! This is true history! 12:22 talks of *Johanan*. On [Wikipedia](#) we read that there is evidence from a coin and a papyrus (scroll), the latter found on the Elephantine fortress in the Nile that record his name during the time of Darius the Persian- that matches up with the timeframe suggested here! Cool, if slightly geeky! Let me know if you want more info! Don’t worry if not!!!

¹ Derek Kidner, page 133 “If history writing inevitably distorts reality by its concentration on outstanding people and on the forces of change, here is something to redress the balance”.