

**Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia**

**Bible Study - August 25, 2022**

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**Ten Steps to Spiritual Renewal**

**Part VII - Step 7**

**Title: "Offering Yourself For Service"**

**Scripture Reference" Nehemiah 11:1-36**

In this lesson we learn that every follower of Christ has an important job to fulfill.

### **Outline**

In God's economy, there are no unimportant jobs - only important ones. Saying "Here am I! Send me" is precious in God's sight.

Here is the outline we will cover in this lesson:

#### **I. The Process Involved in Repopulating Jerusalem**

- A. They instituted a Draft
- B. They asked for Volunteers

#### **II. The People Involved in Repopulating Jerusalem**

- A. The Groups
- B. The Words for the Groups

#### **III. The Principles That Emerge**

- A. Necessity, Not Notoriety, is the Rule of the Body
- B. Performance, Not Preeminence, Is the Basis of Reward
- C. It is a Privilege to Be Drafted; It's Even More Precious To Volunteer

## Overview

The essence of the Christian life is summarized by Paul in 2 Corinthians 5:7 - "For we walk by faith, not by sight."

Even in the "low times" in our lives when it seems like there is no evidence of God at work in our circumstances, our responsibility is to continue to walk by faith, to live out of obedience to what we know God wants us to do.

I believe that you are aware that there are seasons of abundance and dryness in the Christian life, seasons in the work God has called us to do.

In some seasons, there is more evident blessings than in others, but in all seasons, the work goes on.

No doubt there were many in the Jewish Community in Nehemiah's day who wondered whether God had forgotten them. The city of Jerusalem seemed to lie dormant with no evidence of God's blessings.

The Walls of the city had lain in piles of rubble for 160 years before they were rebuilt by Nehemiah. Before he rebuilt the wall, the temple was rebuilt by Zerubbabel. Prior to the work of these men, it might have appeared that God had abandoned Mt. Zion and His sacred city.

God gave Nehemiah a vision for rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. But once the temple and the wall were in place, we have discovered that there was another kind of building that remained: spiritual building - renewing the hearts and minds of God's people.

God used Ezra and Nehemiah to challenge the people to renew their commitment to God and His covenant requirements.

Nehemiah 7-11 is a parenthetical part of the book where some of the problems associated with spiritual renewal were dealt with. One of the

problems was that, even though the temple and the wall had been rebuilt, no one wanted to live in Jerusalem to defend it.

There was great fear among the people that Jerusalem might come under attack again and those living in the city might be killed - as it had happened previously at the hands of the Babylonians.

As a result, Nehemiah appointed two men - his brother Hanani, and Hananiah, to be in charge of fortifying the city, building up the population within its walls (Nehemiah 7:1-3).

The challenge was great and the threat of enemies who might attack Jerusalem was ever-present, so Nehemiah instructed the two men not to open the city gates until noon.

This was the setting and background for the story as we look at Nehemiah 11 - the repopulating of the city of Jerusalem.

## **I. The Process Involved In Repopulating Jerusalem**

A. Towns in Israel were small during this period -perhaps less than a dozen acres in size. Jerusalem was larger but very compactly built on the top of a mountain ridge for purposes of defense.

**Comment:** Based on the physical size and geographical layout of Jerusalem, this gives us more insight into the words of David in Psalm 122:3 which says - "Jerusalem is builded as a city that is compact together."

B. Chapter 11 opens with the leaders of the people casting lots to select 10 percent of the population to become residents of Jerusalem, the other 90 percent remaining in their towns, scattered throughout the land.

## 1. They Instituted a Draft

- a. The problem they faced then was not unlike the problems faced by many cities today: Most people want to live in the country.
- b. But the rebuilt city of Jerusalem needed inhabitants in order to build it up again as the major city in Israel.
- c. As a result, they first instituted a draft - or the casting of "lots" (v 1) - to select "one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem the holy city."

**Comment:** Notice the connection of "lots" with our modern term "lottery." [The Israelites believed that God made His will known through casting of lots (see Acts 1:12-26)].

- d. Ten percent of the population of Jews was "drafted" to inhabit the newly - walled city of Jerusalem.

## 2. They Asked for Volunteers

- a. In addition to those chosen, the leaders asked for volunteers: "And the people blessed all the men, that, willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem (v2).

### Comments:

- 1) Notice the words "willingly offered" in verse 2. There was something inside this group that compelled them to willingly dwell at Jerusalem.
- 2) Jerusalem had been the epicenter of life in Israel for several centuries, and these volunteers, as I said, felt compelled to

relocate to the newly rebuilt city.

**Notes:**

- 1) Many times, when we come to a long list of names in the Bible, we may tend to dread reading through the list. However, their importance should not be overlooked.
- 2) The list of names in Nehemiah 11 were real people, with hope and desires and God knows the name of every person who has moved back into the city.
- 3) God also knows those who serve Him. Do you remember this song? - "He Knows My Name"? God knows **your** name and He knows you!!

**II. The People Involved in Repopulating Jerusalem**

A. Not only are the names of individuals and families mentioned, but descriptions are given of the various groups that moved into Jerusalem.

**1. The Groups**

- a. There are five groups, five categories of individuals mentioned. The first group is made up of the draftees and volunteers previously mentioned above.
- b. The second group was those who did the work in the temple.
  - (1) Eight-hundred twenty-two (822) priests and other servants who carried out the continual ministrations of sacrifice and worship in the temple (Vv 10-12).

- c. The third group (Vv 15-16) took care of affairs outside the temple: civil affairs, public service, and running the city.

**Comment:** Remember that civil and religious affairs were all under the same heading. There was no separation of church and state, and no king.

- d. Fourth was Mattaniah (Nehemiah 11:17) who "was the principal (i.e., leader) to begin the thanksgiving in prayer."
- e. The final group is mentioned in v22: Uzzi, the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Micha. Of the sons of Asaph, the singers were over the business of the house of God.

## **B. The Words for the Groups**

1. Here are the descriptive terms that applied to each of the groups.

**Comment:** These terms are not specifically listed in the 11<sup>th</sup> Chapter, but they may be applied to those who seek to serve the Lord today.

- **Occupation:** These were the ones who moved back to occupy the city of Jerusalem, to be a godly presence in the city.
- **Dedication:** These were dedicated to doing the work in the temple. They were focused on that one area of life in Jerusalem.
- **Delegation:** These had "oversight" of the business outside of the house of God. They were city managers, responsible for a broad range of services within the city walls of Jerusalem.
- **Consecration:** Prayer and thanksgiving were in this group's job description. They led the people in the sacrifice of

praises (Hebrews 13:15), the top priority of all who would worship God.

- **Celebration:** The Levites were in charge of Israel's spiritual life; they were the pastors of the people, leading them into truth, worship, and celebration.

**Note:** We can apply those five descriptive terms to ministry in the body of Christ today.

C. **Occupiers** are the faithful members of the body, who show up whenever and however, there is work to be done.

D. The **Dedicated ones** take their giftedness and calling from God seriously.

E. **Delegators** are those with the gift of administration and leadership who can organize things and people to accomplish God's goals.

F. **Consecrated** ones spend time interceding for the work of God so that it is accomplished in a spiritual, not a fleshly manner.

G. **Celebrators** - those who inspire the body of believers to lift up praise and worship to God.

//Do you see where you fit in that list?//

H. Every Christian fits in the body of Christ somewhere. God has not saved you to do nothing! If you don't see yourself in one of the areas in that list, you may have another calling from God all together.

I. Never-the-less, every believer, regardless of what they have been gifted and called to do, the goal is the same: the unity of God's people to accomplish God's work. Consider 1 Corinthians 12:12-25.

### **III. The principles That Emerge**

Whether in Jerusalem or your Local church, here are three principals that reflect eternal truth when accomplishing God's work:

#### **Necessity, Not Notoriety, Is the Rule of the Body**

- A. It does not matter if we are famous or exalted for what we do when serving Christ. It only matters that we are necessary.
- B. We were saved "for good works, which God hath before ordained that we should walk in them." (**Ephesians 2:10**).

**Point:** You are not necessary because you are famous; you are necessary because you are important to the unity of the body.

**Question:** Does anyone remember the following statement that I have made on many previous occasions: "Within the body of Christ, there are no big "I's" or little "u's, but everybody is somebody in Christ Jesus."?

#### **Performance, Not Preeminence, Is the Basis of Reward**

- A. Many of the names that appear in Nehemiah Chapter 11 are not found anywhere else in Scripture. Most of the people mentioned were not famous on earth. But they were noteworthy to God!
- B. God knew their names, not because they were preeminent in Israel, but because they were faithful and willing to do a job for Him.
- C. Because of this, God will remember and reward followers of Christ for the same reason.

## It is a Privilege to Be Drafted; It is Even More Precious to Volunteer

- A. The prophet Isaiah stepped forward and said to God - "Here am I! Send me." (Isaiah 6:8).
- B. The ones in Jerusalem "who were drafted" or chosen by lot, were fortunate and blessed. It was a privilege to be able to move back into the city of God on earth.
- C. But there were others who said, "Here and I! Send me." Those volunteers who see a need in the body of Christ and raise their hand without being asked, reflect a measure of discernment and grace that I believe is precious in God's sight.
- D. Are you willing to say yes to the work of the Lord? Will you with sincerity say - "Here and I! Send me"?
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It is once again interactive time. Please complete the passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. Each passage has been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"Then saith he unto his disciples, The \_\_\_\_\_ truly is \_\_\_\_\_, but the \_\_\_\_\_ are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the \_\_\_\_\_, that he will send forth \_\_\_\_\_ into his \_\_\_\_\_."

[Matthew 9:37-38]

"O Lord, truly I am thy \_\_\_\_\_; I am thy \_\_\_\_\_, and the son of thine handmaid: thou hast \_\_\_\_\_ my bonds. I will offer to thee the \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_, and will call upon the name of the \_\_\_\_\_."

[Psalm 116:16-17]

"Deal with thy \_\_\_\_\_ according unto thy \_\_\_\_\_, and teach me thy \_\_\_\_\_. I am thy \_\_\_\_\_; give me \_\_\_\_\_, that I may know thy \_\_\_\_\_."

[Psalm 119:124-125]

"Let this \_\_\_\_\_ be in you, which was also in \_\_\_\_\_: Who, being in the form of God, \_\_\_\_\_ it not \_\_\_\_\_ to be equal with God: But made \_\_\_\_\_ of no \_\_\_\_\_, and took upon him the form of a \_\_\_\_\_, and was made in the \_\_\_\_\_ of men. And being found in \_\_\_\_\_ as a man, he \_\_\_\_\_ himself, and became \_\_\_\_\_ unto death, even the death of the cross. Wherefore God also hath \_\_\_\_\_ him, and given him a name which is \_\_\_\_\_ every name: That at the name of \_\_\_\_\_ every \_\_\_\_\_ should \_\_\_\_\_, of things in \_\_\_\_\_, and things in earth; and things under the earth. And that \_\_\_\_\_ tongue should \_\_\_\_\_ that Jesus Christ is \_\_\_\_\_, to the \_\_\_\_\_ of God the Father."

[Philippians 2:5-11]

**Note:** This great portion of Scripture contains what is known as the *Kenosis* passage, specifically Philippians 2:7. The Greek word *Kenosis* means "to empty out." Although Jesus was absolutely "full" of deity

(i.e., **fully God**), He emptied Himself only of certain aspects of His prerogatives of deity, not of His deity itself. He did this, temporarily, taking on the form of a servant, and became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross.

I pray that this lesson has been a blessing to you, and you have been enlightened, informed, and encouraged.

Jude 3

Pastor Austin