

The Prayer and Passion of a Broken Heart

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[0 : 00] miracle Thank you.

Thank you.

All right, if you have your Bible, go to Nehemiah chapter 1. Nehemiah chapter 1 is where we're going to be this evening. We started a brand new series last week entitled Restored.

And this really is a series of hope, a message of hope that no matter how much ruin, how much devastation or destruction you see around you, and we see a lot around us.

Amen? God is the God who restores. He's the one that heals. He's the one that can bring things back together. And that really is the story of Nehemiah.

[2 : 07] If you missed last week, go back. You can watch the message online. We essentially, as we typically do when we start a new series, is kind of place the book in its historical context and give a little bit of an overview of how it fits within the biblical narrative.

So we talked about Nehemiah as it relates to the overall story of Israel. I talked a little bit about Nehemiah's story itself, how his story relates to our story, and ultimately is a part of the gospel story, God's redemptive story that he's telling throughout the Old Testament, leading us to Jesus.

Well, now we're going to kind of pick up a little bit more of the details here of the book. And we're going to begin at verse 4 and read down through the end of the chapter. And so if you have your Bibles, I'll invite you to please stand if you're able to do so as we honor the reading of God's Word.

Nehemiah chapter 1, beginning at verse 4, says, As soon as I heard these words, that is the words about the destruction that still remains in Jerusalem, I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

And I said, O Lord, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments.

[3 : 31] Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant, that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel, your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you.

Even I and my father's house have sinned. We've acted very corruptly against you, have not kept the commandments, the statutes and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses.

Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses saying, If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples. But if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to a place that I have chosen and to make my name dwell there.

They are your servants, your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and your strong hand. O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name and give success to your servant today.

Grant him mercy in the sight of this man. Now I, that is Nehemiah, was a cupbearer to the king. Would you pray with me tonight? Father, thank you for this time in your word this evening.

[4 : 54] I really do believe, I think every week you talk to us, you speak to us through your word. But I believe tonight that there's a question that you want us to grapple with.

Lord, you want to speak into all of our lives. And I pray that you would bring conviction and clarity as to what your will is. And I pray this in Jesus' name. And God's people said, Amen.

Amen. You can be seated. Faith family never underestimate the impact of a single life. That is certainly the legacy of Nicholas Winton.

Nicholas was a British man that lived during World War II, during the German invasion of Eastern Europe. On one particular occasion, Nicholas was scheduled to go on a skiing trip when his friend contacted him and said, I plead with you to cancel your trip and come join me in Prague.

At that particular time, the city was rapidly filling with people who were trying to escape the invasion of the Nazis. Refugees were living in horrible conditions.

[6 : 06] And with winter quickly approaching, many people wondered how they would even survive. When Nicholas got to Prague, he was horrified by the conditions that he observed.

But there was one particular thing among many things that bothered him. There was one thing more than anything else that broke his heart.

It was hundreds of children who would likely never be given a chance at life. And in that very moment, Nicholas knew something had to be done.

And so he began to work tireless hours, endless hours from a hotel room, organizing and operating a rescue mission known as the Czech Kindertransport.

Despite enormous organizational and administrative challenges, from March to August of 1939, he organized a total of eight trains carrying 669 children, most of whom were Jewish, from Prague to Britain.

[7 : 22] In fact, there in Britain, the children would be introduced to their new adopting family and they would now be given a chance at life.

In other words, he essentially saved the lives of these kids. In fact, even today, if you go to Liverpool Station in London, you will see a statue there honoring his legacy.

Now, what's amazing was not only the magnitude of the impact and accomplishment that he had, what was also amazing, Faith Family, is for years, he never spoke a word about what he did.

Very few people even knew. In fact, it wasn't until 1988 that his wife was going through the attic and she found a scrapbook with all the names and photographs and information about these children that he had saved.

As a result of this, he was invited to attend a television show called That's Life. And while he was sitting in the audience, he was introduced to one of the children that he had saved so many years ago.

[8 : 34] Now, obviously, she was an adult. Then, in what has become a very iconic moment, the host of the show asked this question, Is there anyone else here tonight who owes their life to Nicholas Winton?

Nicholas had no idea what was about to happen next. Can I ask, is there anyone in our audience tonight who owes their life to Nicholas Winton?

If so, could you stand up, please? Thank you. Thank you.

More than two dozen people stood to their feet to express their gratitude to a man who had saved their life.

All because almost 50 years earlier, there was a situation that broke his heart.

[10 : 21] Faith family, have you ever seen something, experienced something, or become aware of something, and your immediate reaction was, this has to change.

Something has to be done. Because whatever it was that you saw, whatever it was that you experienced, broke your heart. You saw someone in trouble, and you knew, I've got to help.

You saw a job that needed to be done, and you knew you had to step in. Maybe you saw a ministry or a charity that was doing a great work, and you just had to get involved.

Maybe it was a need that wasn't being met, and you knew that you had to financially give. Anybody with me tonight? Whatever it was, whatever that person was, or that situation was, it broke your heart in such a way that you knew you had to do something.

Amen? That is precisely what happens for Nehemiah here in Nehemiah chapter 1. Look again, beginning at verse 3. It says, They said to me, specifically his brother, that the remnant there in the province who survived the exile is in great trouble and shame.

[11 : 40] The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire. And as soon as I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

When Nehemiah hears of the ruin that remains in Jerusalem, it breaks his heart. It devastates him to hear this news.

And if you remember from last week, the context here is in 586 B.C. The Babylonians take Judah captive. They take them out of their homeland into exile, into Babylon.

And there they remain until 539 B.C. when the Persian Empire will conquer the Babylonians. And if you remember, the Persians had a very different policy on how to handle captives.

They believed if you let them go back to their homeland, let them worship freely, that in return they will be loyal to you. And so that's what the Persian Empire did.

[12 : 52] They begin to allow these exiles to go home. The problem is, this rebuilding effort has not been successful. By the time you get to Nehemiah, about over 100 years has passed since the first wave of exiles have gone in, and it's still in ruin.

It's still in rubble. There's still devastation. Now how many of you know of somebody in your life that never completes a project? Anybody, like, don't necessarily point to them, but you know somebody, like, they just can't complete a project.

You know, they start to mow the yard, but they never actually finish mowing the yard. Anybody got that kid or had that kid when they were young, they would start to clean their room, and then they would always get distracted with something else.

Maybe you still have that basement project that's been unfinished for years. Now be honest, how many of you, if you know someone like that, they drive you insane?

Anybody? You with me? Right? Like, you can't stand the fact that they never finish a project, because you know that it's a little bit embarrassing and even disgraceful to start projects and never finish them.

[14 : 07] Some of you might say, well, I don't see what the big deal is about that. I mean, unfinished projects happen all the time. There's no reason to be a big crybaby like Nehemiah and cry just because this thing's not finished yet.

Well, that's because you don't understand the ancient Near Eastern mindset. I want to bring you in to why Nehemiah is so brokenhearted. Why is he so upset when he hears that even after years, there's still ruin and destruction in Jerusalem?

The reason why it bothers him so much is this. Notice it on the screen. The ancient Near Eastern mindset was that powerful nations equaled powerful gods.

In other words, the more powerful your nation was, your god or gods must therefore be greater than everyone else's. Are you with me?

Say yes. In fact, if you remember in our study through the book of Exodus, it was believed that the Egyptian gods must be more powerful than Yahweh because Israel was enslaved to Egypt.

[15 : 19] And it was through the plagues. Do you remember this? We studied this very thoroughly. That through the plagues, what did God demonstrate? God demonstrated His power and authority and sovereignty over the Egyptian gods.

Do you remember that? Same thing even at Mount Carmel with Elijah when he brings fire down. So here, I'm saying all that to say this. To give you an idea of why Nehemiah is so emotional about this.

Why this bothers him so much. Why it breaks his heart. It's because when he hears that hundreds of years later, Jerusalem is still in ruins, he doesn't find that just shameful and disgraceful that Israel has been unable to finish the project.

He recognizes this as a disgrace and shame to the greatness and glory of God.

He realizes that this ruin is a reflection to all the other nations as to the sovereignty and power of Yahweh.

[16 : 26] And listen, faith family, that broke his heart. It tore him up. It made him weep for days.

The very idea that God's glory and God's greatness would be disgraced among the nations. And like Nicholas Winton, Nehemiah knew in that moment something's got to be done.

This cannot be. Somebody's got to do something and that somebody is me. And what does Nehemiah do? Well, the text tells us he puts together a strategic plan with flawless arguments, amazing PowerPoint slides, and he gives the most persuasive presentation to the king.

Isn't that what Nehemiah does? That's not what Nehemiah does. What is the first thing Nehemiah does when he hears of this news and his heart is broken by it?

Nehemiah prays. And I think this is really insightful for us that Nehemiah understands something that's very important when it comes to the process of restoration.

[17 : 34] Are you ready, faith family? Here it is. Here it is. You need to get on your knees before you roll up your sleeves. You need to get on your knees before you roll up your sleeves.

That is, you need to pray before you plan. You need to worship before you get to work. You need to notice this. You need to talk to God before taking action for God.

And all God's people said? Amen. Some of us, let's be honest, are ready, fire, aim. Right? That's how we approach things. Not Nehemiah. Nehemiah understood before I get involved, before I take action, I need to spend some time alone with God.

In fact, His plan that's going to come out of this comes through a season of prayer. Let's look quickly here at Nehemiah's prayer that we're privileged to have a record of in verse 5.

He says, Nehemiah's prayer starts with the supremacy of God.

[18 : 54] It starts with the covenant faithfulness of God. He reflects here on the fact that God is great and that God is awesome.

And let's be honest. Haven't we lost the meaning of the word awesome? Right? Hasn't our culture kind of taken that word and hijacked it? In fact, the word awesome means to inspire awe or fear or dread.

But we've kind of made it a slang word for something that's hip or cool. And this started back in about the 1980s when that word awesome became used really as something far more common.

Notice, for example, this 1981 automobile commercial. Here it comes. A beautiful new beast prowling the highways making the competition very nervous.

The 1981 Datsun 280ZX. So luxurious there are virtually no options. Consummate luxury package like a book. The Datsun 280ZX.

[20 : 01] Even the competition has a word for it. Awesome. Datsun, we are driven. To give you luxury in the fast lane. Faith family, a Datsun is not awesome.

Can I get an amen? That is not awesome. That does not inspire awe, fear, and dread. But that's how we use the term.

Can we just be really clear on this tonight, faith family? Only God is awesome. Only God is the one that inspires awe and righteous fear in His presence.

And that's where Nehemiah goes first. Why? Notice this on the screen. Because great works for God start with a great vision of God.

Amen? Great works for God start with a great vision of God. And so Nehemiah starts with the supremacy, the awesomeness, the greatness of God.

[21 : 08] Keep going. Verse 6. Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night.

He prayed without ceasing. For the people of Israel, your servants confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. And notice this. Even I and my father's house have sinned.

The second category, if you will, of Nehemiah's prayer is he recognizes the sinfulness of Israel. In fact, this takes place from verse 6 all the way through verse 9 where Nehemiah confesses Israel's rebellion that led to the destruction of Israel in the first place.

Nehemiah even recognizes his own. And this is what's interesting to me is Nehemiah wasn't even one of the exiles. The exile took place before him.

He wasn't even a part of the group that rebelled against God and brought on the exile in the first place. And yet, Nehemiah recognizes the same thing Isaiah recognizes when Isaiah sees the glory of God.

[22 : 18] Remember what Isaiah says? He's like, I am a man of unclean lips and I live among a people of unclean lips. Nehemiah is basically recognizing before God that all have sinned and fallen short of his glory.

That there are none righteous, no, not one, even not Nehemiah. So he recognizes God's supremacy and then he confesses Israel's sinfulness.

Notice verse 10. They are your servants and your people whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. The third thing is he articulates here the salvation of God.

He recalls that God is the one who is the ultimate redeemer of Israel. This is great gospel truth, isn't it? Notice it on the screen. That Israel is a nation that has sinned, but God is still the God that saves.

God is still the God that saves. And so even though Israel is a sinful nation, God is a saving God. Aren't you thankful tonight that though our sins are many, His mercy is more?

[23 : 32] And that's what Nehemiah is praying here. God, You are great, You are awesome, and we are sinful, and yet You are the one who has redeemed us. You are our Savior.

And then verse 11. He says, Lord, let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, to the prayer of Your servants who delight to fear Your name. Give success to Your servant today and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.

And so now, Nehemiah, listen, listen, this is so opposite of how we pray. And I think it's why it's worth taking some time to look at his prayer. Why? Most all of our prayers are supplication.

Amen? I want this, and I need this, and heal them, and do that, and it's all about what we want. Listen, listen. In all of the verses devoted to Nehemiah's prayer, only one of them is a request.

His request is, would You give me Your servant mercy as I go before Artaxerxes? Jesus. That's His ultimate supplication, but He recognizes before we get to my needs or my wants or my desires, I need to first recognize the greatness of God, the sinfulness of my life and all of human life, and the fact that God is the one that saves and restores and heals, and now in light of all of that, Lord, here's my request.

[25 : 06] Here's what I'm asking of you to do. And so then, Nehemiah brings this request before God that He would grant him favor in the sight of the king.

That's Nehemiah's prayer. Let me give you just a few brief observations of this prayer, and then we'll kind of dig into the main big idea that we'll finish up with. First is, Nehemiah's prayer is a perfect example of praying the Bible.

Nehemiah's prayer is a perfect example of praying the Bible. My guess is most of you didn't recognize this, and that's okay, but I want to draw it out to you.

I want to point it out to you. Nehemiah's prayer is pretty much plagiarism from Daniel. In fact, chapter 1, verse 5 is a direct quote from Daniel's prayer in Daniel 9.

In Daniel 9, I say I love this to connect the dots, Daniel 9's prayer is actually a quote of Jeremiah's prophecy that the exile would last 70 years.

[26 : 19] And Jeremiah got the idea that the exiles would return from Deuteronomy 30. Are you with me? Nehemiah prays Daniel's prayer. Daniel prays Nehemiah's prophecy.

Nehemiah's prophecy comes from Deuteronomy 30. In other words, they're all quoting Bible. They all know their Bibles. This is a great example of the Old Testament using the Old Testament.

And you say, what does it mean for us? It means something very important to us. Here it is. Faith family, when you don't have the words to pray, pray God's Word.

When you don't have the words to pray, pray Scripture. Pray God's Word. Take the prayers that are in the Bible and pray them to God.

Oh, this is such a great example of praying the Bible, of a man who knows his Bible and returns that truth to the Lord in prayer.

[27 : 21] Here's a second observation. is that Nehemiah's prayer is a perfect example of a biblical prayer. Now hang with me. I'm not repeating my first observation.

The first observation is that his prayer was full of biblical content. My observation here is not only is his prayer full of biblical content, but it follows the model the Bible gives us in our prayers.

Let me just use, for example, the Lord's Prayer. How many of you, show of hands, have ever heard the Lord's Prayer? My guess every hand is going up. My guess is most of you probably have the Lord's Prayer memorized.

And you remember that Jesus gave what we call the Lord's Prayer as a model prayer. He didn't say, pray this. He said, pray like this.

This is a model. It's a way in which you can think about how to structure your prayers. And it's the same thing. Lean in here. The supremacy of God, hallowed be your name.

[28 : 28] The sinfulness of humanity, forgive us our trespasses. The salvation of God, deliver us from evil.

Supplication, our needs and requests, give us this day our what? Daily bread. In other words, Nehemiah's prayer models the Lord's Prayer before Jesus ever gave us the Lord's Prayer.

So not only does he pray biblical content, he prays a prayer that follows a biblical pattern. Namely, the greatness of God, the sinfulness of man, the salvation of God.

And then what do we need? What's on our heart? What request do we want to bring before the Lord? The third and final observation of Nehemiah's prayer here is that Nehemiah's prayer is a perfect example of a mature prayer.

Not only praying the Bible, not only a biblical prayer, but a mature prayer. And I've got to be careful on this one because I'm really not trying to discourage anyone here at all.

[29 : 37] But we often talk about prayer as simply talking to God. Right? You've heard that. Well, prayer is just talking to God. And there's certainly some truth in that. Yeah, we ought to feel the ability to just go and talk to God.

Moses, for example, talked to God as a friend. So don't misunderstand what I'm saying. Listen to me. I'm not suggesting a formulaic or some type of liturgical prayer.

That's not what I'm advocating for. What I am advocating for is this. If the content of our prayers never goes deeper than Aunt Betty's upcoming surgery for her big toe, there needs to be cause for concern in your prayer life.

And I'm just going to let that sit there. There ought to be a growth in depth of our prayer life.

If all our prayer is just the occasional request, and there's never really any time meditating on the greatness and glory of God, and there's never really any time thinking about His redemptive work in our life and what He has done throughout redemptive history, then we could learn, couldn't we, from Nehemiah's prayer to grow in maturity in our prayer life.

[31 : 08] Are you with me? Are you understanding what I'm saying and what I'm not saying? Because what I'm not saying is you get done praying and I'm with you and I'm like, I give it a B+. But you could...

I'm not suggesting that kind of criticism towards prayer. I'm just saying Nehemiah's prayer is a perfect example of a mature prayer.

Someone who comes to God more than just, I got a quick request and I need your help. He's a godly man who's learned to pray godly prayers.

Now, what's the big point? What's the main idea? Those were just observations. Free and don't go against my time. Nehemiah understood something very important.

I think this is the big idea from the passage and it's this. Reflection needs to precede restoration. That reflection and prayer needs to precede restoration.

[32 : 09] It's what I said earlier. That you really need to get on your knees and pray before you roll up your sleeves and plan. You really need to get on your knees in worship before you roll up your sleeves and work.

There's going to come a time for planning and action but not before time with God.

Amen? Is that helpful to you? Is that encouraging to you? I hope so. And so now, how are we to apply this? If that's, I think, the main idea or the big takeaway, how do we then apply this to our broken heart?

If this gives us some insight as to Nehemiah's broken heart and how he responded, what does this mean for ours? I told you last week that there are two primary objectives that I have for this series.

There's more than that but two primary ones. Personally, I want this series to encourage you that God restores from ruin. That no matter what you have gone through in your life that has been devastating or has been left in destruction or ruin that God restores.

[33 : 19] That God rebuilds. He heals. And He takes us into new seasons of restoration. Secondly, is I want us as a church to realize that ministry is something that we are all called to do together.

We're going to see this even more as we go through Nehemiah that this is a work that God uses Nehemiah to bring everybody together. Nehemiah doesn't go and do all the work himself.

He's a part of leading people to do the work together. So I want to take those two categories, those two objectives and then apply what we're learning here in Nehemiah 1. Here's the first.

I'm going to start with the congregational application. And if you've zoned out, what do you do? Thank you so much for zoning back in. Because I really do want to take a moment and just plead with you.

I sincerely ask you to take a few moments and give this thought to really take some time and consider this question. Faith family, what breaks your heart?

[34 : 23] What breaks your heart? When you look around your community, when you look around your neighborhood, when you look around the city, when you look around our country, I mean, you talk about a week where people have a broken heart.

When you see things like what happened with Charlie Kirk and you see things that are happening all the time on the news. Faith family, do you as a Christian observe all this with a broken heart?

Do these things do anything in you of making you, of giving you a sacred sadness? Think about that.

Do you experience often a sacred sadness? Because you so love God and you so love the glory of God and you so love the truth of God and you so love the mission of God and you so love the gospel of Jesus that when you see things happening around our world, around our city, in your family, at your work, it breaks your heart.

What is it? Is it people who are suffering? Is it families that are in financial need? Is it the unborn? Is it the elderly? Is it families that are in crisis?

[35 : 52] Is it people who lack knowledge about scripture? Is it visitors that may be overlooked when they come to church? Is it facility projects that are being neglected and need work?

Is it unreached people groups throughout the world that have no access to the gospel? Faith family, I'm being very serious with you tonight. What breaks your heart? You need to have an answer for that.

There ought to be things in this world, in your life, around you, that like Nehemiah, you realize that shouldn't be. That needs to change.

I can't just sit back and do nothing. I've got to do something about that for the glory of God. Amen? In fact, notice this on the screen.

Oh man, this will preach. If nothing makes your heart break, it might not have a beat. Spiritually speaking, Christian, if nothing breaks your heart, you may not have a spiritual heartbeat.

[37 : 04] If you can actually see the ruin around you every day and feel nothing, there's something wrong.

There's really something wrong spiritually. And listen, listen, here's something very important. Not everybody's heart breaks for the same thing. Amen?

I mean, some people's heart break for children. Some people's heart break for people that have gone through relational difficulty. Some people's hearts break for the fact that they just can't even hardly sleep at night thinking about that they've got people out there lost without Jesus and need to hear the gospel.

Listen, all of our hearts break for different things, but every Christian's heart ought to break for something. And here is inevitably what spiritually numb hearts do.

Somebody just say preach preacher because I might just preach preacher. Here it is. They blame instead of getting in the game. Ask me how I know about 30 years of church ministry.

[38 : 16] You know how many times I've heard, well, you know, somebody really ought to do something about that. You know how many times I've heard, it's the pastor's fault. Or it's the president's fault.

Or it's the parent's fault. Or it's the principal's fault. But here is what I've learned in life. Notice this. People who blame things don't change things. People who blame things don't change things.

Yeah, it's easy to sit on the sideline with your spiritually numb heart and tell everybody else how they ought to be doing something while you do nothing. That is not Nehemiah.

Nehemiah is a man who has a heart that loves God and the glory of God. And so when he sees the ruin around him in the world, he knows, I'm not going to blame and I'm not going to say somebody else really ought to do something.

Nehemiah is going to take action because he realizes things cannot be this way. Others of you, some of you might just blame, others of you will say something like this, you'll have an excuse, like you just don't have the time to get involved, you don't have the spiritual gift or the talent to do what others can do.

[39 : 29] Many of you will literally say, Pastor, I just don't think that I can make a difference. But listen, listen, listen, this is so important, listen, God is not asking you to change the world, he's just asking you to change something or someone in the world.

I'm not asking you to go out and solve every ruin, every problem that exists in the world. I'm asking you to make an impact in someone's life. I'm asking you to look around your world, look around your neighborhood, look around your city, look around this church, find one person, one issue, one problem that breaks your heart and be like Nehemiah.

Do something. Get involved. Do the work, the ministry that God has called you to do. Listen, if you are a Jesus follower, you must be actively involved in bringing about change in the world.

You cannot actively follow Jesus and simply not want to make where God has put you a better place. Amen? We have all been called to be salt and light of the world.

And so when we look at what Jesus modeled, what did Jesus do? Jesus literally, and I'm not suggesting that we're going to go around and literally do the kind of things that Jesus did, but did Jesus not continuously make the lives of people a better place?

[41 : 01] So what breaks your heart? what breaks your heart? What breaks your heart? And here's what I'm asking tonight.

Here's what I'm asking. I'm not asking you to sign a pledge. Whew! Okay? I'm not asking you to sign a pledge. I'm not asking you to join a program.

I'm not asking you to put together a plan. Here's all I'm asking you to do. Would you pray about it? Would you model Nehemiah and take your broken heart about some kind of ruin in the world and just spend time with God about that very thing?

Before you do anything, before you act on it, before you put your PowerPoint slides together, would you just pray? Would you simply take your broken heart to God and pray about what God might have you do?

Amen? Could you at least do that? Wouldn't you think that's a pretty simple thing for a Christian to do? So that's my word to us as a congregation, to us as a Christian people, is to ask the question, what breaks your heart?

[42 : 24] What is it that you just feel like something's got to be done? And it may be really, really small to a lot of people, but really, really big to that one person.

Like, don't, don't get this idea that you've got to go out and rebuild a city. Maybe you just help rebuild your neighbor's life as you are there for them, and you cook meals for them, and you serve them, and you love them, to help bring their ruin back to restored.

That's all I'm asking. Here's the second application, and this is the more personal application, and that is, some of you might be asking, what do I do with my broken heart? What do I do with my broken heart?

And what I mean here is there are some of you in this room tonight that you would say, Pastor, it's hard for me to have a broken heart for the world when my heart is just broken. Are you tracking with me?

What I mean here is, your life is the city of Jerusalem, metaphorically. Your life is the one, is the thing that's in the ruin.

[43 : 35] This week, as I was preparing for this message, I came across this very chilling, chilling quote by the late Robin Williams, who you remember took his own life.

This is what Robin Williams said, All it takes is a beautiful fake smile to hide an injured soul, and they will never notice how broken you really are.

That's heartbreaking. Amen? And some of you know exactly what that feels like tonight. Behind that big fake smile is a tortured, ruined heart.

And you're just asking, Pastor, what about me? In fact, I'll tell you, one of the things as a pastor that breaks my heart are people with a broken heart. It's part of the culture that we have here at Faith Family is listen, if you are suffering, we want to be the kind of people that show grace to you and walk with you.

I know we don't do that perfectly, but that really is something that breaks our heart, namely, people that have broken hearts. Amen, Faith Family? Oh, I'm not letting that go.

[44 : 52] Amen, Faith Family? You better amen. I'll kick every one of you. So, here's my word to you for those of you, if you're not Nehemiah in this story, you're the city of Jerusalem.

You're the one that's in ruin and devastation and your heart is broken and you're just in a time of devastation. Here's my encouragement. Rest, restoration starts with rest.

Restoration starts with rest. What I mean is, listen, listen, this is so important. Before Nehemiah will rebuild, he's just going to spend time with God.

And some of us can be very concerned about when am I going to rebuild and when am I going to get life back together. It could very well be that you just need some time with God.

Amen? In fact, can I show you something here in the day? I was going to anyways, but I thought I'd ask. Let me show you something. This is important. Look at chapter 1, verse 1. Chapter 1, verse 1.

[46 : 01] It says, the words of Nehemiah, the son of Hecaliah. Now, it happened in the month of Kislev. Everybody with me? Kislev is about November.

Right? And now look at, this is chapter 2, verse 1. This is when Nehemiah actually will go to King Artaxerxes and deal with the very issue of going back to Jerusalem.

Now, in the month of Nisan, by the way, Nisan is the Datsun. Whatever. Okay, it doesn't matter. It doesn't matter. You know, it's amazing how the Lord just brings that together. Nisan is March.

In other words, listen, listen, listen, listen, listen. It's important. It's big. It was five months of prayer and fasting before God from the time Nehemiah's heart was broken to the time he took his request before the king.

Are you with me? Five months of praying day and night. five months of just being with the Lord before he actually took action.

[47 : 20] So, my encouragement to you if you're the one with the devastated heart is before you focus on restoration, you need to focus on resting.

Of being with God. Spending time with God. Let Him heal you and He will restore in His own timing. Amen?

It might be five months. It might be five weeks. It might be five years. I have no idea what the Lord's timing will be in your life but I think Nehemiah is instructive here about having a season of time with God so that we can be healed in our hearts.

So, this passage not only shows us Nehemiah's broken heart, it not only speaks to our own broken heart, but finally it foreshadows a broken heart.

You see Nehemiah chapter 1 is not the last time the condition of Jerusalem is going to break somebody's heart. Anybody know where I'm going? And one of the things I'm trying to teach you is how do we read the Old Testament in light of its fulfillment of Jesus, right?

[48 : 32] Is someone being broken hearted over the condition of Jerusalem new? No. It doesn't just happen in Nehemiah 1, it happens in Luke 19.

Look at it faith family. When Jesus drew near and saw Jerusalem, what did he do? He wept. Where have you heard that before?

Nehemiah 1. When he heard the report of Jerusalem, what was his immediate response? He wept. He's foreshadowing Jesus. Jesus wept over it, saying, would that you, even you, had known on this day the things that make for peace, but now they are hidden from your eyes.

In other words, Nehemiah's broken heart for Jerusalem is foreshadowing what will happen some 400 years later when Jesus will look upon the brokenness of Jerusalem and weep.

Except Jesus isn't broken hearted over the city because it's in physical ruins. He is broken hearted over the city and the world because of all the spiritual ruin.

[49 : 47] In other words, faith family, lean in here. What breaks God's heart is a broken relationship with his people.

God is not about what breaks Nehemiah's heart or what breaks your heart. This is what breaks God's heart. What breaks God's heart is a broken separated relationship with his people.

It breaks his heart when we are not in right relationship with him. In fact, it's because God so loved the world that he sent his only son.

That through Jesus we could be restored in our relationship with God. Reconciled in our relationship with God. So when Nicholas went and arrived in Prague and he saw those children that needed to be rescued, it broke his heart and he knew something had to be done.

When Nehemiah heard of the condition of Jerusalem, it broke his heart and he knew something had to be done. But even more than those, when your heavenly father looked upon your life ruined by sin and rebellion, it broke his heart.

[51 : 10] And listen, he did something about it. And so I ask you, what breaks your heart? What is it in your life that God is calling you to bring restoration where there's been ruin?

And if you don't know what that is, learn tonight from Nehemiah and spend some time on your knees before you roll up your sleeves.

And all God's people said, amen. Let's pray. Father, thank you so much for your word to us tonight. And I do pray that you would impress upon our hearts God.

What is it that is stirring in us? What is it that breaks our heart? What is that person? What's that situation? What's that problem that we see around us that you're calling us to get involved in, to do something about, to serve, to love, to be that gospel witness?

And maybe before we take any action, we just need to like Nehemiah. We need to pray before we plan. We need to pray before we take action and just seek your face.

[52 : 25] And Lord, I pray for that person whose heart is broken or that this will be a time when they will, like Nehemiah, that they will come into your covenant love, that they would rest in you, and that Lord, you would already begin the healing and restoration of their hearts.

And I pray this in Jesus' name. Amen. Thank you.