

# The Extraordinary of Ordinary

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Date: 12 October 2025

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Thank you.

Thank you. What is it that God is calling you to do, not only here in this church, but in your life, in this world, a place that is broken, a place that needs healing?

What is God laying on your heart to serve and to minister and to kind of be a Nehemiah and help bring restoration and brokenness? It's also a time to encourage those of you that you feel broken, you feel like life is in ruin, that God is able to pick up the pieces and restore your life.

And I have to admit, the more I'm teaching through the book of Nehemiah, the more I love it. I've never taught through the book of Nehemiah before. And so I am amazed at how practical this book is, not only with the world around us, but particularly for messages related to the church, what God has called us to do together.

[ 2 : 5 2 ]    And I love tonight's message, and I hope you will, too. I really do, as your pastor, hope that this encourages you this evening. So let's devote our attention to God's word tonight, Nehemiah chapter 3.

I'm going to invite you, if you're able, to please stand as we read God's word. And I'm telling you what, like when I read this passage, you are going to be so excited for tonight's message because these words just drip with amazing truth.

So let's look at them together. Then Elishib, the high priest, rose up with his brothers, the priest, and they built the sheep gate. They consecrated it and set its doors.

They consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel. And next to him, the men of Jericho built. Next to them, Zachur, the son of Imriah built.

The sons of Hassaneah built the fish gate. Aren't you excited? Let's keep reading. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

[ 3 : 57 ] Next to them, Merimoth, the son of Uriah, the son of Hakaz, repaired. Next to them, Meshulam, the son of Berechiah, the son of Mesezebel, repaired.

Next to them, Zadok, the son of Ba'anah, repaired. Next to them, the Tekelites, repaired. But their nobles would not stoop to serve the Lord.

Like, that's so amazing. We're going to stop right there and pray, all right? So pray with me. Father, thank you so much for your word to us. Every single word is inspired by you.

Even chapters like this that we skip are inspired by your spirit. And I really believe tonight, Lord, that you have a message for us, one of encouragement.

And so I pray tonight, Lord, that we would listen to what your spirit is saying to us and that you would come, Holy Spirit, and teach us the truth. And we pray it in Jesus' name.

[ 4 : 55 ] And God's people said, Amen. You can be seated. It was one small step for man and one giant leap for mankind. And it almost didn't happen.

July the 20th, 1969 is a day that will live forever in the history books of human achievement. It's the day, as you know, that mankind landed on the moon.

It was a significant accomplishment, no doubt. And as a result of that, there are images forever etched in our minds. There are names that the history books will forever remember.

Names like Neil Armstrong and Buzz Aldrin. However, none of those things would have been true had it not been for a name you've never heard of.

You see, right before the lunar landing of the Apollo 11, alarms started going off, indicating that there wasn't enough room on the computer for the landing software to work effectively.

[ 6 : 04 ] It turns out the radar was sending false information to the computer, which if left unsolved, would have prevented Apollo 11 from landing.

But one person had the knowledge to override the system. Does anybody know her name? Margaret Hamilton.

Margaret was a computer scientist who wrote the computer code for the Apollo 11 spacecraft. Without her and her knowledge, there would have been no landing on the moon.

She single-handedly saved the mission. And yet, she remained unknown and her work remained unrecognized for decades.

Until finally, in 2016, she was given the Presidential Medal of Freedom. You see, when people think about the successful mission to the moon, everybody knows Neil Armstrong, right?

[ 7 : 11 ] Everybody's aware of that name. But without Margaret Hamilton, the mission would not have been accomplished.

Listen to me this evening, Faith Family. This is like, not heavy in a bad way, but this is heavy on my heart. In our celebrity culture, where bright lights and spotlights get all the praise, in our social media culture, where you're defined by how many clicks you get, it is very easy for us to forget the necessity of the unknown.

That is, people whose life and job seems ordinary, and yet their contribution is absolutely necessary.

Amen? You know what I'm talking about? How many of you have had Margaret's in your life? How many of you? Think about the Margaret's in your life. Maybe it was an elementary school teacher that never got the award for Teacher of the Year, but she sure made a difference in your life.

The police officer that does not get enough recognition, but they helped keep you safe from harm. The grandfather that never won any big award, but he took the time to teach you lessons about life.

[ 8 : 33 ] The coach that never won a championship, but was all state in your book. The pastor who will never be named in a church history class, but helped you know Jesus more.

Faith Family, there are people the world calls ordinary, but in your life, they were necessary. And that is not only true when it comes to life.

I'm here to tell you tonight, it is absolutely true when it comes to the mission of God. That the mission of God is about ordinary people doing a necessary work for an extraordinary God.

Let me say that again. The mission of God is all about ordinary people doing a necessary work for an extraordinary God. That is exactly what the whole chapter of Nehemiah 3 is about.

Now, again, let me set the stage to kind of lead up to where we're going to be tonight. You know in chapter 1, Nehemiah hears the report that Jerusalem is still in ruin. It breaks his heart.

[ 9 : 42 ] He knows that something has to be done. I've been asking you for weeks, like what is it that breaks your heart? What is it in this world that's not right in your neighborhood, in your, where you work, in this church?

Like what is it that God is calling you to do? And then in chapter 2, Nehemiah takes his request to the king and the king gives him the authority and the resources that he needs.

The other challenge I've been challenging you about is not just to identify what is it that breaks your heart, but what are you going to do about it? Nehemiah is not just somebody that sits around and just waits for other people to get the job done.

Nehemiah rolls up his sleeves and he gets to work. Listen, if God is calling you to do something, do something. Amen? And then later in chapter 2, when Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem, he immediately faces opposition.

Remember the sharks come out? Right? You've got Sanballat and Tobiah and Geshem. These are external opponents. They come at him and the work and they do everything they can to shut the mission down.

[ 10 : 52 ] And we talked about the fact that that is always true. Listen, anytime you're trying to do something for God, there will be opposition to it. Amen? You are always going to face external opposition.

And then in chapter 5, last week we looked at how Nehemiah faces the greatest challenge of all, which is not external opposition, it's internal opposition.

You remember the economy has tanked. People can't afford their mortgages. They're literally selling their children as slaves. And rather than seeing this as an opportunity to do good, the people of God, the people of Judah, saw this as an opportunity for greed.

Rather than serving one another, they're becoming selfish. And the unity of God is under attack. Now listen to me. Listen. Through all of that, that is through all of the external opposition, all of the personal and financial trials, all of the internal fighting, there is a group of people that remain committed to one another and committed to the mission of God.

But now listen. Their names aren't Moses, Elijah, Esther, Joshua, King David.

[ 12 : 21 ] They're names you never heard. Names you can't pronounce. Names you skip in your daily Bible reading, you sinner. Right?

But you know you do it. You get to Nehemiah 3 and you jump to John or something like that. Right? This is something you jump over. But I'm here to tell you tonight, listen, the mission of God is not accomplished without these ordinary people.

Look at just a few again in verse 3. You've got the sons of Hassaniah that built the fish gate. They laid its beams and set its doors and bolts and bars. You've got next to them was Merimoth, the son of Uriah, and Hakaz repaired.

Next to them, you've got Meshulam, the son of Berechiah, and the son of Mesezabel. And on and on these names go. In fact, the whole chapter is literally 32 verses of names I can almost guarantee you've never heard of.

The first point I want you to understand here is that this is a group of ordinary people. Do you believe that all of God's Word is inspired? I hope you do.

[ 13 : 37 ] And if you're new to Faith Family, you need to know that that's one thing we believe here at Faith Family is every single word of God's Word is inspired of God. That means Nehemiah 3.

Amen? That these names were included for a purpose. That God divinely inspired Nehemiah to include this list of names.

And there's a lot of reasons for that, but here's one of maybe the primary reasons for that, and it's this. Is that you would know Nehemiah didn't build the wall alone. Nehemiah didn't accomplish this task as a solo effort.

He didn't do the entire work by himself. You see, if Nehemiah is the Neil Armstrong of the story, then this list throughout chapter 3 is the Margarets.

It's the names that nobody's ever heard of, and yet without them, the mission is not accomplished. Now rather than impress you with my amazing Old Testament reading skills, I'm kidding, I will just summarize this chapter in terms of the island of misfit toys that is brought together in these 32 verses.

[ 14 : 53 ] In verse 1, you've got the priest along with the high priest. These are teachers of the law. In verse 2, you've got some out-of-town commuters that have traveled in from Jericho.

In verses 5 through 8, you've got a journeyman, some goldsmith, and some perfume makers. In verse 9, you have a government official who knew they worked.

But here's an example of one that did. That's a joke. In verse 9, verse 12 rather, you've got another government official with the help of his daughters. In verse 17, you have the Levites who were the assistants to the priests.

In verse 23, you have two single men. In verse 26, you've got the temple servants. In verse 29, you have a security guard.

And in verse 32, you have a group of merchants and businessmen. It's essentially a country song. There are winners, losers, chain smokers, and boozers, right?

[ 15 : 57 ] There's a little bit of everybody at this bar. The point is, you knew me, I had to work in a country song. So anyways, the point is, Faith Family, is that these are ordinary people to the world, but they are necessary people to the mission of God.

They're ordinary people to the world, but they're necessary to the mission of God. Now, before you misunderstand what I'm saying, let me be clear. By necessary, I don't mean God could not do His work without them.

That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying that God chose to do His work through them. Amen? It's not that God can't use other people, but that He specifically chose these people.

And in that sense, they were necessary to the mission of God. The Bible is full of these, right? Think, for example, Caleb, right? Not my Caleb, the Caleb in the Bible, a sidekick of Joshua.

You know his name, but have you ever stopped to think about that Caleb had the same experience and qualifications that Joshua did? Both of them were born in Egypt.

[ 17 : 10 ] Both of them were spies in the wilderness. Both of them were eyewitnesses to the miracles in the desert. Both of them went through the Red Sea. Both of them were seen to be courageous men. Both of them grew up together and suffered together.

And yet, when Moses died, it was Joshua who was appointed the leader. And Caleb faithfully played the hardest position in football to play.

Backup quarterback. And yet, he did so faithfully. You think about what the Apostle Paul says to the Corinthians in 1 Corinthians 1 verse 26.

Consider your calling, brothers. Not many of you were wise according to worldly standards. Not many of you were powerful. Not many of you were of noble birth.

But here's the beauty. See, God chose what is foolish in the world to shame the wise. And he chose what is weak in the world to shame the strong.

[ 18 : 16 ] Listen, faith family, the world may look at us and call us ordinary. But God looks at us and says, you're necessary. Not necessary in that he can't accomplish it without us.

But he's chosen to accomplish it through us. How awesome is that? Amen? Now let me give you just a few very important implications of this and then I'm going to move on.

The first is this. What it means, what Nehemiah 3 teaches us is that any work done to glorify God is sacred. Any work done to the glory of God is sacred work.

Do you know what's happening in Nehemiah chapter 3? Nehemiah chapter 3 is not people sitting around having Bible study and singing praise songs. Now they will do that later in the book, but that's not what's happening here.

What's happening in Nehemiah chapter 3 is people are doing, listen, the sanctified, God-called work of digging holes and shoveling dirt and hanging gates.

[ 19 : 26 ] Now we may not think of that as very spiritual, but let me remind you of what Paul says in Colossians chapter 3. Notice it here. Whatever you do, everybody say whatever.

Whatever. Whatever it is that you do, work heartily as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward.

Now everybody say this with me. You are serving the Lord Christ. This is what Paul is saying. Whatever it is that you do, I don't care what it is that you do, but whatever it is that you do, you should work heartily.

Do you know why? Because you're doing that for God. And everything that you do for the glory of God is sacred. This is something, like we really, I think even people in church sometimes, we don't understand what ministry is.

Like we think ministry is working for the church, being employed by the church, having a job at the church. No, no, no, no. Here's what ministry is. Ministry is not about what you do.

[ 20 : 36 ] Ministry is about who you do it for. Amen? And so whatever it is that you do, do it for the glory of God and know that it is sacred, special, spiritual work.

It is ministry. Now, we love to make much, and rightly so, of the miraculous moments of Jesus' ministry, right? The casting out of demons, the walking on the water, the turning water into wine, and so on and so forth.

But yet we forget, listen, 90% of Jesus' life was swinging a hammer. He spent 30 years of life as a carpenter before he did three years of public ministry.

And he was the son of God in all of it. That is encouraging for us that all work, whatever it is that we do, is sacred work, whether it's digging holes or preaching the Bible.

Amen? Here's the second thing. This is so encouraging to me. So encouraging to me. Ministry has more, and I'm just using for the sake of definition, ordinary.

[ 22 : 04 ] Ministry has more ordinary days than extraordinary days. Now let me unpack what I mean by here. Now it's easy for us to think about, if I were to pick out an extraordinary day in the life of Nehemiah, it would be Nehemiah 2.

Remember we talked about this. When Nehemiah goes to the king and he makes that crazy request, remember, overturn a decree you've already given, given me a 12-year leave of absence, pay for the whole project, give me all the authority to go and do this.

And then the king says, yeah, I'll do all of that. I'll give you everything that you need. And in fact, it was so amazing, you remember that Nehemiah had only one explanation for it, and what was it?

This was the good hand of my God that was upon me. There's no way this moment just happened. It is a miraculous, amazing moment that King Artaxerxes would do that.

And yet it's easy to forget. Listen, Nehemiah spent five months in prayer before that day happened. It was an extraordinary day, but there were a lot of ordinary days that took place before it.

[ 23 : 17 ] In other words, most of the book of Nehemiah is getting up and going to work. Like, I can't emphasize enough how much I want this to encourage you, faith family.

Listen, Nehemiah is essentially long days of building walls. Translated into our world, it's traffic and laundry and emails and paying bills and going to the grocery.

It's everyday life of getting up and going to work for the glory of God. And it feels ordinary, and what I'm here to tell you tonight is there's something extraordinary about the ordinary.

That there's actually something extraordinary, Mom, as you're changing the diapers. Something extraordinary as you're mowing the lawn. We cannot lose sight of our extraordinary God and the ordinary things of life.

Amen? Now, this is where I strongly push back on some of my charismatic friends who I do love dearly and I hope they love me. They will read the book of Acts and they will think and they will often emphasize supernatural things all the time.

[ 24 : 32 ] In other words, success often looks like healings and visions and smoke and lightning and this kind of what if you're not careful can become this upper tier Christian experience.

And my push back to that is not that those things can't happen or don't happen. No, please don't misunderstand me. My push back to that is this. There are 14 healing miracles in the book of Acts.

They'll tell you that. Here's what they won't tell you. Acts, the book of Acts, covers 30 years. Do the math.

When you flip a page, you essentially flip a decade. Meaning for every one extraordinary day, there are hundreds of ordinary days and God is God in all of them.

God is God in the extraordinary experience and God is God in the ordinary things of life. Amen? Can I just take a moment and confess to you how I even struggle with this?

[ 25 : 39 ] Okay, so confession time. I struggled early on with this series of Nehemiah. And do you know why I struggled with it? Because I just felt like, man, this is just so practical.

It's so basic. And do you know why I struggled with that? Because what did we talk about this summer? The armor of God and spiritual warfare and swords and helmets and breastplates and war.

armor. Like, wasn't that a series that we all just felt like was this almost spiritual high of what God was teaching us through the armor of God?

Was I the only one? And then, then we segue into Nehemiah and you know what Nehemiah is about? Finding a ministry to do and doing it. It doesn't feel as glamorous.

It doesn't feel as glorious. And yet, I'm here to tell you in the extraordinary things of spiritual warfare and the ordinary things of daily ministry, God is God in all of them.

[ 26 : 56 ] So what this list of Nehemiah 3, these names that we don't know, it's a group of ordinary people who were necessary to the mission of God.

Let me show you something else about them. It's not just their ordinary, but the fact that they had a diversity. A diversity. In fact, I read the list a few moments ago of all the different unique things.

You've got government officials and you've got perfume makers and you've got security guards and you've got just lots of different diversity of gifts. Take, for example, even Nehemiah himself.

I'm about to show you just how valuable pastors are. Okay, hang with me. Here we go. You remember how I told you, I think it was week one, that this whole thing gets accomplished in three waves.

Everybody say yes. It ends with Nehemiah, but it started with Zerubbabel. Now, do you know who Zerubbabel was? Zerubbabel was the son of King Jehoiakim, which makes him a descendant of David.

[ 27 : 59 ] That means Zerubbabel's got all the pedigree. He's from a prestigious line. He's a politician. He's got political authority. But do you know what Zerubbabel does not do?

Finish the job. The work isn't completed. It's mostly focused on the temple. And so God raises up another leader. Who's the second leader?

Ezra. Then Ezra comes along. Who's Ezra? Ezra is a scribe. He's a scholar. He's a theologian. He's a pastor.

And do you know what he does? He reinstitutes the festivals. And temple worship is restored. And people are taught again the Torah.

But do you know what Ezra did not do? He didn't finish the job. Why? Because the last thing you want to ask a pastor to do is construction work.

[ 28 : 56 ] You should just all say amen, right? You do not want to ask me to hang drywall or fix your car unless you want a bigger mess, okay? But my point is here we've got somebody of political pedigree.

He doesn't finish the job. Here we've got somebody that has all the theology and Bible knowledge. He doesn't finish the job. And then who comes along? Nehemiah.

And Nehemiah doesn't have the pedigree of Zerubbabel. He doesn't have the Bible knowledge of Ezra. He's an administrator. He's a layman. And yet it's Nehemiah that actually gets the job done.

You say, Pastor, what are you trying to say? What I'm trying to say is this. The mission was not accomplished by a politician or a pastor, but a common person who knew how to gather merchants and security guards and businessmen to get the job done.

It's a diversity of gifts. Now, I'm not downplaying Zerubbabel or Ezra. My point is, they played their role. You needed somebody with political power.

[ 30 : 06 ] And you needed somebody that knew the Word of God and can teach it. And you need somebody that's got organizational skills and knows how to organize things to get things done. And God brings all of that diversity together to get His mission accomplished.

Does this not like scream 1 Corinthians 12, verse 21? The eye cannot say to the hand, I have no need of you.

Nor again, the head to the feet, I have no need of you. On the contrary, the parts of the body that seem to be what? Weaker, or you could insert, unnecessary.

Unimportant. Not as flashy. And yet, what are they? Say it. Indispensable. The work doesn't get done without those things that would be easy for you to say, well, that person doesn't really matter.

That job really isn't important. And yet, God says, it absolutely is because your body is made up of all different kinds of parts working together.

[ 31 : 26 ] Look at what Peter says in 1 Peter 4, verse 10. Is this encouraging you, by the way? I hope so. As each, that is all of us, has received a gift, that is a spiritual gift, Nehemiah, use it!

I didn't give you the spiritual gift to do nothing with it. I've given each a gift. Use it to serve one another as good stewards of, notice this, God's varied grace.

That is, He's given out varied grace or varied gifts. He has not given everybody the same gift. Amen? It's a varied grace.

So, if it's speaking as one who speaks the oracles of God, if it's serving as one who serves by the strength that God supplies, in order, here's why we need all of this working together, that in everything, say it, God may be glorified through Jesus Christ.

Did you see all three components there? There's mutual effort, it's everybody, it's each of us, with a diversity of gift, God's varied grace, use whatever gift that you've been given for a unified purpose, that God would be glorified here at Fate Family.

[ 32 : 53 ] That God would be glorified here in the South Metro. That God would be glorified to the ends of the earth. Here it is, Fate Family, notice it on the screen.

The mission of God is accomplished through ordinary people who use their diversity of gifts for a unified purpose. This is us.

This is the church. A bunch of ordinary people that use a variety of gifts for a unified purpose. And that unified purpose is to glorify God in everything we do in this place.

And I thought through just what this looks like even here at Fate Family and there's no intent here to leave anybody out or what anybody does out that would kind of defeat the whole purpose of the message.

But here's just a list. I thought about there are people that run sound and audio and make coffee and teach children and care for safety and medical needs and teach Bible study and lead a small group and organize prayer that do outreach in the community that build worship slides that change diapers that clean the facility that lead ministries that count money that oversee the budget that plan events that set out communion that greet at the door and on and on and on.

[ 34 : 12 ] Our church is a mutual effort of diverse people for a unified purpose. You may not clap after this, right?

So what are you doing? You don't have to answer that out loud but what are you doing? I'm not asking do you get the spotlight on you?

I'm not asking does, you know, lightning come down from the sky when you do it? Are you doing anything? Are you taking the gifts that God has given you and using that for the edification of God's people?

You say, I show up and eat a cookie. Does that count? And of course I'm being a little sarcastic but listen, if you're brand new of course we want you to take your time.



But some of you have been a part of this faith family for quite some time and I make no apologies in Nehemiah here to ask you, Nehemiah, what are you doing with the gifts that God has given you?

[ 35 : 20 ] Because you are necessary. You are important and what you bring to the table matters and our ministry will not be as effective as it can be without you serving the way that God has uniquely gifted you to serve.

Amen? So, first of all this group of ordinary people that uses a diversity of gifts and let me show you one more thing namely what their motivation is in doing this together.

Again, this is so practical. I love it. Look at verse 15. Chapter 2, verse 15. Nehemiah says, I went up in the night in the valley and inspected the wall and I turned back and entered by the valley gate and so returned and the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials and the rest who were to do the work and then I said to them, you see the trouble that we're in how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned.

Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem that we may no longer suffer derision and I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good and also of the words that the king had spoken to me and they said, let us rise up and build.

So they strengthened their hands for the good work. Now here's, I love this. This is so important. Listen, these believers that Nehemiah rallies together to do the work are not motivated intrinsically or they're not motivated extrinsically, I mean.

[ 36 : 58 ] They're not motivated, that is, they're not motivated by external benefit. You know what extrinsic motivation is, right? You know, if you eat all your food, I'll let you stay up and watch TV a little later.

Or if you finish the project by Friday, I'll pay you extra. Or here's where you, I'll probably offend some people on this, I don't care. Where you really see this is in dog training, right?

If you'll sit, I'll give you a treat, right? If you obey, then I'll give you a reward. The reason why this is an absolute, complete waste of time, I actually used to be a former dog trainer so I know what I'm talking about.

Some of you didn't know that about all the gifts that God has given me, that's one of them, is that this is an absolute waste of time. And do you know why this is an absolute waste of time? Because it's only as good until the reward for disobedience is greater than the reward for obedience.

Extrinsic motivation might work at a superficial level, but at some point it has to go deeper than that. Intrinsic motivation is different.

[ 38 : 14 ] Listen, it's based on love or the belief in something greater. That is, I'm obeying out of love for the relationship. If you want to use the pet analogy, it's I'm obeying because you're my owner, not because you have a treat.

Right? Or in the company situation, I'm going to finish the project, not because you're going to pay me more, but because I care that this company succeeds. Is everybody with me?

Say yes. The motivation has gone deeper than that. Listen, Nehemiah, oh man, preach preacher, Nehemiah does not motivate these people by saying, hey, whoever gets the most work done on the wall gets an all expense paid to the Caesarean coast.

No. They are motivated in the belief for the glory of God in the restoration of the city of God.

They commit to this work because they love God and they love the people of God and they want to see the glory of God restored to the city of God.

[ 39 : 22 ] And this is so important for us. You see a glimpse of this again later on in chapter 4, verse 6 when it says, so we built the wall and all the wall was joined together to half its height for the people had a mind to work.

The Hebrew there like literally is they worked with all their hearts. They had a mind to work. They were working with all their heart.

And of course, he's not talking about the physical organ. He's talking about their convictions. In other words, here's the point. Here it is. Here it is. They were not motivated by external reward but a vision of God's city restored.

Now what does that mean for us? It means that we are a group of ordinary people with a diversity of gifts who are serving so the pastor will recognize us.

No. So that we'll get a bonus. I don't even know what that would be here. Right? So, or God has given me a gift and I want to use that to encourage people because I want to glorify God with my life.

[ 40 : 42 ] And I'll change diapers for the glory of God and I'll greet people out front for the glory of God and I'll set out communion cups for the glory of God and I'll preach for the glory of God and I'll build services for the glory of God because what motivates me is not some bright light.

What motivates me is faithfulness to my God. Because listen, listen, I'm going to get questions later about dog training. I can already feel it.

It's coming. Because just like in that example, if you're just motivated by external reward, it won't last. I guarantee you, your serving will fizzle out.

Because extrinsic motivation only lasts so long. But when you're motivated by love of your master, by the relationship that you have with God, then you will endure when external opposition comes, and it will, and internal fighting happens, and it will, and together we will continue to serve and advance the mission to the glory of God.

this is what Nehemiah teaches us here. Let me kind of close with this. Do you remember how this whole thing was misunderstood in the minds of the disciples?

[ 42 : 08 ] That is, the disciples thought the same way we tend to think. You remember when the disciples were like, I wonder which one of us is the greatest?

I bet it's me. Oh no, it couldn't be you. It's clearly me. In fact, at one point, James and his brother has their mom ask Jesus, hey, can my son sit on the right hand in the kingdom?

And Jesus is like, oh, oh no. You num nums. You don't get it. Like, this is the problem. You're thinking the way the culture thinks in terms of greatness.

You think it's shotgun in the kingdom. You think it's all the flashing success and glory of the world.

No, no, no, no. No, we need to have a talk. Here it is. And this is Luke's version of this. We read Matthew's last week. This is Luke 22. A dispute arose among them as to which of them was regarded as the greatest.

[ 43 : 19 ] Now, just imagine that in your mind. These group of fishermen and tax collectors of all people are debating who's the greatest. And he said to them, the kings of the Gentiles exercise lordship over them and those in authority over them are called benefactors, but not so with you.

Rather, let the greatest among you become as the youngest and the leader as the one who serves. Bible trivia, what, according to John's gospel, happens next?

Some of you know it, don't you? What did Jesus do, according to John's gospel, right after he taught them about greatness? He modeled it.

You remember what he did? He takes a basin of water and he does the most lowly, disgusting thing you could possibly do in the ancient Near East.

He washed the disciples' feet. You want to observe greatness?

[ 44 : 37 ] Here's greatness. the Son of God washing feet. Can you imagine the silence in that room when in the midst of the disciples arguing about who's going to be the greatest in the kingdom, Jesus gets up from the table, takes off his outer garment, wraps a towel around his waist, pours water in a basin, and gets down on the floor and redefines what greatness really is.

Faith family, listen to me. In the face of external opposition, all the sand ballots of the world, in the face of internal opposition, the battle against selfishness within the church, how did the mission of restoration get accomplished?

Here's how it got accomplished. Lean in, I'm almost done. Ordinary people with a diversity of gifts working together in a shared vision of the glory of God.

That's how the mission got accomplished then, and that's how the mission will get accomplished now. Faith family, the late conductor of the NBC orchestra, said that in all the orchestra, the most difficult instrument in the orchestra to play is second violin.

not because it's any easier to play, but because it takes a back seat to the first violin. And yet without it, the melody of the music isn't as beautiful, and the harmony isn't complete.

[ 46 : 44 ] Tonight, I close with this. I hope that we will understand something very, very important. I'm talking to you, Faith family. I'm talking to me. Listen, if you feel ordinary, if you feel like a Margaret, what Nehemiah 3 says to you is that you are necessary to the mission of God.

Not necessary in that God needs you. Necessary in that God has chosen to help restore something or someone through you.

And God has a way of taking the ordinary and doing extraordinary. Amen? After all, can you think of anything more extraordinary than God becoming flesh?

Is there anything more glorious, more miraculous, more supernatural than God becoming man?

man? But how did such an extraordinary thing get manifested? Through a birth in a manger, growing up in a small hillbilly town called Nazareth, raised by parents who were poor commoners, working for 30 years as a simple carpenter, gathering a lead team of fishermen and tax collectors, and through a life that would end in the most humiliating way of all, crucifixion.

[ 48 : 32 ] And yet through all of that ordinary, God did the extraordinary. He changed our life and this world forever.

And all God's people said, amen, amen. Let's pray together. Father, I can't speak for others here, but this message was such an encouragement to me, and I do hope that it is encouragement to each and every person here.

Because we live in such a world and such a culture where it's all about how many clicks do you have, and how famous are you.

It's all about celebrity, celebrity, celebrity. And it's dangerous when your disciples don't understand greatness.

That's a problem. And I fear that even we as a church have misunderstood greatness.

[ 49 : 42 ] If we want to understand greatness, we need to see our Savior washing feet in the ordinary, in the mundane, in the daily getting up and going to work.

history book. And our names may never be recorded in any history book. But our names are written in the Lamb's book of life.

And you are doing your work through your people. people. And it isn't always flashy. But it's always sacred.

And now we direct our attention to the cross. Talk about humiliating.

Talk about a job no one else would do. Talk about a job no one else could do. And yet Jesus, you humbled yourself to the point of death on a cross.

[ 51 : 11 ] God, you served us. And you accomplished the mission you were sent to do.

I pray that we would take just a few moments this evening and set our minds on that reality. Set our minds on that truth and let it redefine the daily for the glory of God.

And it's in Jesus' name I pray. Amen. Amen. Thank you.