

Rebuilding the walls

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[0 : 00] Your love never changes And maybe late in the night The joy comes in the morning And when the oceans raise I don't have to be afraid Because I know that You love me Your love never fails Your love never fails Your love never fails I can count on You You are the word at the beginning One with God under the most high

Your hidden glory in creation Now revealed in You are Christ What a beautiful name it is What a beautiful name it is The name of Jesus Christ my King What a beautiful name it is Nothing compares to this What a beautiful name it is What a beautiful name it is The name of Jesus You didn't want heaven without us So Jesus you are heaven down My sin was great Your love was greater What could separate us now What a beautiful name it is What a beautiful name it is The name of Jesus Christ my King What a beautiful name it is Nothing compares to this What a beautiful name it is What a beautiful name it is The name of Jesus What a beautiful name it is The name of Jesus What a beautiful name it is I have a beautiful name it is What a beautiful name it is I have a beautiful name it is What a beautiful name it is The name of Jesus Christ my King I have a beautiful name it is The praise of your glory. For you are raised to life again. You have no rival.

[3 : 55] And you have no equal. Now and forever God you reign. For yours is the kingdom.

Yours is the glory. Yours is the name above. For your name. What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. The name of Jesus Christ my King. What a powerful name it is. Nothing can stand against. What a powerful name it is. The name of Jesus. You have no rival. You have no evil. Now and forever God you reign.

[5 : 01] Yours is the kingdom. Yours is the kingdom. Yours is the glory. Yours is the name above all names.

What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. What a powerful name it is. The name of Jesus Christ my King. What a powerful name it is. What a wonderful name it is. What a wonderful name it is. What a wonderful name it is.

The name of Jesus Christ my King. What a wonderful name it is. Nothing compares to this.

[6 : 04] What a wonderful name it is. What a wonderful name it is. What a wonderful name it is. The name of Jesus. everything.

Jesus. Jesus.

Jesus. Jesus. Come like a river You wash over me When peace like a river Attendeth my way When sorrows like sea billows roll Whatever my loss Thou hast taught me to stay It is well, it is well With my soul Yes, it is well It is well with my soul It is well, it is well With my soul My sin, all the bliss Of this glorious Lord My sin, not in part But the whole He's nailed to the cross And I bear it, no more

Praise the Lord Oh, praise the Lord Oh, my soul It is well It is well With my soul With my soul It is well It is well With my soul Whatever may come Oh, my soul Praise His holy name And the Lord Haste the day When my faith

[9 : 39] Shall be sight And the clouds Be rolled back As a scroll The storm The storm The storm Shall resound And the Lord Shall descend Even so It is well With my soul It is well It is well It is well With my soul It is well It is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul.

It is well with my soul. It is well with my soul.

It is well. It is well with my soul. Well, good morning to you all.

Welcome to Union Baptist Church as we come to worship God here today. Some of us may be coming full of thanksgiving in our heart, delighting to be here and to worship God.
[11 : 33] Others may be coming with a heavy heart or concerns. And we want to say that everyone is welcome as we gather in the name of Jesus. Just one quick notice before I forget.

The open door gathering is not on the 21st. It's going to be on the 5th of October. We've sent something out just correcting that. I just want to make sure everybody's got that notice. Now, Joel was prayed for last week as our ministry trainee.

And we thought, right, let's get him right into action. So he's leading our service this morning. So thank you so much, Joel. Over to you. Good morning, everybody.

As I was reflecting this week on some world events, it struck me how in a lot of places they are not able to do what we're able to do today, to gather freely and openly, to sing praises to our God, to hear from God's word, and to pray and praise together.

So I thought it would be good, just before we start singing, just to thank God for the freedom that we have to be able to come and praise him. So before we come and sing his praises, let's pray.

[12 : 43] God, we thank you that we can come together. We thank you that we have the freedom to gather, the freedom to proclaim your goodness, your gospel and your name.

And we pray for those around the world that are unable to do that. We pray that they will be able to find their comfort and their strength and all their daily needs in you, Lord.

And we pray that as we come together today, we'll be able to use those freedoms and those blessings that you've given us to the fullness of our ability to loudly proclaim your name here in High Wycombe.

Amen. So let's stand and sing together our first song today. Behold our God, seated on his throne. Come let us adore him.

Who has held the oceans in his hands?

[14 : 01] Who has numbered every grain of sand? Kings and nations tremble at his voice.

All creation rises to rejoice. Behold our God, seated on his throne.

Come let us adore him. Behold our King, nothing can compare.

Come let us adore him. Who has given counsel to the Lord?

Who can question any of his words?

[15 : 15] Who can teach the one who knows all things? Who can fathom all his wondrous deeds?

Behold our God, seated on his throne. Come let us adore him. God, seated on his throne. Come let us adore him. Come let us adore him.

Behold our King. Behold our King. Behold our King. Nothing can compare. Come let us adore him.

Come let us adore him. Come let us adore him. Come let us adore him. Come let us adore him.

Who has felt the nails upon his hands? Bearing all the guilt of sinful man.

God eternal, humble to the grave. Jesus Saviour, risen, found to reign.

[16 : 36] God eternal, behold our King. Behold our King. God, seated on his throne. Come let us adore him. Behold our King. Seated on his throne. Come let us adore him. Come let us adore him.

Behold our King. Nothing can compare. Come let us adore him.

Come let us adore him. You will reign forever. You will reign forever.

Let your glory fill the earth. Let your glory fill the earth. You will reign forever.

Let your glory fill the earth. Let your glory fill the earth. Behold our God.

[17 : 42] Seated on his throne. Come let us adore him. Behold our King.

Nothing can compare. Come let us adore him. Come let us adore. Behold our God.

Seated on his throne. Come let us adore him. Behold our King.

Nothing can compare. Come let us adore him. Oh come let us adore him.

Oh come let us adore him. Oh come let us adore him.

[19 : 02] Christ the Lord. We'll give him all the glory.

We'll give him all the glory. We'll give him all the glory.

Christ the Lord. For he alone is worthy.

For he alone is worthy. For he alone is worthy.

Christ the Lord. Yes God.

[20 : 04] We thank you. And we praise you. You alone are worthy of our praises. And we thank you that we can come and praise you today. And we pray that you help us to continue to praise you.

To sing your praises. To listen to your word. As we continue in this service today. For your glory we pray. Amen. Amen. And now I believe we have a drama.

Oh boy. Good morning.

Good morning. Oh that's feeble. You may have a mask on but that is really really feeble. Good morning. Good morning. Are you here to praise God this morning? Yes. Yes.

That's what I want. Because we need you to participate. Because today, sorry, today is all about God's people. That's you guys. Down here. Up there.

[21 : 09] Every one of you is involved. If you're under the age of 11, give me a big wave. Yes. Brilliant. Okay. If you're under the age of 100, give me a big wave.

Yay. Good. We're definitely awake this morning, aren't we? Okay. Anyway, I've got some people here helping me. And fingers crossed it will work out. So, there's some bits for you to do.

We're going to be talking about three things in the story. We're going to be talking about the altar. And at the altar, what did the people do? The people, they worshipped God.

So, the action you're going to do is to put your hands up to worship God with me. Brilliant. We're also going to be talking about the people's houses because they needed to be rebuilt as well.

Well, that's an easy symbol. There's your house. So, when we get to that bit, you're going to be building your house. And finally, all the way around Jerusalem, there were crumbled down walls.

[22 : 10] And we're going to rebuild the walls. Brilliant. Okay. So, there's those three things. There's also going to be a little bit of a moment when I want you to go hooray.

I'm sure you'll manage that. There's another bit where we're going to have a round of applause. I'm sure you'll manage that. And at the end, all being well, up on the screen, there's going to be a prayer for God's people to say.

And we're going to do that together. Okay. So, you're going to have to look and listen so you don't miss any of the cues. Okay. Are we ready, team?

Cool. When God looked on his people in exile in Babylon, he decided, my people have learnt their lesson. It's time for them to come home.

So, God whispered in the ear of Cyrus, the king of Persia, where God's people were slaves in exile. Send them home, God said.

[23 : 14] So, Cyrus did. Thousands and thousands of people had to return to Jerusalem. How did they get there? They walked.

There was a lot of work to do when they got there. They were rebuilding the temple. So, they had somewhere to worship God. They were rebuilding their houses.

So, they had somewhere to live. And they were rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. So, they had somewhere to hide from their enemies and be safe. It was hard work.

There was no end of problems and opposition. And for a long time, it looked as if they wouldn't get the job done. But then, Cyrus died.

And another king named Attaxerxes took his place. God took this chance to help his people again by whispering in the ear of a man who could get this king's attention.

[24 : 25] The man's name was Nehemiah. Now, he had a special job. His job was to bring the king his wine every day. But he had to taste it first to make sure there was no poison in it.

The king trusted him very much. But he was puzzled one day when Nehemiah arrived with a cup in his hand but a sad frown on his face.

What's the matter, Nehemiah? Why do you look so sad? Well, Nehemiah whispered a prayer to God before he answered. Forgive me, your majesty.

I know it is my duty to smile in your presence but I cannot. I have heard that my people are suffering. They're suffering in their homeland in Jerusalem.

The walls of Jerusalem are broken down and I know that I could help if only I could go there. I also know that you have wood and stone which would make the job easier.

[25 : 35] Please send me there with supplies to finish the job and to bring an end to my people's suffering. Now, King Attaxerxes thought long and hard about this.

Yes, Nehemiah, you may go but I will send some soldiers along with you to protect you on the way. Nehemiah thanked the king.

He thanked God too. And then he set off on his long journey. Ready? Ready? When Nehemiah arrived, he found Jerusalem in a terrible state.

But the people, they were so pleased to see him. Yay! Yay! Come, let us rebuild up the walls for God is with us.

He gave me the courage to speak to the king. He persuaded the king to give us these supplies. God will help us finish the job.

[26 : 43] And the people cheered. Yay! And then they had to set off to work. It still wasn't easy. There were enemies to deal with.

So sometimes they had to work with a hammer in one hand and a sword in the other. But finally, they were finished. The temple was built.

The houses were built. And the walls were complete too. And so, the people of God, they praised God saying, Lord, forgive us for not listening to you.

We promise to do better in the future. To live the way you told us to live when you gave us this land so long ago.

Thank you for bringing us home at last and for giving us another chance. And all God's people said, Amen. Thank you.

[27 : 45] Thank you. Some very impressive acting there.

I love the sword brandishing. In a moment, we're going to come to sing another song that kind of responds to that story. We're going to be thinking about, we're going to be singing about Christ Alone, Cornerstone.

The cornerstone in which we do that rebuilding. And as we sing that song, the children and young people are going to go to their groups. So first, let us pray for them. Lord, we thank you for our children and young people, for their groups and for their leaders.

And we pray that as they go out today, that you will bless them, that you'll be teaching them, your spirit will be speaking to them and equipping them and rebuilding them.

Amen. Let's stand and sing together.

[28 : 51] Amen. My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

My hope is built on nothing less than Jesus' blood and righteousness.

I dare not trust the sweetest frame, but holy trust in Jesus' name.

Christ alone, Cornerstone, Weak made strong in the Saviour's love.

[30 : 32] Through the storm, He is Lord. He's the Lord of all. When darkness seems to hide His face, I rest on His unchanging grace.

In every high and stormy days, My anchor holds within the grave.

My anchor holds within the grave. Christ alone, Cornerstone, Cornerstone, Weak made strong in the Saviour's love.

Through the storm, He is Lord. He is Lord, Lord of all.

Christ alone, cornerstone, weak made strong in the Saviour's love.

[32 : 00] Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all.

When He shall come with trumpet sound, O may I then in Him be found.

Because in His righteousness above, for wantless stand before the throne.

Christ alone, cornerstone, weak made strong in the Saviour's love.

Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all. Christ alone, cornerstone, weak made strong in the Saviour's love.

[33 : 23] Through the storm, He is Lord, Lord of all.

Good morning.

I'm here to welcome all ladies to a Women's Day called Strength for Every Season. It's going to be on Saturday the 9th of October here at church, right up on the top floor, from 10 o'clock till 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

All women are welcome. The day will provide an opportunity to worship together, spend time praying, doing craft, learning, and enjoying spending time in fellowship with women in our church. Something we haven't really been able to do for quite a long time. Maria Bond is going to be the speaker. She is the church partnering coordinator in Gold Hill Baptist Church in Chelfont.

[34 : 35] She's an engaging speaker who came to faith as an adult. And she'll be sharing from God's word about our identity in God and some of her personal experience in the different seasons of life.

So this day is open to all women. We would love you to come. Please look at the church website to book in. If you can't manage the whole day, then come for half a day, either the morning or the afternoon would be fine.

We will be taking care to put COVID safety measures in place. And if anybody has any questions, then please feel free to ask me or Dawn or Kathy or Lynn, who have been planning the day.

Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you.

Thank you. Jeremiah 29 verse 12 says, Then you will call on me and come and pray to me and I will listen to you. Let's call on our Lord now.

[35 : 46] Let's pray. Gracious and loving Heavenly Father, we acknowledge your majesty and power and in awe of your graciousness and humbleness, we bring before you our petitions now.

As a nation we're starting to get back into a normal way of life with most things opening up to us in our town and throughout the country As adjustments will have to be made we pray that you will guide us through these coming weeks Give those who are guiding and leading wisdom as they navigate a safe return to new or new normal lives As we hold our church members meeting on Tuesday we just pray the decisions that we made there will be inspired by you Lord We ourselves looked into Ezra last week and Nehemiah in a little while and we saw the bit there just now And they would just pray that you'll speak to us and inspire us we pray Remember all the prayers that have been brought to you throughout the summer as the people of prayer walked around Wycombe Lord bless all those prayers that have been brought into you We're privileged to have a member of parliament who follows you Give Steve Baker wisdom and discernment we pray as he represents us and you in parliament

We also bring before Erica and the Wycombe Youth for Christ team The discipleship group that they've just started The new mentoring and other opportunities in the schools as the schools open up The planning of the vision and praise evening at the end of the month that they're going to hold Lord we pray your blessing on that ministry bringing you to our future generation The Wickham Rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme here in the Hub Praise you that they've been able to help many move from emergency COVID-19 accommodations into rented But we especially remember before you those still in emergency COVID-19 accommodation That's due to be ended soon and that brings the prospect of being back on the streets at the start of winter Not a good time Lord may they find the right help when and where they need it We thank you for the 10 years that One Can Trust have been operating in Wickham For the support they get and the provision of a vehicle that they've had to help with collecting and delivering

With the likelihood of refugees coming from Afghanistan arriving in our area soon We pray that we'll be able to get help from not only from One Can Trust But housing and other welfare agencies and be shown love and welcomed into our community We pray for the weekly podcast Take 10 that the YMCA Christian Mission Team has started In which they invite people to take 10 minutes to reflect and pray for the people and places that are impacted by their work In YMC centres throughout the UK Lord it might be a blessing to all that use it Heavenly Father as we look around our world we see many countries in turmoil Lebanon, Syria, Afghanistan, many African countries where just tribal issues dominate really We pray that leaders of these nations and peoples will be influenced by your spirit And have compassion for their perceived enemies And the suffering of the innocent populations will be brought to an end Especially bring before you the women of Afghanistan We pray that they would be able to have freedom Be able to express themselves in their own society We read yesterday that they're stopping the education for girls soon So we just pray into that situation We are prompted in this week's item for prayer to pray for those who are on their own and recovering from surgery Lord give them healing and a sense of your presence Just remember Archie and his dad His dad's probably more nervous than he is as he goes into Wickham Hospital tomorrow for a very small operation Again give them a sense of peace Only you can provide Finally Lord we think of the churches in and around us We pray that as they meet sharing the gospel in various ways today Your spirit will be prevalent as they minister to their communities Being that beacon of hope in today's world All these things we ask in the precious name of Jesus Amen The first reading this morning is Nehemiah chapter 1 and chapter 2 verses 1 to 10

[40 : 36] These are the memoirs of Nehemiah the son of Hakaliah In December of the 20th year of the reign of King Artaxerxes of Persia When I was at the palace of Sushan One of my fellow Jews named Hanani came to visit me with some men who had arrived from Judah I took the opportunity

to inquire about how things were going in Jerusalem How are they getting along I asked The Jews who returned to Jerusalem from their exile here Well they replied Things are not good The wall of Jerusalem is still torn down and the gates are burned When I heard this I sat down and cried In fact I refused to eat for several days For I spent the time in prayer to the God of heaven Oh Lord God I cried out Oh great and awesome God who keeps his promises

And is so loving and kind to those who love and obey him Hear my prayer Listen carefully to what I say Look down and see me praying night and day for your people of Israel I confess that we have sinned against you Yes I and my people have committed the horrible sin Of not obeying the commandments you gave us through your servant Moses Oh please remember what you told Moses You said If you sin I will scatter you among the nations But if you return to me And obey my laws Even though you are exiled to the farthest corners of the universe I will bring you back to Jerusalem For Jerusalem is the place in which I have chosen to live We are your servants The people you rescued by your great power Oh Lord please hear my prayer Heed the prayers of those of us who delight to honour you Please help me now as I go in and ask the king for a great favour Put it into his heart to be kind to me I was the king's cupbearer One day in April, four months later As I was serving the king his wine He asked me Why are you so sad? You aren't sick, are you? You look like a man with deep troubles For until then I had always been cheerful when I was with him I was badly frightened But I replied Sir, why shouldn't I be sad? For the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins And the gates have been burned down Well, what should be done? the king asked With a quick prayer to the God of heaven I replied If it please your majesty And if you look upon me with your royal favour Send me to Judah To rebuild the city of my fathers The king replied With the queen sitting beside him How long will you be gone? [43 : 55] When will you return? And so it was agreed And I set a time for my departure And then I added this to my request If it please the king Give me letters to the governors West of the Euphrates River Instructing them to let me travel Through their countries on my way to Judah And also A letter to Asaph The manager of the king's forests Instructing him to give me timber for the beams And for the gates of the fortress near the temple And for the city walls And for a house for myself And the king granted these requests For God was being gracious to me When I arrived in the provinces West of the Euphrates River I delivered the king's letters to the governors there The king, I should add Had also sent along army officers and troops to protect me But when Sanballat the Horonite

And Tobiah, an Ammonite Who was a government official Heard of my arrival They were very angry That anyone was interested In helping Israel As Malcolm comes up To read God's word to us Let's pray for him And for us as we listen Lord, we thank you for Malcolm We thank you for all that you've laid on his heart this week As he's come to prepare This message for us And I pray that you would be speaking through him To us today And that they would not be his words But yours And that you'd give us attentive ears And soft hearts to listen To what you have to say to us today Amen Amen Well thank you Joel And thank you as well Karen What a great drama that was I really enjoyed that I wonder This story is quite alien for us in many ways But it's a great read, isn't it? When you can really feel like you're getting into the narrative But let me just remind you of the overall series we're looking at In Ezra, Nehemiah We've entitled this Rebuilding the Church And today we're going to continue in that series As we enter into the book of Nehemiah And as we look at the Bible We see the character of a creator God A rebuilding God He loves to create things Just look at the world And he loves to call a people to himself His church He loves to rebuild And it's in that character that we are following As we seek to rebuild in his name at this time So what have we learned so far?

Just a quick reminder We started off in the first week Looking at the fact that the priority was worship The temple was built first It was of the primary importance And as we start to get back into sort of normal patterns This should be our highest priority Above everything else To gather if we can If we're not having to self-isolate To gather to worship Above everything And this is what the people of God did They rebuilt the temple As the first thing that God called them to do And we saw that set out in Ezra After that The Ezra started speaking to the people of God And calling them to repentance And so the second stage was A rebuilding of the people And I think Andrew really helpfully Took us through that stage last week And again as we come to communion today We can keep short accounts with God And confess our sins And know his forgiveness Today we come to the rebuilding of the walls Around Jerusalem

And this is where we come to At the start of the book of Nehemiah Now my father used to love building As a child he was never happier Than when he was rebuilding things And even in retirement He ended up rebuilding various of the buildings At the bowls club Which he enjoyed going to They saw that they were falling down They saw they were in a terrible state And it prompted them to get building And I guess that's what was happening with Nehemiah He heard about these walls All in a terrible mess And he got going on rebuilding As he waited upon God So let's see how God called To rebuild the walls How did he do that?

[48 : 22] Well he spoke to a man Nehemiah And he spoke to him As a rather unlikely person in many ways I mean he was a cup bearer To the king He tested his wine And then he's going to be the civil engineer For this project of major wall rebuilding He was the right man in terms of contact with Artaxerxes But he seemed like the wrong man in so many ways In terms of his skills and abilities And I wonder if that speaks to us today When God may be asking us To do things which perhaps fall outside Things we've done before And saying Will you now rebuild in this area As we look at coming out of lockdown In this country And the thing about it Is that when Nehemiah Heard the report He was hearing about something He'd never seen He'd been brought up in Babylon He didn't know Jerusalem But he knew this was the holy city This was hundreds of miles away

And as he hears the report Of all the gates burnt down still And all the stones scattered He was appalled Something deep moved in him And this is what it says in verse 4 When I heard these things Says Nehemiah I sat down And I wept For some days I mourned And I fasted It's quite striking isn't it He's deeply deeply moved By what he's heard About the state of Jerusalem Nehemiah must have got those walls Into his mind's eye He must have seen What it's like He could see those gates Just in ashes That should have been the gates That the people of God Would have been going through To bring praises to God But they weren't And then he could imagine The walls that should have Offered protection But instead were ashamed To the people of Israel Could you imagine

Going up to the temple Having to stumble through Loads of rubble To get to this great city This wonderful temple Where God dwelt Where God dwelt He wept He wept And he fasted And as he did so I guess God was moving in him And he was determined To do something He didn't know quite what to do But he was determined To do something Jesus of course Looked at the city of Jerusalem Do you remember As he looked over Jerusalem He said this Oh Jerusalem Jerusalem Who kill the prophets And who torture those sent To you How often Have I longed To gather your children together As a hen gathers the chicks Under her wings And you were unwilling This city Jerusalem Has had many tears Shed over it Over the years And at this point Nehemiah is shedding tears Over a city He's never seen I wonder what this might mean For us today How might God speak to us As we look out And we see the ruins In our own society I wonder Have you seen the ruins Have you seen the ruins Of our young people Growing up today Not knowing that God Loves them Not knowing that they're Called To be children of God Made in his image Have you seen the ruins Of that generation This generation We're seeing today With terrible mental health issues Not knowing their identity In all sorts of ways Trying to make an identity For themselves I'm so grateful For those in our church Who have seen those ruins And have responded In such passion In training up The next generation

Let's pray for them And if God's calling you To get involved in that work Then please Do speak to us Have you seen the ruins Of those Who've grown cold In their love Towards Jesus During this time Of lockdown Have you seen the ruins Has it made you Weep Then let us Notice Let us call out To God Let us reach out A hand of encouragement Let us invite people Back Do you see the ruins Of people dying Without believing That anything Is going to be there After that When the Bible Is clear That it's appointed Once for man To die And after that The judgment And we long For that judgment To be good For each person Because they will have Put their trust In the one Who bears their sin [53 : 26] Jesus Christ Have you seen the ruins? Nehemiah saw the ruins Even if he couldn't see them He saw the ruins Even with a report Perhaps we see the ruins As we read our newspapers But what does it do to us?

We mustn't just despair So often we can moan And despair But what Nehemiah does Is he calls out to God Allows those Those factors Those things he's seeing To impact his heart His spirit And he And he fasts Until he senses That God Has moved And is calling him He goes on to Verses 5 to 11 Where he watches And prays Now I was quite struck When in the reading That Karen brought From her version Her translation It talked very clearly About the timings Of what's happening Nehemiah

hears about The ruins In about November December But he doesn't actually Act until March April It's quite striking That he does that Four months He spends In prayer Wondering What God Is saying Deciding What could he do He must feel powerless He's not the king Art Accesses He's just a cupbearer And then he prays These prayers Let me read them to you 5 to 7 He says Lord the God of heaven The great and awesome God Who keeps his covenant Of love With those who love him And keep his commandments Let your ear be attentive Your eyes open To hear the prayer Your servant is praying Before you day and night For your servants The people of Israel I confess the sin We Israelites Including myself My father's family Have committed against you We have acted Very wickedly against you We have not obeyed The commands Decrees and laws You gave your servant And then in verse 11 Lord let your ear Be attentive To the prayer Of this your servant And to the prayer Of your servants Who delight In revering your name Give your servant Success today By granting him favour In the presence Of this man I love the way That he just says This man He's speaking To the king of kings He's about to speak To the If you like Joe Biden Of this world And he just says Can you just Be with me As I speak To this bloke He has the The proportions right As he Comes To king Artaxerxes He goes To God In prayer Is God calling You to rebuild At this time Perhaps rebuild In your family It's a lot of work To be done there Is he calling you To rebuild Within the church Is he calling you To rebuild In your place Of work Can you see The ruins If you can see The ruins He may well Be prompting you To start Rebuilding When Joel Read through My draft sermon He I mentioned About Wickham Homeless connection At this point And he said I need to give Details on this Because he doesn't Know the story About 12-13 years ago On Christmas day People came To worship And sadly In the stairwell Of Eastern Street Car Park A lady had died Of exposure Just frozen In the stairwell As I understand I wasn't here then And people said Well hold on a minute How can we come And worship And turn Our back To the ruins In this town To those Who are homeless And out of that Disturbance That disturbing Christmas day People in this church Were raised up by God Spoken to by God To do a ministry Towards our homeless In this town And of course We now know that As Wickham Homeless connection Not only serving In this town But now further afield As well It's amazing What God does When we see The ruins Have you seen The ruins?

[57 : 34] Have you prayed? And then finally In the third part Of this narrative He goes To the king But really It's the king of kings Who is supplying All that is needed After much prayer After fasting He receives What he didn't expect He receives A letter of commendation From the king He receives A letter to get All the wood he needs Wouldn't you like That at the moment If anybody's trying To get wood A letter saying You can have Whatever there is In terms of the king's forests And remarkably This whole rebuilding project Took 52 days That's all 52 days To build something That had waited 90 years From the first return Of the exiles A remarkable achievement Remarkable what God can do When you see the ruins

And when you call And when you call upon The resources of heaven To start A work Of rebuilding I wonder if we should Turn to God In prayer As we reflect on this In our situation I forgot to say That this sermon Was kind of split Into two halves So you've got A very short one now And the little one After the communion Just in case You were wondering Let's pray shall we Dear heavenly father We invite you To open our eyes To see the ruins In our society And not to despair But to weep And repent upon On behalf of this country We invite you To show us the ruins In your church And to lead us To give a great priority To gather In worship To gather To edify Our brothers and sisters And to glorify you As you called Nehemiah We thank you For calling Us as a church To be part of Your rebuilding work

Amongst children And young people Amongst those Who are unemployed Through the CAP Job club In the new year And for those With no home Help us individually And as a church To know which ruins We are called To rebuild And to do this With the Holy Spirit zeal And with the resources Of heaven at hand Thank you Jesus That you wept Over Jerusalem And you weep Over every broken place Thank you For your cry From the cross Father Forgive them They don't know What they're doing And we rejoice That you choose You chose the cross You went that way Of suffering And massive work Of salvation To transform And heal this world Lord Jesus Help us to open Our eyes To the ruins You have in mind For us to rebuild And as we wait On you And call upon you Please supply All that we will need According to your

Riches In glory And all God's People said Amen Now in preparation For taking communion We're going to sing A beautiful song Thank you For the cross Lord I just want to check That people picked up A little One of these little Thimbles Of juice and bread If you haven't Can you raise your hand And we'll make sure You get one So Bill needs one there And Alex And Phil There's just some At the table here Brilliant Everybody upstairs okay Wasn't looking up there Marvellous Okay let's worship God As we prepare to take Bread and wine Thank you For the cross Lord Thank you For the cross Lord Thank you For the price You paid Bearing all my sin And shame In love you came And gave amazing grace Thank you For this love Thank you Thank you For the nail Pissed hands Watch me In your cleansing Floor Now all I know For forgiveness And embrace Worthy is the light Seated on the floor

[62 : 43] Crown you now With many crowns You reign victorious High and lifted on Jesus Son of God The darling of heaven Crucified Worthy is the light Worthy is the light Worthy is the light Thank you for the cross Lord Thank you for the price

You paid Bearing all my sin and shame In I became And gave amazing grace Thank you for this love, Lord Thank you for the nervous hands Washing in your cleansing flow Now all I know Your forgiveness and embrace Worthy is the Lamb Seated on the throne Crown you now With many crowns You reign victorious High and lifted up Jesus, Son of God The darling of heaven Crucified Worthy is the Lamb Worthy is the Lamb Worthy is the Lamb Worthy is the Lamb Amen Men, do take a seat God chose not to give up on the world when we turned away from him Instead he sent his Son Into the world To save what was lost To rebuild what had been ruined Jesus came and lived amongst us Teaching to renew our minds Touching to renew our bodies Turning over the money changes Table so that he could renew our worship Jesus spent much time in prayer He asked the Father That this cup of suffering Might be taken from him Yet allowed the Father He had said Not my will

But yours be done The Lord did not hold back His one and only Son But gave him up for us all He gave his best To cover our worst He gave life To defeat death He gave love To overcome fear And through Jesus The Lord fully provided For our poverty Through the riches Of his Son This is why we celebrate communion Let's come to him And confess our sins And ask for his Healing His forgiveness And his restoration Let's come A moment of quiet As you may confess your sin Before almighty God Father forgive us When we fail to recognise

[67 : 46] Our continued and deep need of you Before we met you Jesus We were dead in our trespasses And sins So we come in prayer today To ask for your forgiveness And to seek your restoration For all that is distorted All the false loves In our life We confess that we live In a sinful And God denying society And often copy The manner of living around us That leads to destruction We seek to turn away From what we know to be wrong And to follow Christ Please save us From our enemy The devil Who seeks to ridicule And destroy us Father forgive us When we assess things From our own viewpoint Rather than seeking first Your kingdom Forgive us When we have hampered Your kingdom building purposes And help us As we take bread And wine To build a right

On the cornerstone To build together As brothers and sisters As we join In your transformation purposes And all God's people said Amen In 1 Corinthians 11 Verses 23 to 26 Paul sets out The call for us To share this meal Let's hear these words Together For I received from the Lord What I also passed on to you The Lord Jesus On the night he was betrayed Took bread And when he'd given thanks He broke it And said This is my body Which is for you Do this in remembrance of me In the same way After supper He took the cup Saying This cup is the new covenant In my blood Do this whenever you drink it In remembrance of me

For whenever you eat this bread And drink this cup You proclaim the Lord's death Until he comes again Brothers and sisters The body of Jesus Was broken for you We take our little Cups here And take the first layer off And you get the wafer Hope you've all got that Let's eat together The body of Christ Broken for you Amen .

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[70 : 56] After they'd eaten, he took the cup, said this cup represents a new agreement between heaven and earth, sealed in my blood. The blood of Jesus washes us white as snow.

Let us drink and be thankful together. Father, we put our trust, our hope in you.

We seek you in prayer, guard and guide us so that we can stand against any discouragement in the name of Christ. And may the beauty of Christ be upon us.

Establish the work of our hands as we seek to rebuild your church for your glory. We look to you. Do a work by your spirit amongst us, we pray. And all God's people said, amen. Amen. I think probably time is a little against us for my second half.

[72 : 23] So we might leave that for another day, if that's okay, Lynn. She was wondering, weren't you? I'm just going to give a few reflections and then I'll ask Joel to come and join us for the last song or two.

One thing which is so important in any rebuilding is standing together and recognising that we do so. Don't worry about the slides, Stephen.

Standing together and recognising that as we do so, we are in a battle where there is an enemy who will attack us from time to time. And I think we need to be aware of that as a people.

And often that comes in words of ridicule. That's what happened, you heard at the end of that reading. Tobias was there giving ridiculing words to the people of God really think they're going to rebuild.

And sometimes we may even hear those words spoken over the church of Jesus Christ today. Let's recognise that the rebuilding was successful despite those ridiculing words.

[73 : 30] Let us be encouraged by that. And also there was a comment in the text a little bit later in Nehemiah where it was halfway through the rebuilding that was really difficult.

Where you can see you've got halfway and there's still further to go. I don't know about you in your life as a Christian. You may feel you're halfway through, three quarters through, seven eighths through, I don't know what. But we want to carry on to the end, don't we?

But often it's the halfway point that can seem difficult. And so God's people at the halfway point, what did they do? They turned to God in prayer. They wanted his help, his strength.

And the last thing that one might have said about Nehemiah 4 was there was quite a lot of rubble around. You notice there was a lot of rubble as they came into Jerusalem. There was rubble to be removed.

And sadly, the people of Judah, they said, oh, it's impossible. We're exhausted. And they said, there's too much rubble. It's kind of an interesting thing.

[74 : 30] Rubble doesn't often get much of a look in in the Bible, does it? But rubble is mentioned here. And quite often as we go forward in any kind of rebuilding, there's a lot of rubble to be removed and to move forward.

And I wonder if there's any rubble that we need to just be aware of in our own lives. Things we're holding on to, which are hampering God's work moving forward.

Maybe we just need to reflect a little bit on that. So just a moment of quietness as we reflect on how Jesus gave up everything in order that the rebuilding of a people for his possession, he gave up everything for that, for us.

May we look at what we perhaps need to lay down and what we need to take up in this rebuilding time for us as a people. Let's pray, shall we? We thank you, Lord Jesus, that through your death and resurrection, you have broken the power of sin.

You've broken the power of our enemy, the devil. And you have opened up a way to a whole new creation that you are establishing.

[75 : 52] We marvel at your work amongst us at such cost to yourself. We pray that you would strengthen us as we've now just taken bread and wine again.

We so need you, Lord Jesus. We need you in our lives. We need the Holy Spirit filling us every day if we are to be able to rebuild in these days.

Protect us from the evil one. Lord, help us stand against temptation. And wherever we see any rubble in the way, Lord, help us to quickly forgive.

Help us to lay down vested interests that we may have. And help us, Lord, to go forward in whatever you're calling us to do. Father, glorify your great name through your people, the church. Amen. Amen. John. As time is pressing against us, we're just going to do the final song of the two that we had prepared, just so the projection team know.

[77 : 09] It's a song called Facing a Task Unfinished. And it talks mainly of the Great Commission that we have and the fact that as Christians, it's not a task that is done.

It's a task that still needs to be done. Like the walls still need to be rebuilt. They'd rebuilt the temple. They'd rebuilt the people. But they still had walls to be rebuilt, rubble to remove.

So we too as Christians still have work to be done. In projects as a church, the Living Stones project still has a long way to go. And other ministries have work to be done still.

We all as Christians have work to be done. We are still facing a task unfinished. So let's stand and sing to close our service today.

Amen. They sing a task unfinished, That drives us to the knees.

[78 : 36] A need that undiminished rebutes us out of peace. We who rejoice to know Thee, renew before Thy throne, the solemnness that behold Thee, To go and make Thee, To go and make Thee whole.

Where are the Lord's beside Thee, Hold their unhindered sway.

Where forces that defy Thee, Defy Thee still today. We're not to hear their crying, For life and love and light.

Our number of souls are dying, And passing to the night. We go to all the world, With kingdom, Open and light.

No other name has power to say, For Jesus Christ the Lord. He bears the torch that flame, Filled on the hands of those, Who gave their lives amazing, That Jesus died and rose.

[80 : 25] Ours is the same commission, Ours is the same commission, Ours is the same commission, The same my message and mission, But by the same commission, To Thee we yield our past.

We go to other land, With kingdom's hope unfound, No other name has power to say, For Jesus Christ the Lord.

O Father who sustained them, O Spirit who inspired, Saviour whose love constrained them, To toil with ill and hurt, From cowardice and justice, From lethargy away.

From on thine errors, We go to other land, We go to other land, His kingdom's hope unfound, No other name has power to say, But Jesus Christ the Lord.

Lord, no other name has power to say, Sing, for Jesus Christ the Lord.

[82 : 13] Lord, no other name has power to save, But yours. Lord, no other name has power to save, And I pray that as we go out into the world, Into our rebuilding projects, You would help us to remember, That only your name, Can do this rebuilding, Only your name has the power to save, Only your name has the power, To rebuild lives.

Lord as we go, I pray, That you would bless us, That you would make your face to shine upon us, And be gracious to us, Lord. I pray in Jesus' name.

Amen. Amen.