



Near and Now

*When my calling “fits” both me and the needs of others-Nehemiah
By Deacon Amanda Randall*

Warm-up Question

*When have you helped rebuild something?
Give examples*



Photo by David Beccera on [Unsplash](#)

Discussion Questions

1. What do you see in this image?
2. What do you feel looking at this image?
3. What stories from your own life does this image bring to mind?
4. What stories of the world does this image bring to mind?

Come, let us rebuild

Read [Nehemiah 2:17-20](#)

Bible Story Reflection

Just prior to where the reading starts, Nehemiah has a conversation with King Artaxerxes. As he served the king wine, King Artaxerxes noticed Nehemiah's sadness. The place of his ancestors, the city, and more had been destroyed. Nehemiah prayed and asked the king if he could be sent to Judah to rebuild the city. This is not a small feat. This calling to rebuild would take time, energy, and God's guidance.

Nehemiah calls those who went with into action to rebuild. God's graciousness abundant in this ask. It is a poignant departure from doing good for selfish reasons to doing good for the sake of the community. This was not without dissonance. The Horonite and Ammonite officials and the Arabs ridiculed them. Why would Nehemiah do this except to rebel? They do not understand God's presence or calling to rebuild for God's people.

This story is an invitation to us as well. We may never physically rebuild a city, but there is a lot of brokenness in our world. There is pain, disagreements, fighting, and more. We watch those we care about be pushed further into the margins, to the point of their rights being taken. Yet, we are called. We are called to serve as lights and physical incarnations of God's love for God's creation. We are called to show up, just like Nehemiah to create a better world for the common good.

Discussion Questions

1. Where do you see Nehemiah in your own story?
2. Talk about a time that you experienced ridicule for who you are or what you were doing.
3. What do you think is important in rebuilding?
4. How do you think Nehemiah would tell his own story?
5. What does it feel like to watch the world around you?
6. When have you felt your calling may have been bigger than you were prepared for?
7. How does God show up in you to rebuild?
8. Who needs accompaniment in your world?

Activity Suggestions

Draw a bridge, think about all the things that help build bridges between people.

Spend some time learning about different lawmaking actions that affect people on the margins. Pray for them. Pray for ways that you can be a part of positive change for the greater good.

Invite a friend (or a few) into a conversation about this text and our calling to help rebuild. Spend some time together to find tangible ways you can help rebuild.

Prayer Concerns

Those who are called to be bridge builders, those on the margins, and our lawmakers.

Closing Prayer

Help me to serve you, O God, through my prayers and through my work. In the name of +Jesus, Amen.

