

## Reading Schedule for June 4-10, 2018

The remaining chapters in Nehemiah highlight the completion of the wall. It is an amazing fact that it took just 52 days to construct the wall. That would be difficult to do in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, but we are talking about the 4<sup>th</sup> century B.C. One of my favorite lines is found in 8:10, “. . . for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” May you be inspired by Nehemiah’s leadership and the strengthening of God’s people.

**June 4 - Nehemiah 6:** “Four times they sent me the same message, and each time I gave them the same answer.” (v.4) Those in opposition were desperate. The wall was almost complete, and their efforts to stop its construction were failing. So they tried a new approach, centering their attacks on Nehemiah’s character. They used rumors, deceit and false reports. None of their accusations were credible. Even so, Nehemiah remains strong. Nehemiah is a great example of trusting God and overlooking the criticism of others. Each and every chapter builds my respect and admiration for Nehemiah. What do you learn from Nehemiah?

**June 5 - Nehemiah 7 & 8:** “They read from the Book of the Law of God, making it clear and giving the meaning so that the people understood what was being read.: (8:8) I enjoy many aspects of chapter 8, but am drawn to the helpful explanation of God’s Word to the people through the Levites. I want to be that kind of person. When we understand God’s Word, it helps us have direction in a life that is so uncertain. We do live in a society where anything goes. But God’s Word gives us direction, and it will benefit us as we apply it to our lives. There are also other very interesting aspects to this story. For example, the people were grieved that they had disobeyed the law. But now they have an opportunity to do it differently. And so, Nehemiah encourages them to rejoice and be full of joy, for this is a new day. I think you can believe the same thing. How do you respond to this inspiring chapter?

**June 6 - Nehemiah 9:** “In all that has happened to us, you have remained righteous; you have acted faithfully, while we acted wickedly.” (v.33) I was looking for a verse that would describe how the people confessed their sins to the Lord. They were honest about their intense rebellion and sin against God. Each time the people repented and returned to God, he would deliver them. God is amazingly gracious, and continues to give us second chances. Even as they say in verse 31, “You are a gracious and merciful God.” This is the kind of God we have, as much as it seems surprising to have a great God like ours continue to give us grace. He had every reason to abandon the people and give up on Israel. But now he shows his faith in us by helping them build the wall, secure their city and become the people God intended them to be. These chapters give me great hope, as God is always abounding in mercy because he loves us. How do you respond to their prayer? What aspects of it do you identify with?

**June 7 – Nehemiah 10:** “Moreover, we will bring to the storerooms of the house of our God, to the priests, the first of our ground meal, of our grain offerings, of the fruit of all our trees and of our new wine and olive oil. And we will bring a tithe of our crops to the Levites, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all the towns where we work.” (v.37) There are several references to the commitment of the people to be generous and sacrificial. The familiar principle of the tithe is mentioned as recognition of God’s goodness. To preserve the spiritual health of God’s people, he had certain leaders devote themselves to the ministry. They were called the Levites. It is interesting me to play the role of a Levite in today’s Christian community as a pastor. Your generous giving supports my role as the lead Pastor, as well as other staff, and the operation of our facility and ministry. It furthers our impact as we continue to

have a heart for missions. Your generous giving keeps all of these opportunities flourishing so that the Kingdom of God advances through the work and ministry of New Harvest. I think it’s important to honor the principle of giving the first portion of our time, treasure and talents to God. This is a principle that carries on past the Old Testament. into the New Testament ministry of the church. How do you respond to the principle of giving freely of your time, treasure and talent?

**June 8 - Nehemiah 11:** “Now the leaders of the people settled in Jerusalem. The rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten of them to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while the remaining nine were to stay in their own towns.” (v.1) It is interesting that only a few people wanted to live in Jerusalem, and so Nehemiah cast lots to determine who among the many people would move to Jerusalem. You might be wondering why that is, but Jerusalem was not completely safe, even though it was now protected with a wall. There also was the importance of rebuilding the city. So establishing their homes and businesses, they were starting from scratch. There was greater opposition and scrutiny for God’s people in this focal city. Maybe some people choose not to live in Washington D.C. because it might be the first place to be attacked. Bigger cities are known for being less safe. I would suggest reading Psalm 127 as an appropriate Psalm for safety and dedication. It says that unless the Lord watches over the city, the watchman stand guard in vain. I would encourage you to dedicate your home and our city to the Lord, asking him how you can bless the city. How might you honor our city in a way that blesses where you live?

**June 9 - Nehemiah 12:** “. . . as well as some priests with trumpets, and also Zechariah son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Mattaniah, the son of Micaiah, the son of Zakkur, the son of Asaph . . .” (v.35) I like the note in the [Life Application Bible](#), “The trumpet that earlier was a tool to rally the workers against potential threat (4:18) now became one of the instruments used to celebrate the completion of a task, the rededication of the people, and praise to God. Not only had he written powerful psalms, King David also had instituted music as a part of worship in the temple. Although Nebuchadnezzar had destroyed the temple, he couldn’t destroy worship or the music that served that purpose so well.. The reconstruction of the temple and the walls signaled the worship band to start playing again with gusto!” God’s people have been a worshipping people. We have much reason to celebrate. How do you respond to the dedication of the wall to God? What stands out to you?

**June 10 – Nehemiah 13:** “Remember me with favor, my God.” (v.31) I think of the wrap up on Nehemiah as we read this last chapter. Nehemiah was an especially effective leader, and his example lives on. Nehemiah had a clear purpose and he remained determined. His character was above reproach so that no one could accuse him rightly, even though he was accused wrongly. He is also a man of prayer, deriving great power and wisdom from his relationship to God. Nehemiah was able to accomplish a huge task against incredible odds because he learned that there is no success without risk or failure. He exemplifies true leadership, trust in God’s plan, and executes it with great determination. It is an amazing story that lives on for us today. May we all be people who live by this model, “Hand me another brick.” How do you respond to the example of Nehemiah?

**PRAYER: Pray for our graduating high school seniors. There are seven (Grant Hawker, Cameron Sherwood, Katie Crossley, Alex Patrick, Kaitlynn Allen, Josh Curtis, Megan Baily) who are connected to our church family.**