

## Nehemiah 12:27-47

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[0:00] If you remember, we got into the first 26 verses of that 12th chapter along with the bulk of the 11th chapter, which if you were to look over, it includes a listing of names. These in chapter 12 are namely the priests and Levites who are living around Jerusalem and those who are there serving.

And so now we come to a really important time historically for the people, especially during the time of Nehemiah, and that would be the dedication of the wall. The walls have been completed since the 7th chapter, and then Nehemiah said that the Lord put it into his heart to number the people and enroll them by genealogies, in which he did.

In the 11th chapter, because 8, 9, and 10, those chapters are really just a wonderful time of revival. But hopefully we'll see kind of everything come in full circle tonight in Nehemiah.

And then we've got one more chapter, the 13th chapter, which is one really of rebuke and correction. But we'll get to that if the Lord allows us to next Wednesday night. So the Word of God says, Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought out the Levites from all their places to bring them to Jerusalem, so that they might celebrate the dedication with gladness, with hymns of thanksgiving, with songs to the accompaniment of cymbals, harps, and lyres.

So the sons of the singers were assembled from the district around Jerusalem, and from the villages of the Netaphethites, and from Beth-Gilgal, and from their fields in Geba and Asmavath.

[1:25] For the singers had built themselves villages around Jerusalem. The priests and the Levites purified themselves. They also purified the people, the gates, and the wall. Then I had the leaders of Judah come up on the top of the wall, and I appointed two great choirs, the first proceeding to the right on top of the wall toward the refuse gate.

And half of the leaders of Judah followed them, with Azariah, Ezra, Meshulam, Judah, Benjamin, Shemaiah, Jeremiah, and some of the sons of the priests with trumpets.

And Zechariah, the son of Jonathan, the son of Shemaiah, the son of Metani, the son of Micaiah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Asaph, and his kinsmen, Shemaiah, Azrael, Melali, Gilali, Amiah, Nathaniel, Judah, and Hananiah, with the musical instruments of David, the man of God.

And Ezra the scribe went before them. At the fountain gate, they went directly up the steps of the city of David, by the stairway of the wall above the house of David to the water gate on the east. The second choir proceeded to the left, while I followed them with half the people on the wall, above the tower of furnaces to the broad wall, and above the gate of Ephraim by the old gate by the fish gate.

The tower of Hanel and the tower of the hundred as far as the sheep gate, and they stopped at the gate of the guard. Then the two choirs took their stand in the house of God. So did I and half of the officials with me and the priest, Eliakim, Messiah, Menenem, Micaiah, Eloni, Zechariah, and Hananiah with the trumpets, and Messiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzziah, Johanan, Machizah, Elam, and Ezra, and the singers sang with Jezariah, their leader.

[3:06] And on that day they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced, because God had given them great joy. Even the women and the children rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard from afar.

On that day men were also appointed over the chambers for the stores, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions required by the law for the priests and the Levites.

For Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who served, for they performed the worship of their God in the service of purification together with the singers and the gatekeepers in accordance with the command of David and his son Solomon.

For in the days of David and Asaph in the ancient times, there were leaders of the singers, songs of praise, and hymns of thanksgiving to God. So all Israel in the days of Zerubbabel and Nehemiah gave the portions due the singers and the gatekeepers as each day required, and set apart the consecrated portion for the Levites, and the Levites set apart the consecrated portion for the sons of Aaron.

I want you to see very quickly this evening a dedication of celebration and the impact that it has upon them. When Nehemiah was the cupbearer to the king, he asked concerning the remnant of those who had returned to Jerusalem, and he was told then that the people were living in disrepair among a wall that had been torn down, and they were living amidst calamity, the word of God says, in the first chapter.

[4:36] It tells us in the second chapter that when Nehemiah points to the people concerning their circumstances, that they are living amongst the calamity and the judgment of the world, for the walls were still destroyed.

Nehemiah heard about a people that were in despair, and when he got there, he found them the same way. The calling of Nehemiah was in portion to reconstruct the walls, but it was to reconstruct the walls so that he may reestablish the people.

He was concerned about the people of God, not just the walls around the city. And here we find that coming full circle where the people, along with the walls, are dedicated and consecrated and set apart for the glory of God.

We have seen them be awakened by the word of God. We've seen them repent and celebrate the festivals of God. We've seen them come in mourning and ashes and with dust upon themselves as they weep over their sins before a holy God.

And now we see them rejoicing at the dedication of the wall. And we see here now that it is a wonderful time of fulfillment of Nehemiah's ministry.

[5:42] We know that after this time, he will go back to the king. He will be there for some time, come back later in the 13th chapter, and find that they are no longer walking in obedience. But we're not there yet.

We are at this time of dedication. We see, first of all, in this chapter before us, that this was a corporate event. That is, it included all of the people in the area.

When Nehemiah asks concerning the walls and he finally makes his way there, we are told in Nehemiah chapter 2 that he arose in the middle of the night, he and the few men that were with him, and he went around the walls to see the mess that they were in.

It was just him and the animal that he was upon, and the few men that were with him. He told no one about his journey. He told no one what God was putting on his heart. He rode around the walls in the middle of the night just to see how bad the situation was, and then he called the people together.

We find in Nehemiah chapter 3 that the people are scattered around the wall, and each one is working on a portion of the wall. It's a wonderful chapter about how people work side by side in different places, but with one common goal, that many of them were working on portions of the wall that were directly in front of their homes, so they were paying a lot more attention to that.

[6:56] But now for the first time, we find that everyone is going around the wall together. Now it is no longer just Nehemiah and the few men that are with him. It is no longer just the people focusing on the portion of the wall in which they are working, but rather now we have two great choirs going in opposite directions along the top of the wall, and we have what some Bible commentators would say, a representation of Joshua circling the walls of Jericho with priests with trumpets in their hands because we find walking along the walls priests carrying trumpets.

And we have the people celebrating. This is not a city to be conquered. This is a city that is being dedicated and committed to the Lord. But it fits with the theme of God reestablishing his people in the promised land.

Over and over again, we see this repetition of the people being reestablished, God fulfilling his word for the reestablishment of his people in the promised land is exactly what God had declared he would do.

And they were not reestablished just because a decree had been issued and a few had moved back. They were reestablished because now they're living in an established city with completed walls. They are a recognized people.

And God's presence is manifested through the temple and the offerings that are continuing to move forward. God is fulfilling his word. And Nehemiah is demonstrating that because they call out to the people around them.

[8:22] If you remember last week when we looked at the 11th chapter, they were repopulating the city of Jerusalem. And I told you then that the inhabitants of Jerusalem around Nehemiah's time probably numbered between 8,000 to 10,000 people.

But in comparison to what it was when Nebuchadnezzar showed up with the Babylonian army and Nebuchadnezzar, his captain, when they encircled Jerusalem, it housed up to 20,000 people.

So at best, the city is at 50% capacity. It is no longer the great metropolis that it used to be. But here we are told that in those times when it came time to dedicate the wall, that they sought out the Levites from all their places to bring them to Jerusalem so that they might celebrate the dedication with gladness.

We find that they go out into the countryside and they find the Levites that are living in their Levitical cities and towns. They find the sons of the singers and the musicians. And we notice that everyone is present.

Why? Because rejoicing and celebration is a corporate event. This is not just reserved for the few. But rather the multitude is gathered together.

[9:35] There are two great choirs. And the wording there is a very specific wording. It means they are choirs of thanksgiving. They are not just choirs that are going to sing mournful songs.

They are choirs of thanksgiving. There is one going each direction upon the wall. And the people are gathered in the city. And there are trumpeters going and priests. And there are Levites serving. Everyone is functioning. This is a corporate event. And it is time when they are gathered together as the people of God as one body. And in comparison, when Nehemiah showed up several years before that, they were dispersed people, scattered people, living, as the word of God says, in calamity.

And now God has not only reestablished the walls, he has reestablished his people. Now they are the people of God who have come together. More than a breach of walls has been repaired, but rather the people have been united around the word of God, around the celebration of God, and now within the city of God.

Secondly, we notice that this is a complimentary event. That is, it takes each and every part and portion to do its place. Each one compliments the others.

[10:47] The Levites were needed. The singers were needed. The musicians were needed. We are told in verse 30, the priests and the Levites purified themselves. For this celebration to be a genuine celebration, it needed to be offered by a pure people.

Now the priests and the Levites had the ability for self-purification because they alone had the opportunity to go to the temple. The priests could offer the sacrifice of purification.

But now what we see is they extend that a little bit further. They purified themselves, and they also purified the people. For the people were dependent, during the Old Testament time, for purification to be driven from an intercessor or a priest.

I love what the book of Job says. I'm reading through the book of Job, as some of you are right now. John, I love what the book of Job says, how he says, Oh, I wish that there were an umpire that would stand between me and God, that would put his hand upon God and put his hand upon me and intercede between the two of us.

We know that person to be Jesus Christ, who does indeed intercede for man between a holy God and sinful man. In the Old Testament teaching, it is the priest that needs to stand in the gap.

[11:51] And now we see that they are purifying the people, the gates and the walls. So purification has taken part because of this complimentary

task. The choirs compliment one another as each sing correspondingly to one another.

The trumpeters and the musicians playing the songs. The priest offering the great sacrifice. All of this brings to union every part doing their part from one grand celebration.

What we notice is it's much like what Paul would declare in Ephesians chapter 4, that the people of God are comprised more of just one individual working, but rather is when each and every part does their job, does their task, then is the body healthy.

The Levites are the servants of the priest, and the priests are those who offer the sacrifices. But what would that be without the musicians? And what would the musicians be without the choirs? And what would the choirs be without the congregation?

And we see each and every aspect of society joining together here from one great cause. Every part compliments the other part, and each one needs the other.

[12:58] And it is the same today with God's people. As they come together and they celebrate and they rejoice, we need one another for each of us have been called to fulfill a role and a part.

Third, we find that this is a contagious event. And yes, I'm making my way quickly because we have business we need to discuss. This is a contagious event.

As Ezra walks with one choir of thanksgiving and Nehemiah walks with the second choir of thanksgiving, they eventually make their way to the temple. The priests there are offering sacrifices. There is grand singing. It says that the singers raise their voices to be heard. And it tells us there in verse 43, And on that day they offered a great sacrifice and rejoiced because God had given them great joy.

The singers were singing with joy because God had given them great joy. The priests were sacrificing with joy for God had given them great joy.

[14:00] But notice what it says at the end of that 43rd verse. Even the women and children rejoiced. So now the rejoicing of the choir, the rejoicing of the priest have been extended to the rejoicing of the women and children.

That is the entire congregation. It is something that is continuing to be contagious and to spread. But it goes a little further. It says, And so the joy of Jerusalem was heard from afar.

The joy permeated the entire region around them. Why? Because rejoicing is a contagious event. As these people celebrated and rejoiced in all that God was doing, each one was encouraged in their celebration by the other.

Each one was moved to a greater celebration by the other. And eventually the whole entire region around them heard and recognized the rejoicing. When God's people come together with celebration, the area in which they are is greatly affected by it.

We notice this. When we see great awakenings, we see great movements of God. The people of God definitely affect the culture around them. And this was a contagious event.

[15:15] Fourth and finally, we notice that this was not a one of, for it was a continuing event. It was a continuing event. The word of God says, On that day, men were also appointed over the chambers for the stores, the contributions, the firstfruits, and the tithes.

On that day. On that day of dedication and celebration, they appointed some men. They had already discovered in the word of God that they were to be bringing in the tithes to the storehouses. They had already determined that they were to give a contribution or a temple tax to the temple. They knew someone was to be providing wood. But on that day, the day of dedication and celebration, men were actually appointed to be over that reality.

And it says that they came. Why? Why did they do that? Because they wanted to keep the storehouses full. They wanted to bring in the portion required by the law for the priests and the Levites. For Judah rejoiced.

Notice the theme of rejoicing again. Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites. For Judah knew that they were serving them. For they performed the worship of their God and the service of purification.

[16:28] So now we notice that it is a continuing event each and every day. They will continue to provide what is needed. Again, I have

underlined, not in the Bible, I don't underline in the Bible, I preach out of, but in mine, back in my office that I study out of, as each day required.

Each and every day, they brought what was required for that day. And it continued day after day after day. It tells us in verse 47, Unfortunately, their faithfulness will wane as their leadership changes.

Zerubbabel will be no more. Nehemiah will go back home. But as long as these leaders were in place, then God's people continued in their faithfulness. They continued in this celebration and this rejoicing to which they had dedicated themselves to at the dedication of the wall.

They continued to walk because the celebration of the people of God should be and ought to be a continuing event. It is not just something we do for a moment and something we can find to a ceremony, but as each day required, they brought what was needed.

So that the sacrifices and the praise and the hymn singing and the musicians could continue to do it. As long as the leaders were strong, the people continued. We know the enemy comes in.

[17:54] We know the enemy moves in, literally, in the next chapter. And we see that this work stops. But God's people for this time have been dedicated. And now they're celebrating.

And they're continuing to serve as each day requires. Very quick, because I know we have a lot of business to get to. And that's Nehemiah 12, verses 27 through 47.