



# THE HALLOWS CHURCH

## Nehemiah 1

January 7, 2024 | Frank Mayfield

Happy New year! Great to have you with us, my name is Frank I'm an elder here at the Hallows Church and I'm so excited to begin a new sermon series today in the book of Nehemiah.

We are going to press pause on our Luke Series and pick it up in January 2025 which will mean we finish Luke's gospel on Easter day 2025 (thanks to Jake)

So, why Nehemiah?

Not a very well-known and maybe for good reason:

- It isn't quoted by Jesus or any of the New Testament authors once.
- It doesn't contain any direct prophecies that point forward to Jesus.
- The book ends in a disappointing anti-climax.

Despite this, I believe there are many reasons to study this often-overlooked book, and I'm praying that by the time we finish this book we will see it as a deeply relevant book that contains immense wisdom for us individually and corporately.

I've had the privilege of diving deep into this book and I'm so excited about this series! Let me briefly try and help you get excited about spending the next few weeks studying Nehemiah together:

Firstly, although Nehemiah doesn't contain any direct prophecies pointing forward to Jesus, that doesn't mean that this book doesn't play a vital part in the biblical drama.

Turn with me to Luke 24:44.

This is the risen Jesus speaking to his disciples after he's just eaten a piece of grilled fish to prove to them that he isn't a ghost!

“He told them, “These are my words that I spoke to you while I was still with you – that everything written about me in the law of Moses, the prophets and the psalms must be fulfilled.”

What was Jesus' Bible?

Jesus' Bible was our Old Testament, and the way he describes these 3 sections of the O.T. was common at the time.

<u>LAW</u>		<u>PROPHETS</u>		<u>WRITINGS</u>
Genesis	<i>Former Prophets</i>	Joshua Judges 1-2 Samuel 1-2 Kings	<i>Pre-Exilic Writings</i>	Psalms
Exodus				Job Proverbs Ruth Song of Songs Ecclesiastes
Leviticus				
Numbers				
Deuteronomy	<i>Latter Prophets</i>	Isaiah Jeremiah Ezekiel The Twelve	<i>Post-Exilic Writings</i>	Lamentations
				Esther
				Daniel
				Ezra-Nehemiah 1-2 Chronicles

Jesus saw all the Old Testament as a coherent whole. And he saw that coherent whole as a narrative arc, pointing to him.

So... how would Jesus view the book of Nehemiah?

Jesus would have viewed Nehemiah as playing a vital role in telling a small part of the bigger story was building up him. We will keep returning to Jesus' view of Nehemiah as we go through this series because in order to read Nehemiah properly you have to ask how it points to Jesus.

The second reason to get excited about reading Nehemiah is found in 2 Tim 3:14-16.

Paul is writing to a young church planter named Timothy, urging him to stand firm in the gospel, and this is what he writes:

“But as for you, continue in what you have learned and firmly know that from infancy you have known the sacred scriptures, which are able to make you wise for salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus. All scripture is God breathed and is profitable for teaching, for rebuking, for correcting, for training in righteousness.”

What were the sacred scriptures that Timothy learned from infancy? The Old Testament!

What does knowledge of the Old Testament give you according to Paul?

WISDOM! The O.T makes you wise, says Paul!

Wise about what? SALVATION... through whom? CHRIST JESUS!

So, both Jesus and Paul saw the immense value in every book of the Old Testament!

According to Jesus, you can't understand what he came to do if you don't understand the Old Testament!

According to Paul, you can't become wise about the salvation that Jesus brings if you don't have the Old Testament.

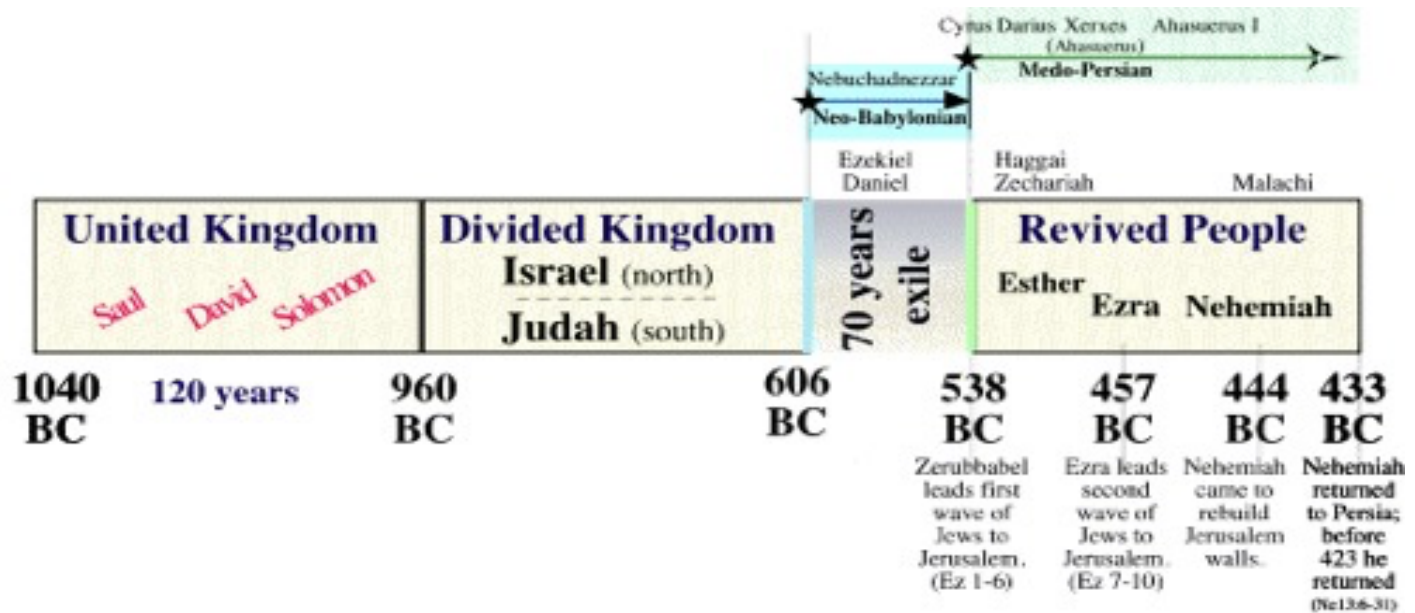
So! I hope you are now at least a little more excited about studying Nehemiah together!

Before we dive and read the first chapter, I want to lay some groundwork to help us get the most out of this book. Understanding the background and context of Nehemiah is particularly important because a bit like the last book in a long series, Nehemiah only really makes sense if you get your head round what came before it. Please bear with me here... I've done my best to cut away as much of the fat as possible and just give us the meat we need to start well in our study of Nehemiah.

The first thing to know about Nehemiah is that it is actually the 2<sup>nd</sup> half of what most scholars would understand as a single book.

The reason why we aren't doing a deep dive into both books is because they are actually very similar as they both tell stories of the efforts to rebuild Jerusalem. We will make references to the book of Ezra when appropriate for understanding Nehemiah, but we aren't going to study Ezra in depth in the interests of time.

The second thing to touch on is where Nehemiah fits into the historical timeline:



Thirdly, it's helpful to get a grasp of how Nehemiah fits into the prophetic timeline.

Let me read the first 4 verses of Ezra:

In the first year of King Cyrus of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken through Jeremiah, the Lord roused the spirit of King Cyrus to issue a proclamation throughout his entire kingdom and to put it in writing:

<sup>2</sup>This is what King Cyrus of Persia says: “The Lord, the God of the heavens, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and has appointed me to build him a house at Jerusalem in Judah. <sup>3</sup>Any of his people among you, may his God be with him, and may he go to Jerusalem in Judah and build the house of the Lord, the God of Israel, the God who is in Jerusalem. <sup>4</sup>Let every survivor, wherever he resides, be assisted by the men of that region with silver, gold, goods, and livestock, along with a freewill offering for the house of God in Jerusalem.”

If you’ll recall we did a series in the book of Daniel in the spring/summer of 2023. Can anyone remember which was the last King that Daniel served under?

Cyrus!

Same king that Ezra is referring to!

In the year 538 king Cyrus gives his blessing to the exiled Israelites to go home to rebuild the temple in Jerusalem.

This hopeful start to book of Ezra, is, as Tim Mackie from the bible project puts it; A hyperlink that should make us think back to prophetic promises, in particular, the prophecies of Jeremiah.

Jeremiah was a prophet who lived in Jerusalem before the exile, then he witnessed the fall of Jerusalem in 586BC and was carried off into captivity in Babylon. Most of the first half of the book of Jeremiah contains his sermons, warning of coming judgement against the people living in Jerusalem.

They people don’t listen to Jeremiah and continue in their sin until they are defeated by the Babylonians just as Jeremiah warned could happen.

It's easy to skim through Jeremiah and conclude it is simple a book of doom and gloom but nestled in the middle of the book, are 3 chapters which are brimming with hope.

These prophecies of hope can be grouped into 3 headings: Restoration, Rebuilding and Renewal.

## RESTORATION:

Jer 30:3 for look, the days are coming”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“when I will restore the fortunes<sup>[a]</sup> of my people Israel and Judah,” says the Lord. “I will restore them to the land I gave to their ancestors, and they will possess it.”

## REBUILDING

- Jer 31:2-4: <sup>2</sup> This is what the Lord says:

The people who survived the sword  
found favor in the wilderness.  
When Israel went to find rest,  
<sup>3</sup> the Lord appeared to him<sup>[a]</sup> from far away.  
I have loved you with an everlasting love;  
therefore, I have continued to extend faithful love to you.  
<sup>4</sup> Again I will build you so that you will be rebuilt,  
Virgin Israel.  
You will take up your tambourines again  
and go out in joyful dancing.

## RENEWAL

- Jer 31:31-34

“Look, the days are coming”—this is the Lord’s declaration—“when I will make a new covenant with the house of Israel and with the house of Judah. <sup>32</sup> This one will not be like the

covenant I made with their ancestors on the day I took them by the hand to lead them out of the land of Egypt—my covenant that they broke even though I am their master”<sup>[a]</sup>—the Lord’s declaration. <sup>33</sup> “Instead, this is the covenant I will make with the house of Israel after those days”—the Lord’s declaration. “I will put my teaching within them and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people. <sup>34</sup> No longer will one teach his neighbor or his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they will all know me, from the least to the greatest of them”—this is the Lord’s declaration. “For I will forgive their iniquity and never again remember their sin.

This final theme of renewal is the high point of this 3-part story of restoration, rebuilding and renewal. God promises a new covenant and promises to write his law onto people’s hearts.

This same promise is spoken using different imagery by Ezekiel in Ezekiel 37:14:

“I will put my Spirit in you and you will live, and I will settle you in your own land. Then you will know that I am the Lord. I have spoken and I will do it.”

These 2 promises of renewal form the prophetic backdrop for the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

In light of these promises, when we read the opening verses of Ezra and hear of King Cyrus sending exiles home to rebuild the temple, we are supposed to sit up and take notice, because it looks like this might be what the prophets Jeremiah and Ezekiel were foretelling.

We should shift forward to edge of seats, asking: could this be the moment in history where the restoration, rebuilding and renewal that the prophets foretold will take place?

Have you ever been so keen to know what happens in a book that you turn to the back pages and read the end?

If the book of Ezra starts brimming with hope of restoration, rebuilding and renewal, all we need to do is read the end of Nehemiah, and we see that sadly, they have failed.

Nehemiah 13 reveals a sad ending in what was a story of hope for restoration, rebuilding and renewal.

We read that the people are breaking God's law in a multitude of ways:

- They are using the storehouses of the temple in dishonest ways
- They aren't observing the Sabbath
- They are taking foreign wives for themselves

And most shocking of all:

- When Nehemiah finds out about their sin, he completely loses it and starts beating people up and pulling out their hair.

What an anticlimax! It was looking like God's people might really turn over a new leaf this time. They were back in Jerusalem, the temple was complete, the walls were rebuilt and they had the Torah to read... they had restoration and rebuild done... but when it came to the renewal of the heart they failed. They break the covenant once again. It's a repeat of the same cycle of obedience followed by rebellion all over again.

*It ends in tears.*

And then the book ends...

It leaves the reader feeling so confused and let down... the book of Nehemiah definitely wouldn't make the New York times bestseller list with this ending.

If the book has such a disappointing finish, the question is: Why should we read it?

Well... I think that the book of Nehemiah is deeply relevant for us as a church, and I think there is much here to ponder. Here's 10 ways this book is relevant for us

1. Like Ezra and Nehemiah, returning to a city that had been broken down, so we, as the Hallows church have been broken down by the 3-punch combo of Covid, firing our founding pastor



and losing the familial connections we had with our North and West Seattle Hallows expressions.

2. Just like the prophets and the people in exile, we are longing to see God do a work of restoration, rebuilding and renewal.
3. We will learn much about how to pray
4. We'll wrestle with the dynamic between God's sovereignty and our responsibility
5. We'll learn about the power of unity among believers
6. Just like God's people in the 5<sup>th</sup> century BC, we are sitting in the now and the not yet. Christ is risen, we have the Spirit, but we still struggle in this life as we wait for the new heavens and the new earth and the final fulfillment of God's promises.
7. This book helps us collectively mourn over our church and the global churches failures to love God and others perfectly.
8. This book is a warning for how well-intentioned efforts at renewal can still end badly and provides us with a case study of revival gone wrong.
9. We'll learn about how to react when our plans are frustrated and how to face opposition to the plans and purposes of God
10. We'll learn about how to confess our sin both individually and corporately.

With all that said, let's read the first chapter of Nehemiah together:

*1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah:*

## *News from Jerusalem*

*During the month of Chisleu in the twentieth year, when I was in the fortress city of Susa, <sup>2</sup> Hanani, one of my brothers, arrived with men from Judah, and I questioned them about Jerusalem and the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile. <sup>3</sup> They said to me, “The remnant in the province, who survived the exile, are in great trouble and disgrace. Jerusalem’s wall has been broken down, and its gates have been burned.”*

## *Nehemiah’s Prayer*

*<sup>4</sup> When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of the heavens. <sup>5</sup> I said,*

*Lord, the God of the heavens, the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps his gracious covenant with those who love him and keep his commands,<sup>6</sup> let your eyes be open and your ears be attentive to hear your servant’s prayer that I now pray to you day and night for your servants, the Israelites. I confess the sins<sup>[a]</sup> we have committed against you. Both I and my father’s family have sinned. <sup>7</sup> We have acted corruptly toward you and have not kept the commands, statutes, and ordinances you gave your servant Moses. <sup>8</sup> Please remember what you commanded your servant Moses: “If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples. <sup>9</sup> But if you return to me and carefully observe my commands, even though your exiles were banished to the farthest horizon,<sup>[b]</sup> I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I chose to have my name dwell.”<sup>10</sup> They are your servants and your people. You redeemed them by your great power and strong hand. <sup>11</sup> Please, Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant and to that of your servants who delight to revere your name. Give your servant success today, and grant him compassion in the presence of this man.<sup>[c]</sup>*

*At the time, I was the king’s cupbearer.*

4 movements:

1. Nehemiah hears v 1-3
2. Nehemiah breaks v4
3. Nehemiah prays v5-11
4. Nehemiah plans v11

1. Nehemiah hears news from Jerusalem

- When? Chislev (Nov/Dec) in the 20<sup>th</sup> year (of king Artaxerxes I ) 445 BC
- 12 years after Ezra was sent to Jerusalem.
- The first wave of the exiles had been successful in 2 major projects:
  - o Project 1 was rebuilding the temple which according to Ezra 6:15 they finished in the 6<sup>th</sup> year of King Darius (approximately 516 BC)
  - o Project 2 was to refamiliarize people with the Torah. We read in Ezra 7:10 that Ezra “had determined in his heart to study the law of the Lord, obey it and teach its statutes to the people” Ezra wanted everyone to hear about God’s love for his people, to hear about God’s law which was for their good and the surrounding nations good and to call people to reaffirm their commitment to Love and obey their God.
- So, fast forward to the 20<sup>th</sup> year of King Artaxerxes, Nehemiah’s brother and friends return from Jerusalem.

Nehemiah asks: what’s going on in Jerusalem?

- Bad news
- The walls are a shoudering ruin.
- Again, knowledge of the timeline is critical to understanding what’s going on here.
- We can tell by Nehemiah’s response that he was surprised by the news. So the destruction of the walls described by Nehemiah’s brother can’t be the destruction of the walls in 586BC when the Babylonian’s conquered Jerusalem.
- No this was a much more recent development. In Ezra 4:23 we read that during Ezra’s 3<sup>rd</sup> major project which was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, King Artaxerxes hears about Jerusalem’s history and of about some of their more famous military victories and so he forcefully stops the rebuilding.
- WALLS = SAFETY WALLS = MILITARY POWER
- Artaxerxes won’t allow them to get so strong that they pose a threat... so he orders the destruction of the walls and the burning of the gates.

This is the news that Nehemiah is given by his brother and friends

So, *Nehemiah hears.*

## 2. Nehemiah breaks v4

Listen to Nehemiah's reaction the news again:

V4: "When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of the heavens."

- We weep about the things that most move us. People weep when they hold their babies in the arms, people weep on their wedding day, people weep at funerals, We weep at films like the notebook or the rescue (2 films that are guaranteed to me cry!)
- We weep over the things that are most precious and dear to our hearts.
- Nehemiah weeps over Jerusalem.

Why is he so moved?

- As a faithful Jew, Nehemiah knew the history of Jerusalem.
- Founded under the great king David and developed further by his son Solomon.
- It was the capital city of Judah and spiritual hub of the nation.
- God made many promises about Jerusalem
- He Promised David that he would Father a royal line of kings who would sit on the throne in Jerusalem, a throne that would "endure forever" according to 2 Sam 6:16.
- God had promised that Israel would be a light to the nations and Jerusalem as the capital city, built on a hill, was the concentration of that light.
- Jerusalem wasn't just any old capital city. It was called the City of God by the Psalmist in Psalm 48v1.
- Jerusalem was supposed to display the glory of God and the joy and abundance of life that came from obedience to his words.

Though Nehemiah was in exile in Persia, he had cause to be hopeful, he knew that exiles had been allowed to return to Jerusalem, he knew about the Jeremiah's prophetic promises of restoration and renewal.

This is why he is so eager to find out about how it's going in Jerusalem.

But his brother brings news that breaks him. That sends shockwaves to his core.

Jerusalem's walls are a smoldering ruin, the exiles hadn't been successful in the rebuilding project.

With his hopes dashed, the disappointment crashes down on Nehemiah.

Here is a man whose burning love for the city of God is on display for all to see as he publicly mourns for days.

As we think about what this means for us...

The New Testament authors present a novel idea.

That idea is that the church is the new Jerusalem.

The church is now God's chosen way to saturate the earth with his glory and goodness.

Jerusalem was given the to be a light to the nations, shining the brilliance of God's loving kindness to the whole earth.

Now it is the church which is tasked with the same mission! The church is supposed to carry on the baton from Jerusalem, shining the light to the nations, making disciples everywhere... baptizing them in the name of the Father, the Son and the Spirit.

**I don't know about you but the question I think we should be asking ourselves in light of Nehemiah's love for Jerusalem was... How much do I love the church?**

- Is the Church, both local and global dear to my heart?

- Do I long for her to be faithful and fruitful?
- Have I arranged my life in such a way as to prioritize investing in the church?
- Do I burn with a passion to see God's church continue to proclaim the gospel to people who have never heard of Jesus?
- Do I pray for God's church, asking God to honor his promise to continue building his church.

I don't know about you but this list is sobering. *So often my love for the church is small in comparison to my love for other people and other things.*

I can find myself making excuses... "the big C church is too splintered, too compromised, too often on the wrong side of history" And sadly those sentiments are too often true.

But here's the thing: Nehemiah knew the good the bad and the ugly about Jerusalem.

He knew why the city had been destroyed, by the Babylonians in 586 and then again more recently under Artaxerxes. He knew it was because of the repeated failure of the people to love God and love each other. In other words, their failure keep their side of the covenant outlined in the Torah.

The failure of the people didn't diminish Nehemiah's love for Jerusalem.

And the reason for that is because Nehemiah was saturated in God's word! He knew the promises about restoration, rebuilding and renewal!

I think faith can be described as a refusal to allow discouraging circumstances to stop us from trusting in the promises of God.

Despite the churches' catalog of failures, God still loves his church, the church is the bride of Christ. And Jesus will never leave his bride.

God hasn't abandoned his church. God is committed to restoring, rebuilding, and renewing his church.

Having hope doesn't mean we cannot mourn and mourning doesn't mean we cannot have hope

Nehemiah teaches us how to mourn over the failures of God's people AND remain hopeful that one day God will finally fulfill his promises spoken through his prophets

As we look back over the past 18 months in the life of the Hallows Church there is much to mourn.

Before we move forward together into the next chapter of our life as a church, it's important that we allow ourselves to grieve what we have lost and who we have lost.

We mourn because we love this family of faith, we love the people who have left and we love the people who have been hurt.

Next, Nehemiah shows us what to do with our mourning

After he mourns, he prays, which leads us to point 3:

### **3. Nehemiah's prays v5-11a**

Nehemiah further proves that he is man who is saturated in God's word. Praying a prayer that echoes phrases from Deut 30 1-10.

Some scholars comment that reading Nehemiah is a bit like reading a prayer journal.

There is much for us to learn here.

Nehemiah shows us how to pray through our mourning

- He doesn't allow his mourning to turn into anger, bitterness, or disillusionment
- He focuses his grief in God's direction

- Going from Mourning to praying is a well-worn path in the scriptures with many Godly men and women doing precisely what Nehemiah does.

It's important that we realize that Nehemiah prayed for over 4 months. It wasn't a quick prayer thrown up to heaven and then paste on a smile and get on with life.

2:1 month of Nisan 4 months later. We will return to this later today and next week...

### **Application:**

- If we don't go to pray after we mourn then where will we go?
- WHAT IF I DON'T KNOW WHAT TO PRAY!!
- What if the only thing you got out of it was simply time with your heavenly father? Even if it's absolute intelligible nonsense coming out of your mouth, you are being held by your heavenly father in that moment and that might be precisely what you need.
- Nehemiah's 4 months of pray teaches us that God is able to hold us until we can begin to pray full sentences again.
- It's a bit like prayer rehab. Starting gently and gradually strengthening our spiritual muscles

Nehemiah teaches us how to confess

- V 7 corporate and personal sins confessed.
- Because we live in such an individualistic culture the thought of confessing the sins of the local church may seem alien to us let alone confessing the sins of whole church.
- But this is an important component of prayer as it recognizes that we are a family.
- We can also confess the sins of the nation we belong to.
- For example, as a Brit there is much that I am ashamed of about the history of the British empire. Though I wasn't physically there when these sins were being committed against other human beings, in some ways I have benefited from their sins, my life has been made easier because of the suffering of those who were trodden on for economic gain and who suffered greatly at the hands of the British.



- I'm not saying that every time we pray we should be confessing cooperate sin, but Nehemiah shows us how to healthily incorporate corporate confession more frequently into our prayer lives.

Nehemiah teaches us hold God to his promises.

- In Verse 9, Nehemiah reminds God of his promise in Deuteronomy 30v1-3:

When all these things happen to you—the blessings and curses I have set before you—and you come to your senses while you are in all the nations where the Lord your God has driven you,<sup>2</sup> and you and your children return to the Lord your God and obey him with all your heart and all your soul by doing<sup>[a]</sup> everything I am commanding you today,<sup>3</sup> then he will restore your fortunes,<sup>[b]</sup> have compassion on you, and gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you.<sup>4</sup> Even if your exiles are at the farthest horizon, he will gather you and bring you back from there.

- Nehemiah is simply praying back to God the things he had promised in his word
- This teaches us that it's ok to pray prayers that say: YOU SAID YOU WOULD DO THIS... SO DO IT!

#### **Lastly then, point 4: Nehemiah's plans v11**

4 months later... (peak into chapter 2)

Nehemiah ends his prayer by asking God to grant his success in the presence of this man.

This leaves us wondering; “what man?”

And then Nehemiah catches himself and answers our question:

“I was cupbearer to the king”

Nehemiah has hatched a plan in his mind. He is going to ask the King if it would be possible to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.

Just like Joseph was cupbearer to Pharaoh and Esther was married to Xerxes I (Artaxerxes Dad) position as cupbearer gave him intimate access to King Artaxerxes.

As cupbearer, Nehemiah was deeply trusted by the king. Nehemiah would have to select the wine for the king and then taste it first in the king's presence to show that he hadn't poisoned. Artaxerxes had reason to be paranoid, his dad, Xerxes, was killed in his own bedchamber by one of his most trusted servants.

Nehemiah would have spent a lot of time with the king in the most intimate settings and as such, he enjoyed a certain access to the King that not many people had.

As we'll see in chapter 2, after asking God for favor, Nehemiah has the courage to ASK THE SAME MAN WHO JUST destroyed and burned the walls to give him his blessing to go and do exactly the same thing!

This was a hugely risky move that could have cost him his life, As we will see, Nehemiah's plan was ultimately successful and the king not only granted him permission to go back to Jerusalem but gave him his blessing and helped supply the materials necessary for the project.

I was us to pause at this point and consider what is going on here.

Nehemiah is a man who is unusually moved by the state of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah is a man who is unusually close to the king

Could it be that God is at work here?

What if God put Nehemiah in Susa for a reason?

What if God helped Nehemiah gain the trust and affection of the most powerful man in the known world for a purpose?

What are the chances that a man who's heart burns so fiercely for Jerusalem would find himself in a position to actually do something about.

I think Nehemiah chapter 1 teaches us that God is sovereign over all things. Kings and nations are like clay in his hands, and he is weaving the strands of history together into a beautiful tapestry for his own glory?

Like Daniel who we studied together, Nehemiah was God's man on the inside! Nehemiah is God's agent, who God used to execute his plan to show mercy, forgiveness and compassion to his hurting people in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah was a man who wept for Jerusalem. Nehemiah was a man who had intimate access to the King.

Who does he remind you of?

Who else wept for Jerusalem and had intimate access to a King?

Luke 19:41:

"As he approached and saw the city, he wept for it"

Jesus wept for Jerusalem.

Jesus' heart was broken as he saw the state of the city and the state of the people.

Jesus was intimately too close to his Father. Jesus, God the Son, had spent eternity in perfect relationship with God the Father and God the Holy Spirit.

And just like Nehemiah, God the holy trinity made a plan.

And so, Jesus left the royal courts of heaven and plunged himself into the muck and the mess of our broken and hurting world.

As I said early, Nehemiah was ultimately disappointed in his efforts to bring restoration, rebuilding and renewal to the God's people living in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah serves as a TYPE of Christ, meaning that there are things about him that remind us of Jesus and he points forward to Jesus.

Like Nehemiah, Jesus' has a massive heart for his people and for his church. He made a plan to rescue us once and for all from the heavy burden of keeping God's law. He kept the law perfectly and then traded places with us, dying the death that we deserved for our covenant unfaithfulness and handed us his perfect covenant faithfulness, so that we no longer have to fear condemnation.

Praise God that Jesus is our perfect Nehemiah!

Praise God that as we seek to rebuild the Hallows church, we know that Jesus, like Nehemiah will lead us and guide us and we pick up our trowels and build our church together.