What Comes Next?

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Preacher: Dr. Michael Staton

[0:00] Well, up until chapter 7, most of the story has been about the building project in Nehemiah.

When you come to chapter 7, it's all about people. In fact, let me just invite you before we embark on this study, just go down to verse 8.
And maybe just kind of quietly to yourself, read verse 8 and the following verses. And then you tell me what you would do with this.
Because I've got to do something with this for 35 minutes. It's a list of names. It's essentially a census. It's a record of people.
It's a record of people from the past. This is the record of those who came back to the land 90 years ago. Remember, they go to exile to Babylon. Jerubal leads a group back. Ezra leads a group back.
[1:06] Nehemiah leads a group back. And up until this point, most of this book has been all about the work Nehemiah is leading his people to do to rebuild the walls around the city.

That work has been finished. But as we'll see here in chapter 7, just because the wall is finished does not mean that the work is finished. Rebuilding the wall was essential, but it was not by itself sufficient.
The hearts of the people must be revived. The hearts of the people must be reformed. That's a good word for our church even to remember. We've had the privilege through the years here to be a part of a number of building projects.
Some with new construction in addition to a lot of building projects that were renovations and remodeling, repurpose areas. And whenever you do that as a church, the tangible physical work is significant and important, but that's never all of it.
There's always things that we're learning. There's always things we need to learn about generosity and prayerfulness and trust and dependence and teamwork and priorities and focus and loving to make room for other people yet to be here.
[2:22] So when we get to chapter 7, we're going to see what's taking place here. And admittedly, at first glance, it feels a bit odd to just have a listing of names.

But there's a reason for that. And hopefully we can learn what that is. And I want to, at the end, as much time as we have at the end, give you some practical things, I think, actually from this chapter that are very important for us.
Let's just walk through together. We only have 73 verses to get through tonight, so it should be a breeze. And most of the verses are all weird names and lots of numbers, so enjoy your nap.
All right? Verses 1 and 2. Let's see how we can do here. It's sunny night, and these are the smart people, right? You can handle this. Verses 1 and 2. Power is shared.
Power is shared. Look at verse 1. Now, when the wall had been built, and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed.
[3:23] So to stop here again, and what I just said a moment ago, let me repeat that. That just because the rebuilding of the walls are complete does not mean the work is done. There's still leadership and power structure, so to speak.

Those who would be in charge of overseeing the people, leading the people, that has to be shared. Things are in order now, and construction is there, but there's more work to be done.
And so he goes on to describe who is going to be given power. Who is going to be given authority and roles here. I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed.
And I gave my brother Hananiah, and Hananiah, the governor of the castle, charge over Jerusalem. For he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many.

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What kind of people are we to trust with leadership? What are the kind of characteristics and traits that we ought to look to when people are going to be given responsibility and authority in the role of leading God's people?
[4:38] Well, there's three specific categories that are mentioned here. One is trustworthy. We need people who are trustworthy. He mentions the name of his brother, who we met in chapter 1, verse 2, who is the one that when Nehemiah said, tell me about the condition of the city and the people, and he told Nehemiah how bad things were.

And so Nehemiah says, I'm handing some of these things off. What he's doing is he's broadening the leadership base. That's an important thing for us to consider. Even though this is a historical account of something that happened 2,500 years ago, this still has good things for us to learn. Nehemiah is not trying to consolidate and hold on to power. He's trying to broaden that base a bit. He is wanting to look for people who are trustworthy to be able to do this.
Men who are trustworthy. Second, those who are faithful. For he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many.
So many people in our world today, even in the church culture, are so enamored with talent and giftedness. And those things are fine, but what really is effective in the kingdom are those who are faithful.
[6:05] Talent and charisma will get you famous. Faithfulness will give you impact.

And we live in a day where it's so easy now to become famous. And the more talent you have, the more charisma you have, the more engaging personality you have, the easier it is to build your brand, so to speak.
But here's a healthy reminder for us that when we're looking for people to bring into leadership and looking for people to take on additional responsibilities, let's look for those who are trustworthy and those who are faithful.
Faithfulness is an attribute that is so often overlooked. It's so easy to be drawn to the person that's got the great voice, whether that's in singing or in oratory skills, to be drawn to the person who has so much engagement with people, to be drawn to somebody who has so many resources, to be drawn to somebody who has so much notoriety.
But there is this simple, beautiful trait of just being faithful. Don't overlook that.
[7:27] Don't overlook that when you're looking for leadership for certain things that you're in charge of. And don't overlook that for your own life when you want to be someone the Lord uses. There is a great word to be said for just being a brother or a sister in Christ who is found faithful.

There's a third attribute and that is God-fearing. Look back again at verse 2. For he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many. To be God-fearing means to live with the reverence of God.
To see God in His proper place. And because you see God in His proper place, you'll see yourself in your proper place. There's John Witherspoon, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, who said this, It is only the fear of God that can deliver us from the fear of man.
It's a good word. We want leaders who are trustworthy, faithful, God-fearing. Those who are God-fearing are not fearful of man.
In fact, just in a practical sense, there are so many people who go through their whole life so afraid of everything, and frightened, and scared, and easily made to feel small or intimidated by other people, or threatened by accusations or threats of the world, whatever it may be.
[8:53] And just understand that the greatest way to get out of living under the fear of man is to have the proper fear of God. And when you have the proper fear of God, you can do as Augustine said many, many years ago, fear God and fear nothing else.

There's a sense of freedom that comes. When you're just a trustworthy, faithful, God-fearing person. 1 Samuel 12, 24 says, Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart.
It's an interesting verse. We're not in 1 Samuel, I know, but that verse is pertinent to what we're studying here with the character of Nehemiah. Only fear the Lord. And in all honesty, we've got to stop for a minute and say, why only fear the Lord?
After all, I could give you some things that are, in one sense, worth being fearful of. Economy craters, military conflicts, terrorism, cancer, death of a loved one.
Those are legitimate things that can and do happen. And yet, 1 Samuel 12, 24 says, Only fear the Lord, and serve Him in truth with all your heart.

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[10:12] Why only fear the Lord? Because, ultimately, man, nor the weather, nor disease, can't do anything about what lasts forever. That which is most important to you is that which cannot be taken or stolen from you.

If you would only fear the Lord, if you would only have the right and proper view and perspective of God, that everything else in the world falls into place. Remember that you are loved by God.
You are forever kept by God. And even losing our physical earthly life is merely a door through which we go through to enter into our great eternal reward.
Rightly has it been said, what can man do to me? Only fear the Lord, and serve Him with a faithful heart.
So as Nehemiah is looking to broaden the base here, he is saying, I'm appointing these brothers to do this, who are trustworthy, faithful, and God-fearing.
[11:19] If you want words to pray for your children, if you want a Christian vocabulary, a Bible vocabulary to pray for your grandchildren, there's good words right there.

Pray for them to be faithful, trustworthy, and God-fearing. Second, verse 3, protection is established.
Protection is established. Verse 3, And I said to them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be open until the sun is hot, and while they are still standing guard, let them shut the bar to the doors.
So the gates are going to open late, they're going to close early. What's going on here? Well, they're still having to be diligent and wise to keep people safe. Remember, as we've looked at in previous chapters, there's been all kinds of threats.
Threats from outside, threats from individuals, threats from neighboring nations, threats from even inside their own people, and so they still have to do the work of keeping their people safe.
[12:27] Verse 3 continues, Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts, and some in front of their own homes. What's going on here?

They've done this hard work of rebuilding. They had to organize. They had to leave their own home. They had to take care of all of the structure. There was a lot of work and sacrifice that had to be done.
And that's been completed. And here we learn, that though the major task was completed, the work itself never stops. There's a certain tenacity that as God's people, we need to have in our heart.
They've done this amazing work by God's grace to complete the walls, and now they have to realize they can't just sit back, relax, put their feet up, and do nothing.
They now have to stay organized, stay diligent, and stay committed to protecting themselves and protecting the people around them. There is still work to do.
[13:32] And this is part of the Christian life for us today where so many people, I think, grow weary. I think today about so many in our church who were teaching Sunday school, you studied your lesson, you got your crafts together, you got your lesson together for the adults, you got your discussion questions together with the youth, all the different things that go on with all our age ministries and Sunday school.

And so many people in our church today had worked all week, prepared all week, came to church, taught, labored, ministered, served, and then they wake up in the morning, and guess what? Sunday is six days away. It always is. I feel that too. You've got to keep going. You worked. You labored.
You served. And you wake up tomorrow and you've got to get ready to do it again. That's true for those who teach the Bible on Sundays. That's true for moms and dads who are raising children. You put them to bed. You get the house cleaned up. You get laundry done. You get dinner put away. And everything's peaceful for about 15 minutes. And then you wake up the next morning and here we go again.
[14:54] That's true when you pay your bills. Everything's done. All the bills were paid. Until about six days later when the next month's round starts to come in and you've got to do it all over again.

That's true when you mow your lawn. And if you're a good man of God, you mow your lawn and you stand there and you watch it. And you just take it in.
And you just say to yourself, this is magnificent. Only if you edge. If you don't edge, don't admire your lawn. And if you use a weeder for your edging, don't even talk to me.
Alright? You admire it. It's beautiful. And then the weekend comes and you've got to do it all over again. This is just true in all of our world.

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It's true in the spiritual world. Every ministry you're a part of, as soon as that work, that ministry, that class, that visit you made, whatever it may be is completed, you've got to get ready for the next one.
[16:06] And this is really where, as believers, we have to embrace that our role is to serve the Lord and serve His people until Christ comes. We don't take vacations from that.

There's no off-season in that. There's ministry labors the Lord has for us next week. And if the Lord allows us to be back physically here and still be alive and we're here next Sunday, there's classes to be taught and songs to be led and sermons to be preached and discipleship classes to lead out in and people to serve in a thousand different ways.
And as soon as that gets done next week, the Lord allows, it's going to happen again the next week and it just never stops. And we can either feel run over by that or we can embrace that that's what it means to be faithful.
That's why the attribute of being faithful in the first part of the chapter to me is so endearing. It's not real hard to do ministry for a few months.
It's not real hard to do ministry for a couple of years. It's not real hard to teach a Sunday school class for a season. But to be faithful week after week over and over and over through all kinds of seasons of life, through all kinds of pains and disappointments, to keep serving as a greeter, to keep going on mission trips, to keep praying for missionaries, to keep giving to support the Lord's work, to keep going to choir, to keep serving families and children, to keep faithful over and over and over is a beautiful attribute.
[17:55] And so I know it's easy and tempting to often say the work never stops. But that's just true until the Lord calls us home.

So as you raise your kids, as you raise your teenagers, as you teach your Sunday school class, as you lead your small group, be faithful over and over and over.
The work of rebuilding is done, but now they have to protect what they've built. I think about this every time I do a wedding.
I just did a wedding a week ago, two weeks ago, whatever it was, and I think of this. You've done all the work for your wedding, you've done the pre-marriage counseling, and you've got the cake, and you've got the flowers, and you've got the suits, and you've got the dresses, and you've got the food, and the catering.
You've got all this work, and the wedding is over, and now you've got to spend the rest of your life protecting what you have established together. The wedding may be done, but the marriage must be protected until death parts you.
[19:04] We've got to be faithful in that. Your baby is born, and you've done the hard work of growing a child, and delivering a child, and dealing with all of the pain, and adjustment, and joy, and emotion of all of that, and now, you spend the rest of your 18 years protecting that child, teaching that child, guarding the heart of that child.

The churches can build a building, or start a ministry, or have a new program, and yet, they have to go to work to protect what God has given them to do.
Now, you're worried, we're just in verse 3, but don't be, because this next section, I'm going to give you the privilege to go home and read for yourself. I think the Lord would be honored in that. Also, because I don't have a clue how to say these names.
Verses 4-69 is the third thing. The population is remembered. The population is remembered.
Something interesting happens. Look at verse 4. The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.
Scholars tell us, less than 10% of the population actually lived within the city walls. So they've rebuilt the walls of the city, but there's houses that need to be rebuilt.
[20:25] There's people who need to move into the area. Verse 5, Then my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy.

And I found the book of genealogy of those who came up at the first. And then he begins to read it.
What follows here is a long list of names referencing those who first returned with Zerubbabel in 530.
When Cyrus says in 538 they can go back. Shortly after that, he leads that first group that returns back. And here he's reading what was recorded and also in Ezra 2.
And he begins to list the names. Who they were. The numbers. How many came in each group.

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We ask ourselves, if you just let your eyes kind of scan through that long section there, what would be the point of reading for the people all of these names of people who returned 90 years ago.
[21:45] He wants the people to know their history. He wants the people to remember who came before them. There's something very important about knowing who and where you're from and who has been a part of the work you are doing.

It's a good word for us today. That's why if you go down the long big hallway to the south entrance, we've got that long hall with a bunch of old pictures.
Old buildings. People who used to be alive here, used to attend here, used to be in leadership here that have long ago passed away.
It's important for us to know that we're a part of a lineage and a legacy. It's important for us to remember that we stand on the shoulders of those who came before us.
It's important for us to know that we are stewards of what has been handed off to us. I love that wall, and I love those pictures, and I love the stories, and the description of what's there that just reminds us that as we enjoy these facilities today, as we enjoy the ministry God's given us today, we're just a link and a chain of those who came before us and of those that will come, Lord willing, behind us.
[23:12] He wants the people to know their history. He wants them to remember the names of people who came to the land.

I think it's a dangerous thing when people disregard the past. Now we all understand that there's a right and a wrong way to view history and tradition.
That can be a wrong thing if a church elevates tradition to the sense of where that becomes the most important thing to them instead of God's Word, that's a problem. If a church says, we've always done it like this, but that way they've always done it, it's not biblical, that's a problem.
But I think it's good and fitting to remind yourself that what you enjoy today has been passed down to you from the work and the sacrifice of those who came before us.
Then we get to the very end of the chapter after he gives and reads all these names to them. Verses 70-73, the past is honored. It's one of my favorite things about the holidays.
[24:25] I love the traditions. Again, we've got to keep tradition in its place. Tradition shouldn't be worshipped. Sometimes tradition needs to go away.

Sometimes a church outgrows its tradition. Sometimes a tradition is no longer effective. Whatever it may be, but even within families, I think tradition's a beautiful thing to link you to the past.
I remember as a young child, at Christmas time, we would go to my great-grandparents' house and see a bunch of people I don't even know who they were. I remember I just knew grandma or papa and nanny's house was like 209 degrees.
It was just the hottest place. You think your grandparents' place is hot. You ought to be to my great-grandparents. It was unbelievably hot. And we got a pair of socks and that's it every year. And one year, someone in our family said, can we just stay here and you just give us our socks later? And that didn't go over real well. But there's something about going and just being connected to the tradition of the past. Of honoring those who came before you.
[25:35] I think that's true in a church. I think it's good to know our past. I hope as you walk down that wall of history, I hope you'll take time to look at it and read it.

And you'll see faces. You don't know who they are. And you'll see buildings that don't look the same anymore. But it just is a reminder for us that everything we enjoy today is because of God's goodness and because of people who before us sacrificed and served to prepare for us.
Which reminds us we should do the same thing today. That's part of why, just in a practical way, that's part of why we have a building fund. A part of our church budget funds a building fund.
I don't know when we're going to build something new. That may be next year. That may be in two years. That may be in ten years. I have no idea. But when that day comes and this church needs to do that, I don't want us, if it's us, or if it's people who come after us, I don't want them to think to themselves, how could we ever do this?
Why didn't somebody think ahead? I want us to think ahead. We've got teams of people who have helped us to think ahead. And so we're preparing for the future. And it may be a building that's built fairly soon that we all get to enjoy.
[26:47] And it may be a building that's built after you've gone to glory. And it may be a building that's built with another group of pastors and leaders. But that's okay. Because we want to be faithful with our season, our link in the chain.

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We want to be grateful for those who came before us. And we want to be faithful to hand off to those who come behind us. When you come to verse 70, the pastor is honored. It says, now look at verse 70, now some of the heads of the father's houses gave to the work.
The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 derricks of gold, 50 basins, 30 priest garments, 500 menace of silver. Verse 71, and some of the heads of the father's houses gave to the treasury of the work, 20,000 derricks of gold and 2,200 menace of silver.
And what the rest of the people gave was 20,000 derricks of gold, 2,000 menace of silver, and 67 priest garments. Why would that need to be stated?
It's reminding the people that those who came before you were generous. They were faithful. And let it be said of us that we were willing to be generous and sacrificial and faithful in our day as well.
[28:11] Verse 73, so the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants and all of Israel lived in their towns.

And when the seventh month had come, now we're shifting back from the past back to Nehemiah's day, when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns. That one sentence sets the stage for what to me is one of my four or five of the most favorite chapters in all of the Bible, which is Nehemiah chapter 8.
If you do the math and do the work there, we're right around, depending on how you interpret some of that, scholars give us the date of around October 8, 445 B.C.
which is kind of cool because that's, what, Thursday? So the very thing that we're reading about actually happens to unfold this week. It sets the stage for what's about to come in chapter 8.
They've built, they've protected, they've remembered, and what's going to happen in chapter 8 is they're going to see that none of this was just about brick and mortar.
[29:35] None of this was just about a building project. None of this was just about organization and structure and materials and a plan. There's something bigger. There's something greater.

There's something more significant. Something more long-lasting that's about to break out. And Nehemiah 8 is a fascinating day.
Let me give you a few implications to think about from chapter 7. Number one, work that pleases God is led by godly people. Work that pleases God is led by godly people.
Keep those three traits in your heart this week as you pray for yourself and those around you that we would be people who are faithful, trustworthy, and God-fearing.
I'd say another thing here is that leaders need to know their people. You may look at a chapter like Nehemiah 7 and say, why in the world do they need to have another accounting and another rendering of all the names and all the people?
[30:42] Well, this tells us, I think rather clearly, that God is concerned with the details of the people in every story, in every season. The Lord cares about them.

And you have to know there are plenty of names here that people certainly felt overlooked. Most of these names did not survive in terms of getting, you don't meet a lot of children today named Asgad or Benui or Bibai.
If you have a kid that's about to be born, read Nehemiah 7. See if you find a good name in there. Dad, why did you call me Peshia? Well, I was reading Nehemiah 7 and the Lord just struck me. Yeah. But there is something endearing here to me to think about that while most of these people would have been forgotten by the world, they were absolutely known by God and remembered by Him.
So are you. In this day, right where you live, right where you serve, right where you do work and business, the Lord knows you and sees you and remembers you and you may feel invisible, overlooked, and forgotten by the world.
[32:01] But if nothing else, chapter 7 reminds us God knows His people. Be encouraged by that. Here's something else we learned. Generosity is a good sign of loving God's work.

Generosity is a good sign of loving God's work. When you read 70-73, it's a tremendous amount that the people gave.
That's just how life works. When people are aware of God's kindness, when people are aware of all they have to be thankful for, generosity just flows forth.
Stingy people are ungrateful people and so the way to become generous is not to get a raise. The way to become generous is to become more thankful, to become more aware of what God has done for you.

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And then you can be generous in all facets. More generous with your spouse. More generous with your children. More generous with helping friends. More generous with ministry in the church.
[33:07] More generous in every possible way. With your time. With your heart. With your abilities. With your resources. Everything. A great sign that you understand the blessings of God and the kindness of God and that you have God in this proper perspective is that you find a joy in generosity.

Here's another thing we learned. The work of building projects must always first be about the glory of God. The work of building projects is first always about the glory of God.
We're going to see next week a beautiful way that that all springs forth and unfolds. Number 8 or I don't know what number we're on.
5 15 whatever it is. Fulfill your responsibility in God's family. Fulfill your responsibility in God's family.
Nehemiah had a role to do. He needed to do what God had called him to do. The building program didn't need 100 Nehemiahs. It needed one. But we already spent a week looking with the map on the wall at all the counterclockwise all the different parts that they rebuilt.
[34:28] Nehemiah led and organized that but all these different individuals did the work. You needed one Nehemiah but you needed a whole lot of people who were faithful to work. Today in chapter 7 the wall has been rebuilt but now you need a whole lot of other people to come and be guards.

You need people to come and to move into the city. A lot of the people it's not that different from our world and society today. A lot of people here didn't live in the city. They lived out away. It was more quiet.
It was more peaceful. There was more space. All those kinds of things. But they need people to move into the city. There's people who are going to have to be willing to sacrifice their convenience and their preference for the good of each other.
And so we learn from that we need to fulfill our responsibility in God's family. Just be faithful with what God has given you. Be faithful where God has placed you. As we looked at the people who were rebuilding the wall were rebuilding the section closest to where they lived.
Just be faithful right where you live. Be faithful right in your ministry. Here's another one. Recount often the generous ways God has blessed you.
[35:42] Recount often the generous ways God has blessed you. Tell your children, your grandchildren, tell those in your Sunday school class, tell those in your D group how the Lord has blessed you.

I don't mean in a way of boasting and bragging about earthly things. I mean to pass on the story of how God has been faithful to you. How God has provided for you. How God has answered prayers for you.
That's part of what we learn in chapter 7 is it's good to not only know people, individuals, it's good to remember the ways that God has provided for His people. Take time to share with people how God has answered prayer.
That will encourage them to pray. Take time to share with people how God sustains you through illness. That will help them when their season of illness comes. Take time to share with people how God provided for you and gave you grace and strength when you lost a loved one because that's going to help strengthen somebody else when their day of grieving comes.
Take time to tell people how God provided for you in your time of need because there are other people who are going to be in their season of need and they need to be reminded and encouraged that God is faithful.
[36:57] See, there's something in chapter 7 that just hearkens us back to remember the past. Not in a way that would paralyze us today or in the future, but in a way that reminds us God is always at work in the lives of His people.

Tell your children the stories of God's faithfulness. Recount often how God has been good to you and good to our church. Our people need to know the stories of God's faithfulness.
Not in a way that would shine the spotlight on us, but in a way that would shine the spotlight only where it deserves on the faithfulness and the goodness of our God. And then one more.
Remember the people who came before you and honor their sacrifice and their service. Remember the people who came before you and honor their sacrifice and their service.

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You get a college degree. It's a great accomplishment. Somebody taught you to read. You do well in your ACT and earn a scholarship.
[38:05] Somebody taught you Algebra 2. You sing a solo and people were encouraged and affirmed you. Somebody taught you how to sing. You played an instrument and people were encouraged.

As you led them in worship, somebody sat down and taught you music theory. You preach a sermon and people tell you that it was very helpful somebody labored to teach you the Bible. Everything that we have that we enjoy, there are people who came before us that invested in us. And one of the real dangerous things that happens for a people, for a church, in the history that we see here in the Old Testament, one of the dangerous things we would do is forget the people who have invested in us and then we start to think, look what I've done all myself.
And it is a dangerous thing to look in the mirror and think, I am here because of me. Somebody taught you. Somebody prayed for you.
I don't have a clue who the old man was that was part of my second grade Sunday school teaching team.
[39:20] He was probably like 32, but in my mind he's like 109. I think he actually was. I don't have a clue what his name is. There's no chance he's still walking the earth.

But he taught me a Bible verse that says men ought always to pray. The reason I know that verse is that he gave it to me is he gave the kids in our class a Bible verse that started with the same letter of our first name.
Michael M. Men M. Men ought always to pray. Since the time I was 8 years old, I've known that very short part of that verse, men ought always to pray.
And it's been a reminder for me the rest of my life that if I'm going to be walking with God, I need to be a praying person. Some children's Sunday school teacher taught me that one Sunday.
And maybe the whole class remembers that. Maybe I'm just a weird guy that remembers strange things from his childhood. Either way, I've never forgotten that verse that some guy who I don't know his name invested in me one random Sunday in Sunday school where he said, I want to give a verse to every one of you that starts with the same letter of your first name and a verse that you can remember the rest of your life.
[40:46] And by God's grace, wouldn't you know, I actually remembered it for the rest of my life. just some Sunday school teacher who went to church to teach.

Remember the people who invested in you. Remember the people who taught and trained you. My grandma, who used to sit on the porch swing, and she would sing songs with me.
Taught me about the love of God through song. Taught me tis,
G-L-O-R-Y-2-0-L-N-M-S-A-V-E-D-M-H-A-P-P-Y because I'm F-R-E-E.
Once I was B-O-U-N-D and the change of S-I-N. Now V-I-C-T-O-R-Y for Jesus Reigns Within. I haven't sung that song in 50 years. But I hear my grandma singing it.
I learned to spell because my grandma taught me songs like that. Somebody prayed for me. Somebody taught me.
[41:59] Somebody cared for me. That's true for every single one of you. Somebody led you to the Lord. Somebody discipled you.

Somebody lived out the Christian faith in front of you. Somebody today was loving your children while you were in adult Sunday school teaching them and supporting what you're doing.
And it's a wonderful thing to remember the people who came before you and honor their sacrifice and honor their service. And I think it's a wonderful thing for churches to remember the same thing. Yes, let's be faithful stewards of what God has given to us today but we stand where we are today because of the faithful ministry, service, and sacrifice for those who came before us.
And one day, if the Lord tarries, there will be a generation or two that comes behind us and they won't remember your giftedness. They won't remember your beautiful voice.
[43:00] They won't know all the different things that you did to serve and to sacrifice but they will know this, that the generation before them were faithful, trustworthy, God-fearing people.

And if that could be said of us, we'll have been faithful stewards with what God has entrusted to us. Lord, we thank You for Your Word. We thank You for Nehemiah 7 and pray that it would be useful tonight to teach us and to challenge us to encourage us.

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We thank You, Lord, for those who serve today. We thank You, Lord, for those who serve before us. We pray that even from our church, You would faithfully be preparing and calling out those who will serve and lead us in the days to come.
We pray that in Christ's name for His glory. Amen. Amen.
Amen. Amen.

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