



9-24-17 Sermon Discussion Guide

"Nehemiah - Constructing Passion:
From Passion to Action"



Context

Our Christian Education theme for year is "Game On!" We are encouraging people to be fully engaged participants in the ministry of First Presbyterian Church. Throughout this year, the second Sunday of each month will be our "Game On Sundays." We'll explore how we play this game as Christians and what we need in order to play it well. This fall, in the remaining weeks, we are going through the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. This book describes events that take place in the Persian Empire and in Jerusalem during the 5th century BC. The nation of Israel was under the rule of the Persians. Nehemiah was an Israelite servant of the king, Artaxerxes. This story is important for us today because it shows the incredible impact one person can have when God gives them a passionate calling. In these coming weeks we'll explore the calling of Nehemiah and how God used him to change history.

Checking In

Since the last time your group has met, how have each of you experienced God at work? What have you celebrated? What have you mourned?

Introduction

Think of a time when you were called to wait on the Lord. Think of a time when God put a dream on your heart and you saw it through to fruition. Think of a time when you had to step way out of your comfort zone to ask something of someone, or make a big life change. Share your experiences with the group.

Discussing the Text – Nehemiah 2:1-8

1. Is it hard or easy for you to wait on the Lord? What do you do in the waiting time? How do you know when you're finished with the waiting and ready for action?

Nehemiah made a big ask of King Artaxerxes. He asked for time off *and* safe passage *and* lumber! He recognized that only God could have given him that boldness. When have you felt God's boldness working through you to do something out of your comfort zone?

So what?

1. Do you need to be more patient and "active" when God calls you to wait? Active by praying, fasting, and seeking God.

2. Do you ever let your passions fizzle out for one reason or another? Does this encourage you to pursue your passions? Author Rebekah Lyons wrote, "when your talents and your burdens collide, there you find your calling." Where is God calling you?

Prayer

Share something you for which you are thankful and/or something for which you need support. Have the group experiment with offering up short prayers ("popcorn prayers") to the Lord throughout the day. Maybe set 4 times throughout the day where you can all pause to pray (morning, midday, evening, compline [end of day]). Invite the members to report back to the group about how their experience went. If you feel God is calling you to wait or calling you to action, share with the group as you feel comfortable, so they can support you with their prayers.