**IT’S TIME TO REFOCUS**

**Nehemiah 1:1-11**

**THE BIG IDEA: God is looking for faithful people who truly love Him to refocus their commitment to His Kingdom work.**

**BAD NEWS CAN BE A CATALYST FOR KINGDOM WORK**

* *“Jerusalem and the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile. 3 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 1:2-3)
* **Oftentimes the Lord uses bad news to refocus our attention and priorities back to Him.**
* *“What, then, are we to say about these things? If God is for us, who is against us? 32 He did not even spare his own Son but gave him up for us all. How will he not also with him grant us everything?”* (Romans 8:31-32)
* **If we allow bad circumstances, negative people, or Satan’s influence to overcome us, we will never accomplish God’s Kingdom plans for us.**

**GOD USES FAITHFUL PEOPLE FOR KINGDOM WORK**

* *“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.”* (Nehemiah 1:4)
* **As followers of Jesus we should be stirred to prayer and fasting when God’s people and His Kingdom work are attacked and in “ruins.”**
* *“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. At the time, I was the king’s cupbearer.”* (Nehemiah 1:11)
* **If you are willing to be used by God for His Kingdom purposes, He will use you regardless of your pedigree.**
* *“Brothers and sisters, consider your calling: Not many were wise from a human perspective, not many powerful, not many of noble birth. 27 Instead, God has chosen what is foolish in the world to shame the wise, and God has chosen what is weak in the world to shame the strong. 28 God has chosen what is insignificant and despised in the world—what is viewed as nothing—to bring to nothing what is viewed as something, 29 so that no one may boast in his presence.”* (1 Corinthians 1:26-29)

**REPENTING OF SIN PREPARES US FOR KINGDOM WORK**

* *‘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, 6 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 we have committed against you. Both I and my father’s family have sinned. 7 We have acted corruptly toward you and have not kept the commands, statutes, and ordinances you gave your servant Moses. 8 Please remember what you commanded your servant Moses: ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples. 9 But if you return to me and carefully observe my commands, even though your exiles were banished to the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I chose to have my name dwell.’* *10 They are your servants and your people. You redeemed them by your great power and strong hand.”* (Nehemiah 1:5-10)
* **Repentance is the key that unlocks God’s blessing, provision, and power in our lives.**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Ice Breaker:** If time and resources were not an issue, what is one thing you would like to do for God’s Kingdom work on earth?

**Start thinking:**

* What do we learn about God from Nehemiah 1:1-11?
* How did Jerusalem get in the horrible condition it was in?
* Why do you think the remnant of Jews in Jerusalem were struggling so much?
* What role did sin play in the condition of Jerusalem and the Jews?

**Start sharing. Discuss in depth to create openness.**

* How would you describe the condition of God’s Church today?
* What feelings develop in you as you discuss and consider the condition of the Church today?
* How do you fit into God’s Kingdom work and His Church? What can you do to make an impact?
* What can you do as a Connect Group to advance God’s work through Renew Church in our community?
* What is your “Big Takeaway” from this message?

**Pray**

* Share prayer requests and pray for each other.
* Pray for our community to be open to the Gospel.
* Pray for our church, and leadership.
* Pray for our government leaders, and local leaders.
* Pray about anything else the Holy Spirit leads you to pray for.