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**Thanks for checking out our sermon-based Study Guides!** If you’ve never used our Study Guides before, you’ll find some basic instructions beginning at the bottom of page 2.

# Sermon-BASED Study Guide

Campus Sunday – Sermon Preached Online by Pastor Tim Ghali

“Rebuilding Our Future” - May 8, 2022

From Nehemiah 2:1-6, 17-20

This was a Campus Sunday where each one received its own unique message for their particular context. Obviously, this complicates the Study Guide and as a result, it felt best to create a guide from the Digital Campus. We’ll try to create as accessible of questions for those that have not watched the sermon. It is available at [www.grace.org/sermons](http://www.grace.org/sermons) for those interested.

In a time where many of us felt our lives overturned and dramatically interrupted, this message is a call to rebuild. And as we read in Scripture, we come to the book of Nehemiah – God’s appointed leader called to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. As we will see, this was not just about stone walls and protection, but a hope and a future awaited them as they rebuilt.

**Group Discussion Questions**

Q – Pastor Tim opened with an illustration of leading mission trips to join the rebuilding efforts of New Orleans. They discovered that there was a small town next to the Lower Ninth Ward that was just as flooded as their neighbors but because they were not within city limits, they did not receive the same federal funding and disaster assistance. Tim said that as they served in Chalmette, they learned that because less than 15% of their population had returned, many schools were closed, hospitals and municipal services stopped, abandoned neighborhoods, and very few stores were open (thankfully Home Depot and Lowes’ were open). At one point, they wondered aloud, “Is it worth rebuilding?” Clearly the answer was yes but the gravity of the question was certainly felt. Similarly, describe an experience you have been through (or have witnessed) where you asked the question, “Is it worth rebuilding?”

Q – Let’s read Nehemiah 2:1-6 a couple of times. What strikes you as interesting or intriguing? Why do you think Nehemiah, the king’s cupbearer, was hesitant to share his feelings with the king? And what do you think encouraged him to do so?

Q – Long story short, Nehemiah’s request was granted and he received letters from the king that functioned like building permits, blank checks, and also provided a small army for protection. At the same time, Nehemiah had political rivals (named in vs. 19 as Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab) that were intent on stopping him and his God-given mission. What do you think they had to gain from Nehemiah’s failure?

(*The reasons include they did not want attention and resources going to a foreigner with his own people returning from exile, with their own cultural values, and beliefs. Further, they likely had their own political aspirations on what they wanted the king’s attention focused on. And finally, it was likely that any success Nehemiah experienced would strengthen the relationship he had with the king.*)

Q – Nehemiah had his critics and cynics that we must beware of. In the message Tim framed it this way:

“Beware the cynics! Beware the critics! Some of them are failed builder themselves. And if they couldn’t rebuild, they definitely don’t want you to succeed. For some, they gain by seeing your life remain in ruins. And for some, they are just stuck. Afraid in believing that something great can be done again. Afraid to get their hopes up … just to be disappointed again. Beware the cynics. Also, beware arguably the most dangerous cynic, the one inside you.

That voice that says, “Why bother rebuilding?” That voices that says, “Who are you fooling, you can’t do this?” The one that brings up all your failures and reminds you of your shame and of your pain mentioned.

\*\*\*Perhaps our critics, cynics, and rivals have not been as obvious but how have you dealt with the voices of the naysayers that come from the outside and also from that inner voice that can potentially hinder you? What do we need to ask God for in these moments?

Q – Tim mentioned a few spaces that might be in need of rebuilding:

“Do you need to rebuild your spiritually formative practices and habits again? Prayer, mediation, the reading and application of Scripture, ask the Lord for strength to rebuild.

Do you need to rebuild a set of relationships? For some of us, we have survived Covid-19 but some of our most special and long-held relationships have suffered. Can you ask God for the strength to rebuild these bonds?

Do you need to rebuild your place in the church? Is God calling you to help build this online community? Maybe you will join a virtual group down the road, maybe you’ll feel led to start one. Maybe it’s a combination of practical actions but you will be a builder of the church?

Do you need to rebuild your hope in the future again? Not the future that pop-culture or news media outlets keep talking about. I’m talking about the future that God is calling us to. Can we rebuild our hope in the future God calls us to?”

\*\*\*\*Which of these resonates with you and is there another area in your life where you are asking God for the strength of rebuilding?

The book of Nehemiah (chapter 6:15) tells us that they completed rebuilding the wall in 52 days. It was an extraordinary work aided by the strength of God and a testimony of Nehemiah’s faith and obedience. Let us consider taking the next 52 days and prayerfully asking what needs rebuilding in our own lives? Let’s close in prayer.

**How to Use These Study Guides:**

* Consider sending out the Scripture passage to your group members ahead of time.
* Begin each meeting with a short time of checking in with one another.
* You may want to begin the discussion by reading the Scripture passage together out loud, or by summarizing the passage if everyone has read it ahead of time.
* Don’t feel like you need to discuss every question included in the Study Guide. Pick one or two to start with, and see how the conversation flows.
* If your group meets over Zoom:
  + You may need to do more overt facilitating over Zoom than you would in person. Feel free to call on people to invite them to share.
  + Try to be sensitive to attention spans over Zoom—keep the meetings shorter than they would be in person.
* Be sure to set aside time for sharing prayer requests and praying together.

**Group Leader Support:** Please reach out to your Campus Pastor or your Coach if you have any questions about leading your group or concerns about your group dynamic. If you have questions about or feedback on the Study Guides, please reach out to Pastor Tim or Pastor Rachel from the Group Life team.