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We're going to go to Nehemiah chapter 11, verse number 1. Nehemiah chapter 11, verse number 1. And the scriptures record, now the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem, and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of 10 to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while nine out of 10 remained in other towns.

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And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered to live in Jerusalem. Father, we thank you for the reading of your word. Guide us in Jesus' name we pray, amen.

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Amen.

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Amen.

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I know this evening we have scheduled a Bible 201 class for the next two Sundays, but those

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are going to be rescheduled. So Lysandra will be reaching out to those who signed up so that we can give you the new dates of those classes. This morning, I want to begin by first thanking my Savior and Lord Jesus for giving me the strength to be able to stand before you this morning

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and for the great comfort that he has brought to my son, rest of our family, as his daughter, my granddaughter, the niece and the cousin of so many, as Tatiana lost her battle with cancer this past Monday. I want to thank you guys, because your prayers have been relentless. You've kept her before the Lord. You've kept this family before the Lord.

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And as grandparents sit here today, as aunts, cousins from both sides stand here, we want to just say thank you for just walking alongside us. I use the word lost her battle. I'm talking about a physical battle with these bodies which will not inhabit eternity. This side of heaven, we will suffer temporal loss. One day we will have that new glorified body that will never feel the sting of sickness and

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and death. Our precious Tatiana will one day, as a child of God,

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be standing with all who believe.

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So while I say she lost her battle with cancer, she didn't lose the war against sin and death, because she knew who he was. Jesus defeated that at the cross. He gave victory to all who, through faith in him, him know that because of his life, his death, his burial,

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and his resurrection, we have victory. And today, she's sharing in that victory. So as I stand before you this morning, it's in full assurance of knowing that to be absent from the body is to be present with the Lord. So I know that she is beholding a glory that we only get

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glimpses of this side of heaven. So while our hearts ache, they do not grieve, has the world grieves when they lose someone. 1 Thessalonians 4 tells us, but we do not want you to be uninformed, brothers, about those who are asleep, that you may not grieve as others do who

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have no hope. For since we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so, through Jesus, God will bring with him those who have fallen asleep. Paul wrote those words so that we may be comforted, reminding us that our hearts, they long for loved ones. We have a hope that the world does not have, a hope that is in Christ Jesus, who will one day return for all who belong to him. It's that hope

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that's keeping this family moving forward, a hope that can only be understood through saving faith in Jesus Christ. This is why Paul says in the first Thessalonians 4.18, as he closes, therefore, encourage one another with these words.

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It's a family. We're all feeling the pain associated with missing Todd. We have these encouraging words that his love is being poured out in our hearts. And so we thank you all for your prayers and for your support. It was a bit uncomfortable walking out the door because I knew that I would be preaching a sermon for the first time without her not

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being in this world. And it reminds me of the first time I preached after my grandmother had passed away. And so I knew that there was no place any of us would rather be than in the house of the Lord. And I also knew that for me, to live is Christ. For you, to live is Christ. I breathe his name.

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It's above everything. It's the only reason why we're able to stand here today, because He's occupying every part of our minds, of our hearts, of our being. And so we're thankful knowing where she is. And so rather than standing before you

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and asking the Lord to give me something that would comfort the hearts of those who've been praying and comfort the hearts of family, the Lord directed me right back to where I've been, the book of Nehemiah. Because you see God moving in so many different ways. And I was good until my daughter came back

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just before I walked out here, and I wasn't anticipating that. And she said, can I pray for you? And I wasn't expecting it. And then she began to pray. And I started listening to her words, because I have this tendency to check out of where I'm at so

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that I can be where others need me to be. And she brought me back to where God wanted me to be, which is just a son hearing from his father as somebody was praying for me. Sometimes you stand back here and you just get accustomed to just going as the Lord leads. But if you cut me, I bleed.

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If something happens, I hurt. And so I knew walking in here this morning that it wasn't going to be about me. It wasn't going to be about us. It's going to be about him. And as I look at my son, I know that he

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would want nothing else than to make it about Christ. And so with that said, we return to the book of Nehemiah. And if you recall, when we left off last, the Israelites were growing in their understanding of the book of the law. They desired to reaffirm their commitment to God

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through a binding agreement. That's what we looked at last week, a covenant, if you would. Remember, revival had come, and Israel desired nothing more than for the Lord to know they were committed to the worship of him and him

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alone.

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So as they detailed their willing obligation to the Lord, they signed their names to this document. Remember, in chapter 10, verse 39, it says, we will not neglect the house of our God. In other words, they weren't offering lip service. For the minute they called Ezra to bring out

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the book of the law, as the wall was now complete, they immediately began to obey. And as Ezra and the Levites began to teach and the people began to grow in their understanding, they willingly complied. Beloved, they set their hearts to worship the Lord in spirit

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and in truth, and their actions confirmed it as they repented, turning back to the Lord, reinstituting feasts such as the Feast of Booths. When they heard from the book of the law, they began to confess. They began to turn to him in pure worship. What started out with the Lord sharing

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his heart with a cupbearer named Nehemiah and Susa of the Citadel turned into a revival for God's people. We cannot forget the road for Nehemiah wasn't easy. He left the comfort of the king's palace, his position of influence, his own wealth to come to Jerusalem, where the once glorious wall that

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surrounded and protected this magnificent city now lay in ruin. He left the palace to come and live among the rubble. So as we approach the end of this book, we must remember that adversity he endured from those who were around him and also

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from those working with him. It's the adversity that Nehemiah faced that caused us to see the hand of God that brought about not simply the building of a wall, but the revival of his people. Now, I want us to consider the challenges he faced wasn't just the slander of his name or character.

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It wasn't just the extortion that was taking place among the people. It was the very threats on his own life. From the first day Nehemiah set his heart to obey the voice of the Lord and going to rebuild, he willingly left comfortability behind.

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So while last week we became witnesses of the signing of this amazing document in which the people, beginning with Nehemiah, willingly devoted themselves to the Lord. We can't forget they didn't get there without personal sacrifice.

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Let me explain what I mean. If you go to chapter 11, beginning at verse 3 and running all the way through chapter 12, verse 26, look at it as a big parenthesis, if you would. We have these names of those who willingly gave up the comfort of their homes and towns

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in order to move back to Jerusalem. If you recall after the wall was finished, Nehemiah recorded in chapter seven, verse number four, "'The city was wide and large, "'but the people within it were few, "'and no houses had been rebuilt.'"

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So you got this wall around it, but you have all this rubble on the other side of it. The temple had already been completed, and the wall was now finished. The only thing missing was the people. There can be no revival without the people of God who at this time has set up their homes outside

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They were raising their families outside of Jerusalem So as we looked at chapter 7 We could have easily included chapter 11 and the names that were present of those who willingly return Remember the rebuilding of the wall was it wasn't a means was a means to an end in other words Nehemiah's purpose was the restoration of a people Israel's return to the worship of the Lord their God we can never forget the chief end of man It is to glorify God

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That is the chief end of man. It doesn't matter what you face. It doesn't matter what you go through It doesn't matter what you experience It doesn't matter how hard life comes at you the chief end of man No matter what you face is to glorify God in fact the harder it is to go the harder the things you go through the easier it is for you to begin to see that it's not you that's doing it as God that's carrying you and thus you glorify him so this is the picture that we see remember

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Jesus said that if we didn't worship the rocks would cry out the father the son the Holy Spirit the all-deserving of our worship and it should be the desire of our heart to worship them to worship them but the God doesn't need our worship. He desires us to love him just as he loves us. And his love isn't coerced. He loves us because he desires to. It's amazing to me. This is the love we're to have for God. In fact, because of his love for us, we're enabled, as 1st John 419 tells us, we love because he first loved us. The love of Christ is life-giving,

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transforming, empowering. It's his love that enables us to love and adore him above anything else. Now I want you to keep this in mind because the names that we see in chapter 11 and 12 as I said are one long parentheses and what I mean is these men placed their love and worship of God above themselves. Please key in on that. Their love and worship of God above themselves.

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Like Nehemiah, who left the palace, these men willingly left the comfort of their homes, their towns, to return to Jerusalem. Get the picture. The leaders were living in Jerusalem. The people cast lots to see who would return.

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I want you to think about this for a second, because there's always a great deal of responsibility you find on the leaders. It said the leaders were present but the people were living outside. The leaders knew where they needed to be in order for the work to be done so they were already present. There's a great deal of responsibility but they were living up to this responsibility. It's something you can

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pass right by but it's important to understand because leaders will stand where others won't. When God calls a leader they'll stand in the places before the people actually begin to come. And so God is calling the people back, but the leaders were already present, and now we have this wall that is built, and now we have the temple which was previously built, and so now we're ready for the people to return. They cast lots, and one out of every ten return. But there was a

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group of men who willingly offered to go back and live in Jerusalem. We see that in verse number two. Many voluntarily gave themselves to the work of the wall. So this is the first time we see Israel willingly giving themselves to the Lord. The point I believe Nehemiah is making is now that the work is done, the real work

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of returning to the worship of the Lord had begun. This required the men to not only come to work and then return to their families in their neighboring town, but to uproot their families from their comfort so as to aid in the revival of God's people. And this was all done in service to the Lord as they would leave behind friends, jobs,

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routines, extended family, all to set up life in a place that was unfamiliar to them. We can read this and think, okay, people moved back, we see what's happening. But remember this is all about revival. Can I tell you revival starts in the heart? These men were willing to do what many of us struggle to do leave all to follow the Lord Let me say it again They were willing to do what many of us struggle to do which is to leave all to follow Christ It's so easy to get comfortable in our devotion to the Lord

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We can fall into these routines or begin to question anything that takes us outside of our comfort zone Believing if it feels uncomfortable that maybe it's not from God. This is what I've been doing. This is how I go to church This is how I give this is how I do this and all of a sudden somebody begins to preach You begin here something and then begins to make you feel a little bit uncomfortable, but you say to yourself Well, you know what? I know what God's having me to do so I'm good with where I'm at.

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Beloved, you can never stay where you are because God's always maturing and growing you. So don't believe the lie that says you've arrived because you haven't. Okay, we may be made perfect in Him but He's perfecting us every moment of every day. So that means that as we're hearing and then confirming through the Word of God as the Spirit is moving something should be happening on the inside of us. There should be this progression that's moving us forward because I'm not content with where I am because guess what

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trouble's coming and if I'm not mature enough I won't be able to stand. You got an enemy who's watching you, you got an enemy who's stalking you, you got an enemy who's looking at you 24 7 and he's just waiting for the opportunity and the Lord is just saying if you continue to let me grow you, if you continue to let me mature you, if you continue to hold on to my unchanging hand, then it doesn't matter what's before you, you'll be prepared for it when you get to it. What's happening in my family right now Isn't something that should be making us shocked because we live this side of heaven

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Deaths a part of this side of heaven and I hate it But yet I love it Because it takes us from here And it brings us to where ultimately the Lord desires for all of us to be And so there is this picture, right? We have to get uncomfortable because there's gonna come a day where you're gonna be comfortable forevermore So quit trying to get comfortable here. Okay, we want to make sure that nothing moved me from what I got going on here

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The people were listening and they were understanding When you consider that many of these men helped rebuild the wall hold it They were already doing this at a cost in order to come they were we they were away from their family They were away from their personal livelihood. They weren't working their jobs. They were working here and at one point they were told they couldn't go back and They stayed and the wall was finished in an amazing 52 days

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So who would ever question their devotion to the Lord after all? The wall was standing and as a result it was a result of their commitment. But remember, the wall was never the chief aim. The chief aim of man is to glorify God. It was returned to the worship of the Lord. This means that the wall may have been built,

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but the worship as the book of the law came forward had just begun. Worshiping the Lord this side of heaven comes with a cost. We hate hearing that. Well, you know, it's grace and it's free. If I had a million dollar home and I said I'm going to sign it over to you, it's paid in full. You run around telling everybody, Pastor Will gave me a million dollar house paid in full. You be telling everybody,

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come check it out. I see Paco smiling right now, he's like, where it at? So you get this house and you're like, okay. But they say, well, hold on a minute, isn't there property taxes on that? Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, it says something like $13,000 a year, that's less than a thousand dollars a month. So, so then it's not free. Did you hear me say somebody gave me a million dollar house? It was paid for.

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Come and check out these faucets. All you got to do is walk by them and they turn on.

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OK?

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OK.

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OK. Mm-hmm.

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Look at that refrigerator.

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It's got my picture on it. Listen, this is a smart house. You ain't got to do nothing but walk in. And so you get this picture in your mind. You think I'm worried about $800, $900 a month? That's nothing compared to what I received.

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The house is free. It's interesting to me, right, that we will look at that and not consider that a cost. When we're called to follow Jesus, it's interesting all of a sudden we start weighing it. Well, well you know, it's gonna cost me this. You do know that you have been given eternal life, right? Compared to anything you do this side of heaven there is it there is an amount of money that you could have that could buy you heaven the gift that you have been given anything he asked for you this side of heaven will pale in comparison because

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you will have eternity with him so when we say it comes with a cost we need to make sure that we understand that that cost is really no cost at all here we Here we have Jerusalem in ruin. They were set up outside. Their livelihood depended on them working the very land they lived on, yet they willingly left it all behind. They say, listen, we're going to go, we're going to build, but now we're gonna go and we're gonna go back and worship the Lord our God. It reminds me of

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Elisha, 1 Kings chapter number 19. Now you know Elijah's up in the mountains, he's depressed, Jezebel's trying to kill him. He's frustrated He's mad and he's up and he's up in the mountain and he just wishes he could just die But then God speaks to him not in the not not not in the strong wind in a whisper Not an earthquake, but he whispers to him and I love I just simply tells Elijah go back Go back he didn't say lay down in the castles talk about what happened to you in the past

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He didn't say I understand why you're afraid. He didn't do anything. He said, go back. Listen, I have thousands that have not bowed and need a bell. I know what I'm doing. You need to trust me.

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Elijah goes back. But God's prepared a successor. And he sees Elisha, 1 Kings 19, 19. So he departed from there and found Elisha, the son of Shaphat, who was clowned with 12 yoke of oxen in front of him.

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And he was with the 12. Elijah passed by him and cast his cloak upon him. And he left the oxen and ran after Elijah and said, let me kiss my father and my mother, and then I will follow you. And he said to him, go back again,

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for what have I done to you? And he returned from following him and took the yoke of oxen, sacrificed them, boiled their flesh with the yoke of the oxen, and gave it to the people, and they ate. Then he arose and went after Elisha and assisted him."

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I love this picture, because we see what it truly means to follow after the Lord Liza understood that when he cast his mantle upon his cloak. He knew exactly what it meant and he had a decision to make He goes back. He says goodbye to his family. He says goodbye to his livelihood He left nothing behind. I love how it says he goes back He takes the very equipment that he was using he breaks it completely up then he slaughters all the animals that he had and he has a barbecue like none other

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and then he's ready to go well why would he do all that because he made sure he had nothing to come back to you see what we do was we're willing to follow God but we make sure that what we want to hold on to still stays right here we want to make sure I still have something to come back to something that I want. Beloved, it's not about what you want, it's about what he wants for you. Elisha made sure there was nothing for me to come back to and he began to solely and wholly follow God. He had a family, he had a great business, but

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yet he left all. How about us? What we see in Nehemiah isn't simply a call to help. us. What we see in Nehemiah isn't simply a call to help. It was a call to complete and utter devotion to the Lord. So now Israel's worship of the Lord was secondary. In some cases, it was non-existent.

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And to the Lord sent a man, a man who was a cupbearer, to bring them back to uncompromising worship of him. The Lord desires the same of us. Luke 14, 25, now great crowds accompany him. And he turned and said to them, if anyone comes to me and does not hate his own father and mother and wife

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and children and brothers and sisters, yes, even his own life, he cannot be my disciple. But we've talked about this verse before. The word hate just simply means to love less by comparison. To hate that is to set aside anything that would compete with our love and our allegiance to the Lord catch that anything Anything notice what he said

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Father mother wife children brother sister hold it and the hardest one of all your own life your own ambition your own focus He's saying listen if you love any of those things more than me You're not worthy to be my disciple

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We see Elisha leave everything behind, but the Lord Jesus is calling us to do the exact same thing Nothing should compete with our allegiance to him. The focus in this verse, we hear hate and love, we think emotion. The focus isn't emotion, the focus is will. Wherever your will goes, so will you. And this is what he's talking about. Do you choose Jesus over everything else? Is that your focus? We know the Lord isn't teaching us to hate. That would contradict his teaching to love our neighbors.

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It would contradict the teaching to love our enemies. The issue is commitment, a resolve to follow Jesus, no matter the temporal cost to oneself, a resolve to follow him. I don't read that these men went home and took a family vote.

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Honey, I think that it's important that we go over to Jerusalem now. What do you think about that? Let's get the kids inside here and see exactly what they think about that. Let's take a family vote.

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That's not what happened. They knew they needed to leave, and they left. The men led. The family who could see the men who loved God willingly followed. Make sure you get this picture, men.

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Because when you start talking about that uncompromising devotion, let me tell you where it starts, with you. In your home, in your house, with your family. You see, when you are willing to lead, something begins to happen. Your children will see it. I remember when my son called me after he surrendered.

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He said, hey, can you meet me? And him and I had been at odds back and forth for the longest, ever since he thought he was big enough to take me. And I remember when I got that phone call from him to come meet. And we met, and he walked in, and he said, hold on. And he goes back, and he grabs a Bible.

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And he comes in, and he sits down. And I remember prior to that, speaking with his mom. And she said, you can't say the things you say about the boys. And I was like, the boys are crazy. So she loved them boys. And I said, the only one that can change them is God.

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I do remember saying that. And my son came in, and he sat down, and he had a Bible in his hand. And I was looking at the Bible, and I was like, this is interesting. And as he began to talk to me, he

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began to talk to me about his surrender to Christ. And I remember sitting there, listening to him when I was just kind of in awe. And then he said, you know, I was speaking to my wife. I said, wife, you got, you're married? He was like, yeah.

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I said, to who? And he said, well, I married Mary. Married Mary. And I said, you got married? And he said, yeah. I said, why?

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He said, because that's what God would have me to do. And I knew in that moment, that wasn't the son who left. That was his son who had now been born and who had come. And so watching over these last ten years or so, faithfully growing and maturing in Christ prepares for moments like this. And so now I'm watching him lead his family.

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We never know what's going to happen with our children. What we do know is one thing. Can we be an example to them in every way, shape, and form? I know if you say prayer in the Russell household, better make sure you inside where it's warm because all my grandkids and everybody

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will go straight to the floor. They don't care where they at, outside in the heat, everybody's on the ground praying. But that's the example to honor him. Are we willing to leave all to follow him no matter the cost?

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These men loved the Lord and were committed to devoting their lives to him the minute the book of the law began penetrating their heart. So these names are recorded because the Lord is honoring them. Think about it like this.

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Today, we go to memorials to read the names of men and women who died for their country. Their names are written so that we may honor them. The same is true here. Remember when the Lord spoke to Eli about his sons, Hophni and Phinehas, quite the group of men.

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What they did before the Lord was wicked and evil. Eli chose his sons before God. In the scriptures recorded in 1 Samuel 2 30, I love how it says, for those who honor me, I will honor. It's been a verse that's been stuck in my head for years. So my desire is to honor God no matter what I'm going through.

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Because I know that if I'm honoring him, he may just maybe honor the things that are around me. Love of the Lord will stretch us so as to mature us in our worship of Him. Are you willing to count the cost? Are you willing? Truth be told, when God calls us,

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just as we see the men here, they had experienced His goodness, which means they were brought to a place of decision as we said a couple weeks ago. Do I go as the Lord command or not? Listen, I understand. The place where God will call us, the work that the Lord will ask us to do, the sacrifices

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that he may ask us to make, they may seem impossible. But can I tell you something? Those are the times when God's strength, as I've already said is Mosin. When we're willing to follow the Lord, and trust me when I say, you can only follow Him in His strength, not yours.

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Make sure you catch that. Don't pull yourself up by your bootstraps, because they will break. It's by His strength and His power. That is the only way you can follow in the manner that I'm describing, or should I say,

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in the manner that Jesus calls. And yes, it will be uncomfortable. But if we're willing to follow Jesus, just as these men who didn't cast lots, but said they would willingly go, they were willing to count the cost.

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Luke 9, 57, as they were going along the road, someone said to him, I will follow you wherever you go. And Jesus said to him, foxes have holes and birds of the air have nests, but the Son of Man has nowhere to lay his head. To another, he said, follow me.

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But he said, Lord, let me first go and bury my father and Jesus said to him leave the dead to bury their own dead but as for you go and proclaim the kingdom of God yet another said I will follow you Lord but let me first say farewell to those at my home and Jesus said to him no one who puts his hand to the plow and looks backwards is fit for the kingdom of God beloved this is beyond lip service

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It's beyond just saying listen. I'm willing to follow him when it costs me nothing I'm willing to follow him when it just makes me marginally uncomfortable I'm willing to follow him as long as it works around the things Christ is coming back And we keep saying soon soon. He's coming soon Just let me do what I need to do first these men willingly said listen. We did the work we've sacrificed we've come down. We've built the wall. We've been through we did everything He did now let us go home

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He says no no the work was never the wall the work was always the people we need now to Understand that revival is supposed to come and we need the people to come back which means we need you so yes You made a sacrifice But now God is asking you to come back and these men willingly understood that listen They may have cast lots and it may not have fell on me But it doesn't matter if it falls on me because I love God

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Because I love my Lord because I've been hearing the book of the law and I want to be a part of what God is doing In Jerusalem, so I'm not gonna stay comfortable where I'm at. I'm gonna come back and I'm gonna praise them. Is that you this morning? Are you willing to are we too busy still looking at our count take the calendar off the wall? It doesn't dictate to you you dictate to it. I understand I'm long-winded and I yell when I preach. But understand two things about it, right? I don't know how to do it any other way. And so I need you to understand something this morning. So we need

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to get to a place to where we're looking at our lives, really looking at it because I'm sitting here and I was all over the place inside my head and I came and I got out of the car and I walked inside and I'm thinking about my family I'm thinking about my son I'm thinking about all these different things and I go to walk down this hallway and I turn to the left and I look and I see somebody Ralph what are you doing here his wife just gave birth. There were some things that they had to go through there in the hospital.

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She hasn't been home long at all. How's she doing? She can't really walk right now, but...

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Why are you here?

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Because he knows how to follow the Lord. That's why. I thought coming into the building today, thinking about those who I knew weren't present. I was thinking about a lot of different things. And when I saw him, he keeps, keeps encouraging me in ways that I can't even begin to describe. Because it was the one face that I wasn't expecting to see, that when I saw, it just brought a sense of peace to my heart.

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Because I could say, well, he's here for me. He's here with me, because we're here for him. And he has us here for you. And so he's here to wash the same feet I want to wash. And knowing what's going on in his life, even as we speak, You want to talk about watching two people kind of walk? A friend of mine just lost his

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wife to cancer last week. I went to go see him last Saturday. Then a week later, I find myself in the same place. And as we were talking, someone, aware of the conversation between the two of us, made this comment to me. You know how you always hear people make that comment that hurt people hurt people? She said it's amazing that two hurting people were helping each other. That's what happens in the body of Christ. See, when we put everything else aside,

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when we only focus on Christ, when we are Christ-centric, when he is the center of everything, then that doesn't mean, OK, great, you placed God at the center. So now guess what? You won't have problems.

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It's because of the problems and the adversity in this world that God is at the center already. I know they're coming. I just want to be prepared when they get here. I'm not looking backwards. I'm only looking forward.

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There is a cost as we mature in the Word of God and as the power of the Holy Spirit continues to enable us to walk out His will. I don't want to give the impression that when they cast lots those who the lot fell on weren't willing to go back. Proverbs 16 33 said the lot is cast into the lap but it's every decision is from the Lord. They knew God was sovereign and they were still willing to go. Multiple times through this book we've seen the names of men listed. The first few verses list

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heads of family. Then the next few verses list priests and Levites. The next few verses gatekeepers and temple servants. Then it lists some appointed officials. In fact, verse 14, it talks about a hundred and twenty-eight mighty men of valor. Mighty men of valor. Think about that for a second. These were the guys who kept and guarded and protected the city. But here's what's interesting.

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Not one of their names is mentioned. Can I tell you something? We need to stop serving the Lord for recognition. It's not about whether he knows your name. It's about whether you know his and whether or not you're able to talk to others about who he is.

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You know what that's going to require? You to come outside your comfort zone. So let me ask you, are you willing to follow the Lord outside of your comfort zone? We see ordinary men used by an extraordinary God. Nehemiah led the people in the rebuilding of the wall and Ezra's leading them in revival. Both were honoring God. Continue what God honors, faithful men not clever programs.

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We get so caught up in the church today trying to make sure we have the right program, the right this and the right that, so that we can involve the right people in the right place at the right time have this group for this this group for that this group over here this group all these different types of groups and all these different kinds of programs but yet every time I open the Bible I don't see programs I see people that's what I see I don't see new and fresh

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curriculum trying to spark discipleship among God's people what I see is God use his word and those who were devoted to him to spark revival. People say, well I'm uncomfortable talking to people about Jesus. You don't have to preach a sermon. You don't have to teach a scripture to be used by God. All you need to do is come alongside one another, encourage one another, love one another, and show mercy to one another as you serve the Lord. And let me help you. If the gospel is sown in your heart, it will come out. It may not come out chapter and

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0:38:21  
verse, but you know when somebody knows the Word of God because you can hear it and let me tell you something God will cause his word to accomplish what he sent it to do and so we need to be faithful instead of trying to look for different ways to do different things we need to trust in the Lord he honored these men and this honor included their families who willingly returned we have to remember that he will not forget our labor of love Hebrews 610 for God is not unjust so as to overlook your work and the love that

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0:38:48  
you've shown for his name in serving the Saints as you still do. Listen, he says your work and your labor of love, but it's really the Holy Spirit at work in you. That's all we need. Can I tell you, we just need to stop entangling ourselves with the affairs of this world.

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0:39:03  
Return to the book, as believers devoted to honoring God through the strength provided by the Holy Spirit, as we willingly live out his truth, no matter the cost. Got to move. Oh, the election's coming up.

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0:39:21  
Don't know what's going to happen to interest rate.

7  
0:39:22  
Should buy a house right now.

2  
0:39:24  
Should do this. Should do that. Maybe I should get a car.

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0:39:26  
Maybe I should do all these different things. Can I help you? Don't get caught up in that. Buy a house, rent a house. Buy a car, take a bus. Put on new clothes, old clothes. Because can I tell you, not

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0:39:42  
one of those things is going with you. Not one of them. And we put so much time trying to make sure that we're financially secure and the Lord can say today your soul is required of thee. Now what? What? I get to leave it to my kids? I see my kids. I ain't trying to take it with me. Get the picture. We put too much of a focus. We're entangled with the things of this world.

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0:40:09  
And God is calling us to be entangled and solely and wholly focused on him. Is that us this morning? You see, we live our commitment on Sunday. But can I tell you that revival, when God's word is completely beginning to stir our hearts, we live off that commitment in our everyday life. Not just on Sunday at

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your job, when you're barbecuing in the backyard, when you're watching the game on TV, when you're out, when you're doing this, when you're doing that. It's in our everyday life. We make it seem like our commitment is when we come to the church. Okay, I'm serving the day in this capacity, I'm serving the day in that capacity, this is what I'm doing. That's not commitment. That's what we call a routine. A commitment to God is wherever you go. Some of you had the opportunity to go with my son anywhere.

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It's quite the experience, let me tell you. Because if you go with my son to eat anywhere, he will know the waiter, he will know the cook, he will know the manager by first name before he leaves. He shakes every hand, he talks to every person. I haven't seen anything like it before in my entire life.

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And you think I'm joking, take him out to eat and see what I'm talking about and hold it. Just let me let you know by the time you're done. He will also start cleaning the table before the busser gets over, okay?

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So he's cleaning the table, he's stacking the dishes. I'm feeling like I need to go to work. I got a five-four job. I'm like, what are you doing, son? And so this is how he is. People look and they'll see my son

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and they'll go, it looks a little intimidating until you talk to him, until you talk to him. And he is the softest person, okay? He got a side, but he is the softest person That you want to meet so you sit back and you think about these things right you begin to say it comes from his heart It's in his everyday life. I started to move past this chapter

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I have to remember Romans 15 it tells us everything written is for our learning These names have been etched in Scripture by God who am I to pass them over? Who am I not to talk to them? They didn't serve out of obligation. They counted the cost and willingly said, I'm ready to go. Or that we would count the cost and devote our lives

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0:42:12  
in the same way. That's worship. And at this point, it was leading to an amazing celebration. Nehemiah 12, 27, and at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites

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at all their places to bring them to Jerusalem, to celebrate the dedication with gladness, with Thanksgiving, and with singing, with cymbals, and harps, and lyres. The wall was complete, however, the people hadn't dedicated yet. Interesting, because usually we have that ribbon-cutting ceremony after it, right? But there's a hesitation. They understood they couldn't dedicate the wall represented the Lord working in Jerusalem, Israel's repentance,

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obedience, and worship represented the Lord doing the work in them. As they read God's word, repented, prayed, obeyed his precepts. As they drafted an agreement to sign, vowing to follow the book of the law with sincerity of heart. As they vowed to never neglect the house of the Lord, they were now ready to dedicate the wall because their hearts were dedicated to the Lord. So they're preparing to celebrate, and they sought the Levites. The Levites were that special tribe

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that had many responsibilities. They served in the temple. They served the Lord. And part of their service was worship. So if Israel was going to return to glorifying God, God's way, they would need the Levites.

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And so they sought them. And as they sought them to bring them from the varying towns back, the priest and the Levites understood that before they could go before the Lord and worship, their hearts and the hearts of the people need to be purified.

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Nehemiah 1230, and the priest and the Levites purify themselves, and they purify the people in the gates and the wall. It's not our work that the Lord seeks. It's the work that comes from a pure heart. Worship is first inward before it's outward.

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It involves the mind, the will, the emotions. Therefore, the good work God has prepared for us to do must flow from a pure heart, one that's set aside for God. We have to guard against raising our hands in worship, knowing our hearts are not pure. Notice I said pure, not perfect, because sanctification is a process, right? And so as we get heated up by the things we go through, it works out that dross, that impurity in the gold, and makes it purer and

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0:44:23  
purer and purer the hotter it gets. But the desire is to have that pure heart. Psalms 24.3, who shall ascend the hill of the Lord, and who shall stand in this holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart, who does not lift up his soul to what is false and does not swear deceitfully.

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It should be our heart's desire to bring praise before God with a heart that worships him. Hold it, not on Sunday, Saturday, Monday through Saturday. We'll just look at what takes place at one moment. Beloved, what was your heart like when you came here this morning? Is it focused on what's coming up afterwards? Carved on what happened before? Was it to praise Him? Let me tell you, that's God's

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desire. The question we should be asking is, how do we keep our hearts pure? Psalms 119, how can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word. With my whole heart, catch that, with my whole heart I seek you. Let me not wander from your commandments. Have you just found yourself and you're starting to wander off and you stop because you're sowing God's Word in your heart and you find yourself, you see yourself wander off, you hold on, let me not wander from your precepts. Oh Lord. I have stored up your word in my heart that I might not sin against you

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Reading the Bible isn't just an exercise in futility as We read the word it may not speak to you in the moment, but in time God brings that back to your remembrance It purifies us as we are pure pure. And so now they purified their hearts, the gates, and now they're ready to worship. And two choirs began taking their place on the wall with thanksgiving and praise, because those always flow from a pure heart. And if you go back and look at the list of names, we see the men were

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positioned according to their gifting. In 1111, those who are working within the house of the Lord. In 1116, speaks about those working outside the house of the singers the people were positioned to worship God Nehemiah 1231 that I brought the leaders of Judah up onto the wall and appointed two great choirs that gave thanks thanks one went to the south on the wall to the dung gate that's the first choir and they were following Ezra in 1238 it says the other choir of those who gave thanks

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went to the north and I followed them with half of the people that would be Nehemiah on the wall above the tower over the ovens to the broad wall and above the gate of Ephraim and by the gate of Yeshaniah and by the fish gate and the tower of Hanau and the tower of the hundred to the sheep gate and they came to a halt at the gate of the guard." Listen, I want you to get this picture right. They're up on the wall, okay? They're not walking in front of it, they're on top

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of it. I love how Swindoll says it must look like a Disneyland parade. You got all this stuff going on, right? And you got these different instruments. They're standing on the wall they built. It's a beautiful picture with musical instruments, the instruments that David had used. And remember, David commissioned Asaph, 1 Chronicles 16, 8,

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O give thanks to the Lord. Call upon his name. Make known his deeds among the people. Isn't it interesting? At one point, they were working on the wall with one hand. And the other hand, they were prepared to defend themselves.

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And now here they stand up on this wall with their hands open to praise God with a choir ready with gladness and thanksgiving With singing and cymbals and harps and leaders They were ready to erupt erupt in the worth ship worth wrth ship That's worship Worth ship it's ascribing to the Lord all he is worth

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0:47:57  
They were ready for a celebration and was going to take place on the wall. Picture it. If you're standing around and you look and all of a sudden you see all these people up and you can see them and it's amazing and they're ready to just praise God. They have purified their hearts. They are in full revival. They have returned to the worship of the Lord. Doesn't matter what's going on around them. They're willing to make the sacrifice. They're willing to count the cost. Their families are there. 1240 says both choirs of those

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who gave thanks stood in the house of God and I had half of the officials with me and the priest Ekkalum, Miasa, Mianah, okay here we go Micaiah, Elani, Zachariah, Hananiah with trumpets and Messiah, Shemaiah, Eleazar, Uzziah, Jehonah, Michael, Eli, Ezra and the singers we love the singers cuz that's easy and the singer sang with Jehezarah and their leader. And they offered great sacrifices that day

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and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy. The women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far and away. Last year during the Super Bowl, you could hear the crazy sounds of the 49er fans in my house. Bang, bang, Niner gang all day, every day.

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0:49:08  
It didn't end the way we wanted it to, but it's OK. There was laughter that could be heard throughout the neighborhood. Picture this choir standing on the wall as the musicians got ready to play. There was joy emanating from their Thanksgiving,

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0:49:25  
and it was infectious. And as the singer sang, it could be heard far away. You want to talk about a testimony? The people who were all around them opposing them were now hearing them and they were testifying to God Five times in four verses were told Israel is rejoicing

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0:49:45  
Not just the men The women the children you point out everyone is rejoicing you want to know why because they purify their hearts So now they're coming to worship. Do you experience that level of rejoicing when you come to the house of the Lord? Did you experience it today?

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0:50:11  
Psalms 122.1 says, I was glad when they said to me, let us go to the house of the Lord. When I hear the instruments and I hear the singers here, fingers here within this body. I wonder, are we rejoicing? Is there a joy and gladness of heart that comes as we enter?

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Are we happy to be standing with the body of Christ? Notice I said happy. I thought you said happiness is an emotion. It is. It's a byproduct of your heart. But your heart is filled with joy

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So therefore when you come in there should be a happiness Proverbs 15 13 a glad heart makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed Catch that a glad heart Makes a cheerful face, but by sorrow of heart the spirit is crushed Listen, I'm not suggesting God's looking for a smile What I'm saying is when you're ascribing to God all he's worth you can't help but smile.

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See that's what we see now what we see is this community of believers a community of people working and serving together a community of people hearing God's Word together a community of people repenting together a community of people confessing together a community of people praying together a community of people purifying their hearts together a community of people meeting the needs of one another together a community of people sacrificing and worshiping God together.

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There can be nothing greater than that. That's what makes you smile. That's what makes your heart filled with joy. That's when you can walk into a place and no matter what you're going through, there is a joy on the inside. And as I saw Ralph, I could smile because that brought me joy and that joy was erupting from the inside of my heart and it made me smile I saw my son standing out there made me smile I saw my family talking it made me smile because you want to know what being around the body should bring about joy and gladness this is why it's

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important for us to come together Hebrews 1024 and let us consider how to stir one another on to love and good works not neglecting to meet together as is the habit of some but encouraging one another and all the more as you see the day drawing near it would have been easy to just stay home It would have been easy to just stay together That's what we've been for the last several days and we could have just stayed there and we could have just ministered that would have

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Been the easy thing to do but that's not what God was calling us to do. I

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Was glad

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When they said unto me, let us go into the house of the Lord I wasn't disappointed because Sunday came Sunday couldn't get here quick enough. Now I wasn't disappointed when it came time to sit down and read the words of Kate. Are you gonna be able to preach? Are you gonna be able to preach? That's like asking me am I gonna be able to breathe? Because that's when I have the most strength. That's when I'm leaning most on Him.

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So I was listening to my daughter pray before I walked out there. She said give him the strength that you give him every day. I knew I wasn't walking in here on mine. I knew I was walking in here on his because if it were just mine I'd still be at home. So the question is this morning how'd you come in? Were you glad when they said let us go unto the house of the Lord? Were you happy when someone said get up we're gonna be late for church?

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You're like no I can't wait to get there. Was it like Disneyland? Or you're like, oh man, can I sleep for another 20 minutes? Can I sleep for another 30 minutes? Psalms 100, make a joyful noise to the Lord, noise to the Lord, all the earth. Serve the Lord with gladness, come into his presence with singing, know that the Lord he is God. It is he who made us and we are his, we are his people and the sheep of his pasture. Enter his gates with thanksgiving, in his courts with praise, give thanks to him, bless his name, for the Lord is good.

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Steadfast love endures forever and his faithfulness to all generations. That's what was on my mind, being involved with a worshiping community because Romans 14, seven is clear, for none of us lives to himself

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and none of us dies to himself. Everything we do is to the Lord. He is the head of the body to which we all belong. So when God's people gathers together in worship, we're testifying to the world. So now, as they are rejoicing and everyone is hearing,

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Nehemiah closes. 1244, on that day, men were appointed over the store rooms. The contributions, the first fruits, and the tithes, to gather into them the portions required by the law for the priests and for the Levites, according to the fields of the town,

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for Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. And they performed the service of their God, the service of purification, as did the singers and the gatekeepers, according to the command of David as his son Solomon.

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For long ago in the days of David and Asaph, there were directors of the singers, and there were songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. And all Israel, in the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah, gave the daily portion for the singers and the gatekeepers.

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And he set apart that which was for the Levites, and the Levites set apart that which is for the sons of Aaron you see David so much in this last section being mentioned because David knew how to praise God David knew how to find joy in the Lord he knew what it was like to praise him and so now he closes out and this section is really really simple they provided for the Levites they provided for everyone who

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was providing service to the Lord not out of obligation catch 1244. The people desired to give. Listen to what they said. For Judah rejoiced over the priests and the Levites who ministered. They rejoiced over those who were serving them.

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So they willingly gave. We talked about this a couple of weeks ago. And I said then and I'll say again, I don't talk about giving unless it's here. They were so overjoyed, they rejoiced, that they understood, yes, they were learning from the book of the law, they knew tithing, they knew giving, they knew what the responsibility was. Who was beyond that?

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They understood that there is a giving to those who are serving the Lord, back to counting the cost. Because sometimes our giving is predicated on making sure I have enough for me first.

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Can I tell you something?

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Back to counting the cost. It's not just about your time. It's not just about your talents. It also includes your treasure, your money. You really want to find out where a person's heart is check the checking account and you might find some people's heart is that QT

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okay you stop the QT for that bright you might come off that back always broke faster will you leave those third buses alone that's okay anyway my point is moment and look and see because the reality is He calls us to but the greater reality is we should want to. I'm glad to come unto the house of the Lord. 1st Corinthians 16 now concerning the collection for the saints. Listen, beloved, I pray that you're looking at this entire chapter

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because we have one more to go. And I pray you're beginning to see something. And that is, it's not about us. It's all about him and what he does in us. Let me close by saying this. The pioneering missionary William Carey

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was a cobbler, which was a shoemaker. Before he left for the mission field, he would keep a map of India before him in his shop, stopping ever so often to study it. He longed to go there and preach the gospel. He did a lot of preaching and teaching on the side,

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with the result of that his trade dwindled. One day, a friend admonished him for neglecting his business. Neglecting my business, Kerry said, my business is to extend the kingdom of God. I only cobble shoes to pay the expenses. Listen, our job's a means to an end.

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What's the end to glorify God? So therefore, does my giving to the storehouse reflect that? Beloved, going all the way back, the people desire to give to the work of the Lord, the people desire to serve the Lord, the people desire to leave the comforts of their home

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to come back to worship the Lord, the people desire to put Him first. Everything we see is a picture of the revival. The people keep saying, I pray a revival comes to the US. The United States is in need of a revival. I hear it often and always. Can I tell you what we need to first do? As a church, we need to purify our hearts.

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Which means we need to return to the Word. In the course of returning to the Word, and what needs to happen next is, then we need to begin to move forward and come outside our comfort zone. He might be telling you to go somewhere. He might be telling you to do something. He might be telling you to give something. I don't know what it is, but when you hear it, don't negotiate, don't talk about it. Like Nike, just do it. When you start to move forward in the power of His might

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so that we can see Him continuing to take the gospel to the world through us so that men and women may be saved. This is the book of Nehemiah thus far. And so I need you to understand that I am this ordinary, quirky, crazy kind of guy, who apart from God right now would be in a room crying.

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And so I need you not to look at what you think there's strength in me, or in Pat, or anybody else. There's something that we want you to really clearly see. It's not us. There is a God. And all we're doing is testifying to His mercy,

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to His goodness, to His grace, to His love, and most importantly, to His power. So when you hear me preaching from the pulpit, we don't need to get caught up in that. Turn from this. Yes, there's pain. Yes, we rise above. You say, okay, well, we'll see how it is when you go through something.

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1:00:21  
Well, I'm going through. I'm going through. Let me tell you something. God's not a liar. I'm not camped out on my words. I've been camped out on His. And I knew He wasn't a liar when I surrendered because God is not a man that He should lie nor the Son of Man that He should repent. Had He said it, will He not make it good? So numbers reminds me that I can stand on his promises.

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And today, what you see is promise fulfilled. I will carry you through the valley of shadow of death. I will carry you so you fear no evil. He is comforting everyone. So beloved, if you don't know him today, then when this service is over, find myself.

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1:01:11  
Find Pastor Ralph. Find Neil. Find Zeke. Find somebody in this building that's a believer. Say, listen, I don't know, but there's something about what was said. I'm trying to understand it all.

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1:01:28  
Because God wants you to understand. Don't leave the same way you came in. My granddaughter's passing was never in vain. God knows what He's doing, how He's doing it, and the manner in which He's doing it. And every sermon leading up to reminding me of His goodness,

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reminding us of His goodness, is what keeps us in a place of knowing that she will never come back

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1:01:57  
to us.

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1:01:59  
But as David prayed when he lost his child, we will go to Her.

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1:02:07  
Stand with me.

3  
1:02:09  
you you you you

Transcribed with Cockatoo