

## **BIBLE STUDY WEEK – NEHEMIAH CH13 THE FINAL STUDY**

**There is a beautiful chorus which has the line – “what a faithful God have I, what a faithful God.....” What a great introduction to our final study in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah. If we have seen anything during the course of this study it is that God is faithful. He keeps His promises in the big scale and the small scale. He promised to bless the seed of Abraham and give them a land of their own – here we are after the Egyptian episode and the Babylonian disaster, the city restored the land populated the temple operating. This faithfulness of God must be understood in its fullest sense as we see in the many, many problems Nehemiah is trying to sort out in the final chapter of the book that bears his name. Many scholars have stated that they wished the book ended a chapter earlier – upbeat and positive and with a Godly celebration – but it does not. God is faithful and will keep His promises so flouting the Sabbath, the Temple, the Covenant set by God to govern personal, national, spiritual life could spell disaster, so we leave Nehemiah firefighting problem after problem and we almost shout aloud – will these people never learn, then we look at our own lives and we shout a little more quietly.**

**There is a pointing forward to another nation another holy city – the New Jerusalem issued in by Christ and His first coming, made complete when He comes again.**

**Q.1. There are a series of problems identified by Nehemiah when he returns to Jerusalem, looking at each one, why do you think they were so serious and demanded the action Nehemiah took?**

**Q.2 This final chapter is punctuated by a number of important, “remember me for.....” statements that Nehemiah makes. Take a moment to review these, then look within, what would you like to be remembered for....?**

**Q.3 Not only does this final chapter make a big statement about the faithfulness of God. It also makes a very big statement about the nature and persistence of sin. It would be good to take some time to reflect on this from what we read in this chapter – the better you know your enemy the better equipped you are for the battle!**

**Q.4 As we reach the conclusion of our study perhaps it would be good to reflect on what has been a blessing to you as we have met these two men of God – Ezra and Nehemiah? Also to be honest what have you struggled with as we have taken this journey together.**

**In conclusion then – thank you for journeying with Emma and I through these past weeks and though we will take a breather now through the rest of the summer, we will never take a breather from studying God’s Word. As we look towards an uncertain future in our nation and world, as we wonder what will change and what will return to normal and when, it is good to centre again on our Father God who is faithful – Amen.**

**Please if you have any suggestions for courses of study either in the flesh or in the virtual – please do let us know. Till then continue to pray for us and each other as we, alongside the vestry, consider our options for a safe return to Church at some stage.**

**God Bless**

**Emma & Mark**

**Q1**

**Chapter 7 places an importance on belonging – is this something you are aware of in these times? Belonging to God. Belonging to a world-wide Christian family, belonging to a denomination? What importance do you give to a sense of belonging? I often use an illustration in funerals/weddings etc. My dad is from Muff, my mum from Ballywalter, we lived in Hillsborough and Lisburn, I married a girl from Omagh, we lived in London, Bedford, Bangor, Killyleagh, Ballynure and Ballymena – please don't ask me where I'm from!!! Belonging can be a tricky thing.**

**Q2**

**What score out of ten would you give the Bible – God's Word? How many times a week do you take time to read/study God's Word? What importance in our part of the world (Ballymena 2020) do people place on God's Word? Do you think living through these covid-19 days will make a difference?**

**Q3**

**When was the last time you had a deep emotional response to God's word whether preached/being read/or discussed? We see this giant Bible study move people to tears of sorrow and distress and to literally jump for joy in celebration? Are you suspicious of reactions like this within yourself, or, others? Why?**

**Emma and I would love to hear your stories about how and why a verse or section of the Bible has moved you and why? An intellect only approach to scripture can be very dry and uninspiring! An emotion only relationship with God's word can lead to serious error. This is tricky, but in God's power and sovereignty both are important. Maybe you and your Bible will get along better in the coming days.**

**God Bless you everyone keep the faith and keep safe. Mark**