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## Nehemiah 10 Making a Covenant to Keep the Covenant

Have you noticed so far in Nehemiah...there are no big God sightings, no visible miracles?

The people now in Jerusalem are doing something rather unnatural...express and commit to faith in something they cannot see

Faith is not natural for us. It's not natural to base our past/present/future on someone we cannot touch or see

Doubt is natural; envy and fear are natural; worry is natural; trying to figure out what will happen next is natural; trusting in our own strength and wisdom is natural

Even putting our faith in our own faith is natural. Putting our faith instead on the object of our faith, God, is not natural. What is unnatural to us has to be given to us

Even if we say we "believe in the power of prayer" we're not correct. Prayer by itself has no power - it's only in the One who hears our prayers is any basis for faith found, right?

Nehemiah 10:1-27 the people (heads of households, leaders) sign their names to "seal the covenant"

**Nehemiah 10:28-29** *The rest of the people, the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the temple servants, and all who have separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the Law of God, their wives, their sons, their daughters, all who have knowledge and understanding, join with their brothers, their nobles, and enter into a curse and an oath to walk in God's Law that was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord and his rules and his statutes.*

Names are made visible. They knew who was in, and who was out  
They're making a covenant with each other to together keep (renew) the covenant they already had with God, the same covenant they and their ancestors had violated and led to their recent exile

Essentially (in verse 28) they're saying, "Anyone who is willing to separate themselves from the idols and abominations of the peoples around us have a place with us, irrespective of ethnic background"

They are responding to the covenant, because, in God's mercy to them, they've already been redeemed

The Ten Commandments came after they had been redeemed from enslavement in Egypt

Opportunity to renew the covenant with God came after they had been redeemed from Persia

**Nehemiah 10:30** *We will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons.*

Same problem we see in Ezra, and in what their contemporary Malachi spoke to

This is not an ethnic issue; it is a lack of holiness issue - for the foreign wives or husbands were overt idolaters

Ever known a married couple where one is a follower of Jesus, and the other is not?

Are you aware of the heartache the believing spouse feels?

Have you seen the ends the believing spouse will go to if it means a chance the unbelieving spouse will give up and believe Jesus?

**Nehemiah 10:31** *And if the peoples of the land bring in goods or any grain on the Sabbath day to sell, we will not buy from them on the Sabbath or on a holy day. And we will forego the crops of the seventh year and the extraction of any debt.*

This is not legalism. This is about trust, acknowledging their dependence on God  
The Sabbath points to our eventual and eternal rest in and with God

**Nehemiah 10:32-33** *We also take on ourselves the obligation to give yearly a third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God; for the showbread, the regular grain offering, the regular burnt offering, the Sabbaths, the new moons, the appointed feasts, the holy things, and the sin offerings to make atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.*

**Nehemiah 10:34** *We, the priests, the Levites, and the people, have likewise cast lots for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, according to our fathers' houses, at times appointed, year by year, to burn on the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the Law.*

**Nehemiah 10:35-37** *We obligate ourselves to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all fruit of every tree, year by year, to the house of the LORD; also to bring to the house of our God, to the priests who minister in the house of our God, the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, as it is written in the Law, and the firstborn of our herds and of our flocks; and to bring the first of our dough, and our contributions, the fruit of every tree, the wine and the oil, to the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and to bring to the Levites the tithes from our ground, for it is the Levites who collect the tithes in all our towns where we labor.*

**Nehemiah 10:38-39** *And the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes. And the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes to the house of our God, to the chambers of the storehouse. For the people of Israel and the sons of Levi shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the chambers, where the vessels of the sanctuary are, as well as the priests who minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers. We will not neglect the house of our God.*

This is about worship, enabling the people of God to enjoy the presence of God

In our New Covenant time, we do not support a building (a physical Temple), we support a new temple (the people of God, the church)

We give financially, not to make God happy with us, but to physically reflect how God is god over our money. We trust God, not money

We can see here that the people are earnest; they're serious about the re-commitment they're making to honor and serve God

The problem is, as we'll see later in Nehemiah, it didn't stick

They really didn't have love for God - they just wanted to get on His good side

Jesus said something to His disciples in the Upper Room the night He was later betrayed by Judas

**John 14:21** *Whoever has my commandments and keeps them, he it is who loves me. And he who loves me will be loved by my Father, and I will love him and manifest myself to him.*

**John 14:23-24** *...If anyone loves me, he will keep my word, and my Father will love him, and we will come to him and make our home with him. Whoever does not love me does not keep my words. And the word that you hear is not mine but the Father's who sent me.*

It is easy for us to be just like those Israelites. We can act the part without any love for God and His Church

As the modern Church, we don't have a dissatisfaction problem; we have a satisfaction problem

We're satisfied to be mere consumers of the work of the church, rather than committed participants in it

We're satisfied to be fearful and thus ignore or run away from the radical implications of the gospel

Because we're so easily satisfied, we are resistant to the grace that is our only hope

Paul Tripp says this: Here's what we need to remember - we serve a dissatisfied Redeemer. He knows we still need the transforming work of his powerful grace. Isn't it wonderful that, in his gracious dissatisfaction, he will not relent until every microbe of sin is removed from every cell of every one of the hearts of his children?

We don't have a behavior problem - we have an affection problem, a "love problem"

Even though the word "Blessed" has been co-opted in the wider culture, we are already and thoroughly a blessed people, for God has already completely forgiven all our sins, once and for all.

He has covered our sins with the shed blood of Jesus. He will never count our sins against us; because He counted our sin against Jesus, and He now counts us righteous in Him!

What we live for is what gives meaning to everything else in our lives

As Radiant Church Juneau, we're saying "We live or the Lord!"