Normal Campus Sermon Study - 11.1.2026

Leader's Corner

Faithfulness

Nehemiah 5-6

Main Idea: Starting something often requires inspiration. Finishing something requires faithfulness.

Main Passage: Nehemiah 5:14–19; 6:1–16 **Key Verse:**"I am engaged in a great work, so I can't come. Why should I stop working to come and meet with you?" — Nehemiah 6:3 (NLT)

Main Practice: Identify the great work God has entrusted to you and take one intentional step toward greater faithfulness this week.

Leader Summary: As we conclude our Calling + Character series, we discover one final characteristic of the kind of person God uses: faithfulness. Nehemiah faced injustice, opposition, distraction, deception, and exhaustion. Yet he remained committed to the work God had called him to accomplish. His example reveals three essential ingredients of faithfulness:
* ***Integrity***: Doing what's right, even when we have the opportunity to do otherwise (5:14–19).
* ***Discernment***: Recognizing what deserves our yes, what requires our no, and what aligns with God's calling (6:1–14).
* ***Determination***: Continuing the work despite difficulty, trusting God to provide the strength to finish (6:15–16).
Ultimately, Nehemiah points us toward Jesus, who demonstrated perfect integrity, discernment, and determination. While Nehemiah finished rebuilding a wall, Jesus finished the work of redemption. The good news is that we aren't saved by our faithfulness. We're saved by Christ's faithfulness and grace. Through His Spirit, He forms His character in us and empowers us to remain faithful.

Leader Encouragement: Help your group distinguish between faithfully following God's calling and simply trying harder. The goal isn't perfection or relentless productivity. It's learning to trust Jesus, recognize what matters most, and keep taking the next faithful step.

Prayer and Praise

Opening Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for being faithful to us in every season. Thank You for the work You have begun in our lives and for the promise that You are still shaping us into the people You've called us to become.

As we gather today, help us recognize where we have become distracted, discouraged, or tempted to compromise. Give us the integrity to do what's right, the discernment to recognize what matters most, and the determination to remain faithful when life gets difficult.

Most importantly, turn our eyes toward Jesus, who faithfully completed the work of redemption on our behalf. Teach us to trust in His strength rather than our own. Help us encourage one another to keep following You.

In Jesus' name, Amen.

Suggested Worship Songs

* Goodness of God — Bethel Music / Jenn Johnson

* Yet Not I But Through Christ in Me — CityAlight

* Christ Be Magnified — Cody Carnes

Group Discussion

OPENING | Connecting with Life

1. What's something you started with great enthusiasm but struggled to finish? What made it difficult to follow through?

FAITHFULNESS REQUIRES INTEGRITY: Read Nehemiah 5:14–19.

2. Nehemiah had the authority to demand more from the people, but he chose to give more instead. What does his example teach us about integrity, leadership, and putting others first?

3. Nehemiah explains his decisions by saying, "Because I feared God, I did not act that way" (v. 15). How does our relationship with God influence the choices we make when nobody is watching?

4. Where is it most tempting to compromise your integrity in everyday life—work, finances, relationships, marriage, or something else? What would faithfulness look like in that situation?

FAITHFULNESS REQUIRES DISCERNMENT: Read Nehemiah 6:1–9.

5. Nehemiah refused to leave his work to meet with his enemies, declaring, "I am engaged in a great work, so I can't come" (v. 3). How did Nehemiah recognize the difference between an opportunity and a distraction?

6. Not every opportunity is bad, but not every opportunity is from God. What are some good things that can distract us from more important things? What might you need to say no to in order to give your best yes to what God has called you to do?

Read Nehemiah 6:10–14.

7. Shemaiah's advice sounded reasonable, even spiritual, but it would have led Nehemiah to compromise his convictions. How can we distinguish between advice that sounds good and wisdom that genuinely aligns with God's Word?

FAITHFULNESS REQUIRES DETERMINATION: Read Nehemiah 6:15–16.

8. After everything Nehemiah and the people endured, the wall was completed in 52 days. What stands out to you about their perseverance? Why is it important to recognize God's faithfulness rather than simply celebrating Nehemiah's determination?

9. Think about your current season of life. Where is God asking you to remain faithful even though the work is difficult, progress is slow, or you're tempted to give up?

JESUS — THE ULTIMATE PICTURE OF FAITHFULNESS: Read Matthew 27:39–42 and John 19:30.

10. Nehemiah refused to come down from the wall, and Jesus refused to come down from the cross. What does Jesus' determination to finish the Father's work reveal about His love for us? How does remembering that Jesus has already finished the work of our salvation change the way we approach our own calling and faithfulness?

Closing Thought: We don't remain faithful to earn God's love. We pursue faithfulness because we've already received His love through Jesus.

Practice

Group Exercise: "I'm Doing a Great Work"

Purpose: Help group members identify what matters most and recognize the distractions or compromises that threaten their faithfulness.

Step 1: Identify Your Great Work (2–3 minutes)

Invite everyone to reflect silently on this question:

What is one important responsibility, relationship, or calling God has entrusted to you in this season?

Ask each person to write down one area where they believe God is calling them to remain faithful.

Step 2: Identify What's Pulling You Away (3–4 minutes)

Ask everyone to consider three questions:

- Integrity: Where am I tempted to take a shortcut or compromise?
- Discernment: What distraction or lesser priority is competing for my attention?
- Determination: Where am I tempted to give up because the work feels difficult?

Step 3: Declare Your Next Step (5–7 minutes)

Invite group members to complete the following statement:

"God has called me to _____, and this week I will remain faithful by _____."

Give everyone an opportunity to share their response. Encourage the group to pray for one another, asking God for the integrity, discernment, and determination to take those next steps.

Weekly Challenge: "I Can't Come Down"

Choose one specific action that demonstrates faithfulness to God's calling this week.

It might mean having a difficult conversation, setting a boundary, eliminating a distraction, keeping a commitment, spending intentional time with someone, or simply doing the next right thing.

Each morning, remember Nehemiah's words: *"I am engaged in a great work, so I can't come." — Nehemiah 6:3*

*B*efore the next group meeting, connect with another group member and share how your commitment is going. Encourage one another to keep building!

Further Study

Philippians 1:6 — God Finishes What He Starts
Paul reminds us that God, who began a good work in us, will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.
Reflection: How does confidence in God's ongoing work give us hope when our own faithfulness feels inconsistent?

Hebrews 12:1–3 — Running with Perseverance
Hebrews encourages believers to lay aside the things that hinder them and run with endurance, keeping their eyes on Jesus.
Reflection: What unnecessary weight might you need to lay aside to run the race God has given you?

Galatians 6:9 — Don't Grow Weary

Paul encourages believers not to become weary in doing good, reminding them that perseverance matters
Reflection: Where do you need renewed encouragement to continue doing good, even when you cannot see the results?

2 Timothy 4:7–8 — Finishing the Race
Near the end of his life, Paul reflects on having fought the good fight, finished the race, and kept the faith.
Reflection: When you look back on your life, what do you hope will be said about your faithfulness to Jesus?