



Normal Campus Sermon Study - 9.27.2026

Leader's Corner

Calling + Character

Nehemiah 2:1-10

Main Idea: God uses people who obey even when the outcome is uncertain.

Main Passage: Nehemiah 2:1–10

Main Practice: Identify the next step of obedience God has already put in front of you—and take it while trusting Him with the outcome.

Leader Summary: Nehemiah has prayed and waited for four months. Now the opportunity comes, and he has to act. His obedience isn't reckless or fearless. He is faithful where he already is, moves despite fear, prays and prepares, and ultimately trusts God with what he cannot control.

Encourage your group not to spend the whole conversation asking, "What big thing is God calling me to?" Instead, bring it closer: ***What is the next faithful thing God is asking me to do?***

Prayer and Praise

Begin Here: Think about a situation in your life where you know what you believe you should do—but you cannot control how it will turn out. You don't have to share details yet. Just hold that situation in mind as you read Nehemiah 2 together.

Read: Nehemiah 2:1–10

Pray Together:

God, You are faithful even when we cannot see what comes next. Give us courage to obey You in the ordinary things and in the moments that scare us. Show us where fear, comfort, or our desire to control the outcome is keeping us from saying yes to You. Help us pray, prepare, and take the next faithful step. We trust the results to Your gracious hand. Amen.

Worship Suggestions:

* Trust in God — Elevation Worship

* Yes I Will — Vertical Worship

* I Surrender — Hillsong

Group Discussion

Faithful Where You Are: Read Nehemiah 2:1–2.

Four months have passed since Nehemiah first heard about Jerusalem. Yet he is still faithfully serving the king.

- * What stands out to you about Nehemiah during these months of waiting?
- * Why can it be easier to look for the next thing God has for us than to be faithful with what is already in front of us?
- * Where might ordinary faithfulness—showing up, keeping your word, loving someone, serving well—actually be forming your character right now?

Consider: What has God already put in front of me that deserves my faithfulness?

Moving While Afraid: Read Nehemiah 2:2–5.

Nehemiah says he was terrified—and then he spoke. Four months of prayer didn't eliminate his fear. It prepared him to obey despite it.

- * What does Nehemiah teach us about the relationship between faith and fear?
- * How can waiting until we “aren't afraid anymore” sometimes become an excuse for disobedience?
- * Where might fear currently be making a decision for you?

Courage isn't the absence of fear. Courage is obedience that refuses to let fear make the decision.

Pray AND Prepare: Read Nehemiah 2:4–8.

Notice the combination: Nehemiah offers a quick prayer—and then gives the king a remarkably prepared answer.

He has thought about timing. Travel. Letters. Protection. Resources.

- * What do you learn from the way Nehemiah combines dependence on God with preparation?
- * Why do we sometimes treat faith and planning as opposites?
- * What might it look like for you to pray like you depend on God and prepare like He may invite you into the answer?
- * What is one situation where your next act of obedience requires some preparation?

Trust the Outcome: Read Nehemiah 2:8.

Nehemiah prepared. Nehemiah spoke. Nehemiah asked. But when the door opened, he said: “...because the gracious hand of my God was on me.”

- * What parts of Nehemiah's situation could he control? What couldn't he control?
- * Why is surrendering the outcome such an important part of obedience?
- * Which is harder for you: taking the step or releasing control of what happens afterward?
- * How does trusting God's character change the way we approach uncertain outcomes?

Key Truth: My responsibility is obedience. God's responsibility is the outcome.

Practice

The Next Step

Give everyone a minute of silence. Return to the situation you thought about at the beginning.

Ask yourself: What is the next step of obedience I already know God is asking me to take?

Not the entire plan. Not the outcome you want. Just the next faithful step.

Have everyone write:

- *God, I believe You are asking me to:*
- *What makes me afraid or hesitant:*
- *One way I can pray or prepare:*
- *What I need to entrust to God:*

If appropriate, invite people to share their next step with one other person. Pray specifically for one another—not necessarily that the outcome goes the way you want, but for courage to obey and faith to trust God with what follows.

This Week: Take that step.

Have the conversation. Make the call. Confess. Forgive. Give. Set the boundary. Serve. Speak. Apologize. Begin.

And before you do, practice Nehemiah's four-second prayer:

"Jesus, help me obey You and trust You with what happens next."

Further Study

Philippians 2:5–11 — Jesus is our ultimate picture of humble obedience. He entrusted Himself completely to the Father, even when obedience led Him to the cross.

Luke 22:39–46 — Jesus models surrendered obedience: "Not my will, but yours be done."

James 1:22–25 — Faithfulness isn't merely hearing God's Word; it moves us toward action.

Proverbs 3:5–6 — Trusting God means surrendering our need to understand or control every step.

Ephesians 3:20–21 — Our obedience rests in confidence that God is capable of doing far more than we can see or imagine.

One Question to Carry This Week

What's the next step of obedience I already know God is asking me to take—and what would it look like to trust Him with the outcome?