

Sunday, April 30, 2017 - "Discovering Our Sent" - Gerald Coleman

Key Passages: Nehemiah 2:1-8

- Feel free to read the passage(s) out loud as a group
- Allow the group to share freely about what stood out to them from the passage or from Sunday's message

Main Ideas

- The Jewish people are in exile under the kingdom of Persia
 - They have been kicked out of their homeland
 - Nehemiah was from Judah which experienced it's best times under King David
 - God originally called the people of Israel to be a kingdom of priests (Exodus 19:6)
 - But they were disobedient and didn't live out their calling
- Nehemiah was called to maintain his identity in essentially a godless culture
 - There are similarities between Nehemiah and us
 - Christianity is no longer in a position of favor
 - The church is called to be the representation of Christ in the world
 - We all have a mission and a purpose
- Nehemiah was the cupbearer
 - He got a position close to the king
 - He worked faithfully and obediently for the king
 - Nehemiah's sadness (his presence and mood were important to his job) caused the king to reach out to him
- Nehemiah's heart was broken for his people
 - his heart was in tune with the heart of the Father
 - We have to pay attention to what breaks our hearts
 - If we're not careful, we will use everything to tune out brokenness
 - God wants our hearts to break for what breaks his heart
- When the king asks Nehemiah what's wrong he responds...
 - "Let the King live forever" v3
 - He engages with culture BUT he doesn't lose his identity
 - The king essentially asks what he can do and Nehemiah PRAYS before laying out a plan
- God's providence was evident in Nehemiah's occupation
 - How long had he been cupbearer?
 - Nehemiah had influence with the king much like we have influence with coworkers, bosses, employees
 - His character/faithfulness gave him favor before the king
 - "Skill will get you through some doors, but character will keep you there" - Pastor Gerald
 - Sometimes we kill our witness for lack of integrity and character (G's story about his believing friend who didn't do his job at Target but only talked about Jesus)
- Esther and Mordecai's stories with the king impacted Nehemiah's interaction
 - We are a team
 - OUR character strengthens OUR witness
 - It's true for us like it was for Esther that we have been prepared and made for "such a time as this"
 - God has a mission and a purpose in the places/situations/jobs that we are in right now

Questions (Feel free to use all of these, some of these, or none of these)

1. What breaks your heart? How is God calling you into that?
2. How do you feel about your current "position"? How does the Lord want to change your thoughts and feelings about your current situation or circumstance?
3. How are you doing at engaging the culture that you live your life in?
4. How has God used your character to give you opportunity or favor in relationships or work situations?
5. What does it mean to you that God made you for "such a time as this"?
6. Are there ways that God is calling you to change your heart or your thinking to live on mission and on purpose for Him?
7. What is God inviting you into as a result of this passage or sermon?

****15 Minutes with God Reading Plan - Mon: Acts 11 Tues: Acts 12 Wed: Acts 13 Thurs: Acts 14 Fri: Acts 15**

****5 Minutes Reading/5 Minutes Writing/5 Minutes Praying**