

When God Gives You a Burden

by Shane Idleman

The sermon encourages believers to recognize and act upon the burdens God places in their hearts as a calling to serve and make a difference.

Duration: 34:58

Scripture: Nehemiah 1:4

Topics: "Faithfulness", "Burden"

Description

Shane Idleman emphasizes the significance of burdens in our lives, drawing from Nehemiah's call to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem. He explains that God gives each person unique burdens and motivations to fulfill their calling, urging the congregation not to dismiss these feelings but to act upon them. Idleman warns against judgmental attitudes towards others' burdens and encourages individuals to seek God's direction in their lives. He highlights the importance of perseverance and faithfulness in the face of challenges, reminding listeners that true success in God's eyes is measured by faithfulness rather than numbers. Ultimately, he calls for spiritual revival and a deeper connection with God to overcome spiritual dullness.

Transcript

Tonight, obviously, as you know, we finished Nehemiah. Now, I don't have you, I'm not gonna have you turn anywhere because there's chapters nine, 10, 11, but what happened this week in Nehemiah, he just briefly talked about where the people lived in Jerusalem. He talked about the wall being dedicated, the wall of Jerusalem was dedicated, they used a choir, the choir came out, choirs of people, and they sang and they dedicated the wall.

And then also, he outlined who had the temple responsibilities. So, long story short, Nehemiah is called of God to rebuild the wall surrounding Jerusalem. And in building that wall, there were a lot of challenges we talked about, and I wanna just recap those because a lot of you were not here throughout the whole series.

But first, we see in Nehemiah's ministry, in the call of Nehemiah, to me, Nehemiah, the reason I like to read it once a year is it's a reminder of God's faithfulness, it's a reminder of God's power, and it's a reminder that you will go through adversity, and how to get through that adversity. So, the first thing we found, the first night we opened this, is that there is a burden. God gave Nehemiah a burden for his people, a burden to do something.

And the more I preach, the more I realize, the more I pastor church, without motivation, we won't do much, will we? There has to be a burden, a motivation. And you see people, for example, on the fasting book, we won't get in shape until the doctor says, oh, by the way, there's a small lump forming. Oh, now it's time.

Or the kid's going haywire, and we're seeing now that the media is influencing. Okay, now I've gotta pull back on media. So something, there's gotta be a burden of the Lord.

There's a motivation to do something. Did anybody ever feel that? I wanna do something, I'm assuming most in this room are saying, I wanna do something for the Lord. Well, let me just let you know a secret.

You don't have to be a pastor. You don't have to preach. You don't have to teach.

I believe God has callings and desires that all of you in this room do something for him. And what you do for him is the same as what I do for him, is the same as what Billy Graham did for him. God's not gonna go, Billy Graham, your mansion is 100 stories high.

You are so esteemed in heaven because of what you did. Look at all these people. He'll look at the single mom still raising her kids, doing what God wants her to do in that faithfulness.

He measures faithfulness, not numbers. And we get so caught up sometimes in the numbers, but God is putting burdens on different people for a reason. He wants you to fulfill that call he's put on your life.

So don't despise that burden. If you feel like, gosh, I wanna make a difference in my school. Anybody felt that way? I wanna make a difference in my workplace.

I wanna make a difference in my family. Where I'm at, Lord, where you have me, is there a burden for something? And this is why I think we need to be careful and not be too judgmental. Because what happens is a burden that God gives me is sometimes a burden he doesn't give someone else.

For example, this is a normal struggle in most churches. Missions teams will feel like the church doesn't care about missions because it's not mission-oriented. It's not always about missions.

Why don't they share the same desire I share about missions? And they can get frustrated. And then I would say, why don't you share the same passion I feel for calling the nation to repentance? Why isn't everybody a voice crying in the wilderness? Why isn't everybody upset at abortion and mocking God's word? Because God gives different voices for different purposes, different passions, and different burdens to do different things. So if somebody, and that's why we get frustrated, can't we? Why don't they care about my school like I do? And people come and say, the church needs to start getting into the public schools.

Can you do something? Why don't, if you have a burden, why don't you work on it? See, often you have the burden for a reason. But what do we like? We like to cast burdens. I have this burden, church, would you release me of it? And people do get, they get frustrated.

Why don't we have something, and I've heard this a couple times, and people are frustrated. I agree with them, I'm frustrated. Shane, why don't we have something where we reach out to the homeless? Well, start it.

Well, no, no, I can't start it. You need to start it, and then I'll do, oh, no, no, I've got too much on my plate. I'm trying to just do what God's burdened my heart.

And part of my calling is not to be on the mission field a lot, not to be maybe always factoring what can I do on the homeless. God's given me a desire to call people to repentance, to call the nation back to God. So, and you'll also notice your calling, you'll often, you'll find that your calling lines up with what book of the Bible you like.

You like certain things, you'll like that book deals with. I love Esther, and I wanna be that Esther. I love Daniel, and I love prophecy, or my favorite books are Isaiah, Jeremiah, and the Old Testament.

Isaiah and Jeremiah, why? Because God called them to speak to the nation and call people back to God. So, if that's lining up with your calling, you'll have a passion for that. I love John the Baptist's sermons.

John the Baptist, I love his sermons. Because he'll see the religious leaders coming down to be baptized. And John the Baptist says, who warned you to flee from the wrath that is to come? Bear fruit worthy of repentance.

And don't say that we are children of Abraham. God is able to raise children up from these very stones. And he rebukes the religious leaders, he rebukes the hypocrisy.

And then you get wimpy little John the Beloved. You know, like, that guy drives me crazy. Just so, oh, I just laid on the breast of Jesus and pondered all these great things, and it's just flowing with like, give me Paul.

You know, and then there are people, I don't like Paul. I like John, because he aligns with your gifting, with your calling. Some people love the book of Genesis.

They'll study the book of Genesis. They'll look at, they'll read people like Chuck Missler. I don't know if you know who that is, but that guy, boy, he gives me a headache.

And he's just so smart, and all the numbers, and correlating this, but they have a desire for apologetics. And people leave this church. Well, Shane, I want a church that teaches through the Bible, systematically, verse by verse, like Calvary Chapel.

I'll say, well, I can recommend two good Calvary Chapels, if that's what you like, that's your passion. But he hasn't called me to camp out in Leviticus for six months. It's different things, right? So, gosh, this is a long rabbit trail, but let me stay here for a minute, because there's a burden, there's a motivation.

I believe, God gave me this burden when I was in construction. I wasn't reaching anybody, except people on construction projects. No radio, nothing.

But there was still this burden, and I would go home and go, well, what am I doing with this? But see, God will often plant the seed. He'll show you the future, so you can get ready now. You don't see the apple tree, bare apples, that first week you plant it, it's little.

There's a season of growing, and saying, okay, God, you've called me to do this. He would give me dreams where I could, I'd read Billy Graham's biography, and I would see this, I would have dreams of just speaking to a sea of people. Like, what is that? I have no clue what that means.

Until he started to show me, but then that burden, I would start to read theology books. See, that burden prompted something. I would start to read church history, biographies.

I'd start to read on the Holy Spirit. And so, now if I'm gonna teach it, I have to be well-versed in these areas. So, he often gives you a burden to do something, and to make a difference in these areas.

But be careful, because can't we become wrongly judgmental? Why don't they share my burden? Why aren't we doing this? And a spirit of criticism can come in the church. I've been guilty of this in my last few churches. Critiquing and criticizing, why don't they? And I would actually get mad at the pastor in my heart.

But God, why doesn't he preach? He's a teacher, Shane, he's teaching. Okay, but why doesn't he preach? Man, we need a fire of God in this place. You know, and well, that's my calling.

And so, just be careful in this area, because I've seen people from the hospital homes ministries. Why aren't more people concerned about the people in the hospital homes? Why aren't more people serving? And they get frustrated. I know there are ministries here at the church, I'll leave it at that, that are frustrated with the body of Christ, because they're not stepping up and serving in these areas.

But I remind the people, listen, don't allow the enemy to come in and frustrate you where you come to church bitter and angry. For example, I didn't have any ushers for six months when we started the church. I had little kids handing out bulletins.

Remember Mark's family, just Mark and his wife handing out bulletins. God will take care of what he needs to do. And children's ministry, I think we just opened up a room and had two ladies just help with the kids.

God will provide, but we can become wrongly judgmental. So I think that's the point on this with Nehemiah, is there was a burden, there was a motivation there. So if God is giving you a burden for something that's godly, ask him tonight, Lord, what do you want me to do? Open that door, show me.

And often, the reason we miss it is because we put our lofty ideas up here where God says, just minister to your neighbor. But I want the big ministry. I want the big ministry.

Just minister to your neighbor. And just a side note, this is one thing, and there's actually a couple pastors I'm mentoring that are younger than me. And a lot of us, myself included, it's a struggle.

We do rate success if we're not careful by church growth and by numbers. Because we think we've been created, right? It's like, well, if it's not growing, it's not, what's going on here, Lord? But sometimes, God will prune. Blessed subtraction.

Blessed subtraction. People will leave that need to leave. And the church needs to be pruned sometimes.

But also, we forget that 80% of all churches, 80% of all churches in the United States are 80 people and under. We had that the first night. So God, see, how do you rate success? Because, and that's the question, well, how many people do you have? What's your budget? And we rate things by numbers, but it should have nothing to do with that.

And the pastor I'm talking with on June 6th, we actually had lunch today, and we talked about that. We said, we just need to get away, who cares how many people you have? Well, are we being faithful? How can we, how can the black and white community come together and minister to people? They actually had a tent revival-type setting in a park in East Lancaster a week ago. And I went to, I just was sitting in the back, and I felt there was an African American brother, he's worshipping, he rode his bike there.

And I just sensed God wanted me to talk to him. We had a good connection. I've got a cell phone number, and I actually was able to get him a job with a contractor this week.

He started just by talking to that person, and maybe helping him out financially a little bit. I had some cash, I brought some cash to be, because God puts these things in my heart. And the same thing with you, but don't measure it by me, because I mess up all the time.

God will tell me, Shane, go talk to that lady in Vaughn. I'm in a hurry, I'm in a hurry. I'm not in the right mood, right? I saw Phil in Vaughn's, and I bumped him with the shopping cart, he didn't know it was me.

And just trying to be wherever, my point was wherever God places you, whatever that burden is, do you have a burden for pregnant women who are thinking about aborting? Then you might want to get with Care Net Pregnancy Resource Center. What about battered women? That's, my mom has a desire for that, my wife, we've had a desire. How can you help people that want to get out of their home, that need to get out of their home? I won't talk about or mention names, but we just helped a girl leave a state, and we helped her with a vehicle, and get her back on her feet, got her a job, and so there's burdens there that we, you know, that God will give you to do something.

But most of the stuff we do, I think me and Morgan, it's really not inside the church where people see, it's really outside in our community, these different burdens, these different things that God has placed in our hearts, to go and help people. Now again, I'm not the, don't look at us, because we make mistakes, we say no, and we should say yes, we should do more. And that's why we're all challenged this evening.

But do you have a passion for battered women? We have people that go here, they're on the board with A.V. Saving Grace, it's a battered women's shelter, so we can get you plugged in with that. The homeless ministry, and reaching homeless, so if you have a burden, you can get plugged in somewhere, even if you wanna make a difference. What about, right now I've got at least two or three young kids, maybe 18 to 21, that need work.

One of them was on parole, or on, were you checking with your probation officer? And so I decided, it was a little harder than I thought, so I had eight scoops of DG delivered, and I did the landscaping out front one day, two days, actually, and I had him come over and help me, and try to mentor him, and get him financially going a little bit, and got him a job as well. So all these little things that God gives you a burden, sometimes we think it's a big thing. Well God, do you want me to have a ministry, do you want me, just the little things, touching the little lives, that's what really matters.

And I think we can get misfocused many times, because we want the big numbers, we want to look successful, and God actually, I don't think, who you think is successful might not be successful in God's eyes, because he's looking for that faithfulness. So that's what we see in Nehemiah, there was a burden, there was a motivation, and I would encourage you, step out and do it. Just step out and do it.

Nike had the slogan, we need to take it back. Just do it, just do it, just step out, because that's, actually, that's what faith is. God, I'm stepping out onto something I can't see, I know this will bless and help people, I'm stepping out in faith, I'm trusting you to show me where I can help.

You think God's gonna say, boy, you're out of my will, you missed that one. He's just waiting for us to step out. So we see, Nehemiah had a burden, there was a motivation, he saw, basically, he said, why should I not be sad to the king? The place of my father's tombs lies in waste.

So this wonderful jewel, apple of God's eye, Jerusalem, the chosen of God, was now lying in waste. And that parallels, to me, America. Why should I not be sad when the place that people have fought for and died for lies in waste? That God was built, initially, and now, look at this.

This is unbelievable, what we're calling entertainment, and what we're allowing to enter in, and so, there's a motivation to do something, then do it. And then we see, Nehemiah, he was an intercessor. He said, Lord, I don't know what to do, I'm going to seek direction.

And guess what he did? He prayed and fasted. And that's why it's so hard, is because it's so important. Most problems that we have stem from knee-jerk reactions.

Do you know what knee-jerk reactions are? You get hit, ow! Oh, that kinda hurt. That didn't go as planned. Right, ch, ch, and the same thing's happening.

We get hit with something, boom. We get hit with something, boom. And there's a knee-jerk reaction where God says, listen, intercede, sit, and wait.

Nehemiah could've got upset that day. He said, I'm going back to Jerusalem, I don't care. What happens? He left that day.

He didn't. He pondered, he waited. Lord, show me, because with God's will is God's timing.

They go together. I've missed this before, haven't you? I know this is God's will. And we get out in front of God, and we fall flat on our face, and we come back.

Okay, Lord, now I'll just wait on you. And because often it's in the waiting time that character's developed. It's in the waiting time that motives are changed and realigned.

So Nehemiah's seeking God, he's waiting for direction, and then finally there's action. God says, okay, now go and do this. And then when God does something, these doors just open.

Yes, there's challenges. Satan will try to close doors. But the king of this entire area said, Nehemiah, you have my blessing.

You can use the lumber from these other governors. Stop by and talk with them. You have lumber, you have everything you need to do God's will.

Always remember this. If it's God's will, it's God's bill. It's a little, it's not name and claim it saying.

It's a true saying. If it's God's will, it's his bill. God will open doors that no man can shut.

God will shut doors that no man can open. And let me just give you a little history on this too with in discouragement. God worked with in discouragement.

He'll open doors. There was a, when we first got on the radio, we decided to do this I think eight years ago. And there was a little station out of Bishop.

I don't know if any of you listened to it, 91.9. It was only \$50 for a Saturday. So we had, we paid a producer and he put this radio program together. And then right when I was going to do it, the radio station said, oh no, we're full.

We can't, sorry, we can't do it. I'm like, oh, I can't believe that. And then Morgan said, why don't you contact KTLW down in Los Angeles and see if they'll do it for \$50.

Like, oh my goodness, there's no way that's gonna happen. But I sent the guy the clip and he came back and said, you know what, we'll honor that. 6 a.m. or 7 a.m. on Saturdays.

I think we'd love to get you on. And we like your ministry. And I think it's a good thing for our station.

I'm like, oh, wow, that's, because you're talking places that charge \$500 for a program, not 50. And so that kind of started that. And then you get on Saturdays, Sundays, and eventually they got us on Monday through Friday for the whole week.

And God just uses that, if it hits his will, it's his bill. He'll open doors that no man can shut if we just trust in him and walk with him. And often the plan is not exactly like you have it laid out.

Because we, right, our plan is the comfortable plan. The best money plan. The best, everything, we want the best.

And sometimes that's not bad. But when I knew God was gonna give us a building, a location, right, I had no clue it'd be here. It didn't even enter my radar.

And like, we own a valley. You know what I said when Joe first asked me? I said, oh, that's too far. That's too, thank you, but that's too far.

And you know, and just, situations change. I'm like, man, knee-jerk reaction, right? And then I drove it, and I'm like, oh, this is two minutes longer than where I currently drive to church. Two minutes.

It was 11 minutes. The other church we had on Saturday nights was nine minutes. Saturday nights, you understand, right? Yeah, so two minutes longer.

So I drove, kept driving out here. Morgan drove out, and I'm like, okay, well, I could see. I could see how God could be doing this.

But it wasn't even, not even an option. Because sometimes God wants to use different things, His timing, to get things accomplished. So now, looking back, it makes perfect sense.

But that time, it didn't make any sense, because God, because what are we looking for? Comfortable, right down the street from our house would be nice, you know, in this area, and this, and you know, and God's plans do not always line up with ours. Why? Because my motives and your motives aren't always pure. Can we be honest? Let's just be a little honest tonight.

My own motives, our motives often are not pure and holy. We say, God, I'll carry my cross as long as it's up, not uphill, right? I'll carry my cross as long as no one sees me. I'll carry my cross as long as I'm off on weekends.

And we try to juggle things. So there is action. There's a burden.

You'll intercede, you'll pray, but at some point, like Nike, you just do it. And then once you do it, guess what? There's a fight. Nehemiah walks into the city.

Wouldn't you think everybody said, oh, praise God. We're gonna rebuild the wall. The Jews did, but not the other people of the land.

Sanballat and Tobias, these sneaky little guys, they were teasing him. They said, whatever you build, even if a fox runs on it, your wall's gonna fall down. What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they gonna rebuild the wall, this wall that's in ruins? Are you kidding me? So with the fight will come the challenge, always.

Anytime God is doing something, the enemy comes alongside and tries to stop that work. Doesn't it? Doesn't he? Just today, just today. I'm getting lunch with this pastor and this lady that owns, I won't say where we were.

But she goes, I haven't seen you in a while. You know what I'm gonna say, huh? I haven't seen you in a while. You look really bad.

You've lost too much weight. Like, oh, I guess fasting is not a good thing. But I said, I could have been a little nicer.

But I said, but don't you know it's healthier, right? As we get older, I can't carry a lot of, it's healthier, I feel better. She goes, yeah, but you just look, you know, you lost so much weight. I don't know, you should have did that.

So I'm getting downcast now. I'm like, well, jeez louise, do I look like I have cancer? I mean, is it? But, no, I mean, but that's what she said. Like, I'm looking sick and I'm like, wow, I didn't, you know, well, thank you for that feedback.

But it was, but here comes the fasting book, right? I'm trying to keep myself in shape because I have a, I would, I love to eat and food and sweets and it's hard for me. I've always struggled with that when I was older in my life. So I can relate to that.

So here I come, here comes the fasting books coming out. I'm gonna teach on it. And then discouragement comes along.

Or people will say, and on this topic, while I'm here, I'll camp out here for a minute, but people will say, you know, that Bible doesn't say anything about that. It doesn't matter. Just focus on spiritual things.

Just don't worry about that. Yeah, but if the physical is affecting the spiritual and how we take care of the temple is important and I feel a lot better when I'm taking care of it, I can be a better pastor. I can be a better husband.

I can be a better father. I have more energy. I can race my son at the park instead of sit down and take a nap.

You know, there's benefits to that. So I wanna help people do that. So with that comes the negative emails, the negative comments, right? Oh, you're just trying to make money.

How? The books are free. The e-book is free. It's free, except Kindle is stuck at 99 cents and they won't let me drop it.

But all the other, we have four other options of e-books are free. So it's just, but see, there's always something. Oh, another pastor trying to make money.

How? What, what? I'm trying to help people. I'll pay them to read it. I did, I did do that.

I did pay. I paid a couple people to read the book that need to read it because they need to refocus their energy. But with that, with every mighty move of God, you see the enemy coming in.

I wonder if I should pay people to read it. I should go up there and pay you to, but actually, well, they won't listen to this, so I can say it. I don't think they're here.

No, Christine, you did a genuine edit. You did it right. But I asked a couple people if they would edit it and find any errors just because I wanted them to read the book.

They need to read this. They need to understand this. And of course, they found some errors, and it was helpful, very helpful.

But I wanted to help them get this area of their life in check and balanced. And all the people I've talked to have made changes in the area. Nobody has ever said, oh, that wasn't worth it because who doesn't want to feel better? Because when you feel better, you'll do more.

When you have the energy to do things for God, you want to do things. So I think the enemy loves to zap our energy and take our strength. So with everything God's calling you to do, there will come a challenge.

Here comes, as soon as we decide to pray every morning. Why do I not want to pray every morning now? You know, bad moods come in, the enemy comes in. You ever have any of those, or just me? Don't leave me hanging up here.

Right, my wife says, don't check your email until after your prayer time because you start checking it, right? Here comes all the day's garbage, and oh, I don't feel like doing it. And you get frustrated. So the enemy comes in, and every mighty move of God, we can feel it.

You ever feel on a Sunday morning where God's moving, people are encouraged, you're built up, salvations, and you just, oh, it's going great, and then the enemy comes in, and something happens, whether it's in children's ministry, or ushering, or somebody got offended, I said something wrong. That's hard to believe, I know, but it happens. And then, no, no, I didn't mean it that way, I didn't mean it that way.

So the enemy comes along, just like he did with Nehemiah, and he wants to stop what God is doing. That's why there is a fight, remember that? There is fatigue, Nehemiah was stressed out, he was fatigued, and there was also perseverance. That's why perseverance is part of your character as a Christian.

Adding to your faith virtue, adding to these things, perseverance. A fruit of the Spirit, goodness, kindness, self-control. Persevering is, I'm gonna finish this race regardless of how much I fall.

I'm gonna finish this race regardless of how many times the enemy trips me. I'm gonna finish this race even though I don't see the results. So Christians, we've got used to this mentality of God's will should be easy, and carefree.

If life's difficult, I must be out of His will. When in reality, that's not the case. With the high points comes the low points.

With the blessings of God comes the challenges of life. So you must just persevere. I know it's easy to say and very hard to do, but how do you persevere? You stay in His Word.

This is the anchor. You stay in God's Word, you're built up through His Word, you stay in worship, corporate prayer, coming together, centering everything around God, and persevering. Because when life is difficult, what else do you have to hang on to? You gonna go to the media or this? The media just makes me wanna bury my face in the sand.

The world's coming to an end. Look at all this, just so much corruption everywhere. And then, after perseverance, Nehemiah, we saw there was continual faithfulness.

Continual faithfulness, which really lines up with perseverance. And then, like verse 35, I'm just gonna read it from chapter 10. Nehemiah said, we made ordinances to bring the firstfruits of our ground and the firstfruits of all the trees year by year to the house of the Lord, to bring the firstborn of our sons and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstborn of the herds and the flocks to the house of our God.

So we see Nehemiah bringing the firstfruits. Once the people got the wall built and the city reestablished, they were bringing the resources to God. They gave them the firstfruits of their produce, their resources.

So their priorities were aligned. It was giving God everything, or at least giving them the firstfruits. But then also, we read later, Nehemiah says, why is the house of God forsaken? Why is the house of God forsaken? So they had to go in and they had to cleanse the temple of all the pagan rituals and people were working on the Sabbath.

So see, they were giving to God his due. Okay, we have to bring tithe into the storehouse. We have to give, but the temple of God was falling apart.

They weren't really changing in their hearts. They were allowing pagan practices to come in. They were going through the motions, if we wanna break it down.

And that's another thing that you have to watch out for, is just going through the motions. Okay, it's Wednesday night. What do we do on Wednesday night? We go to church.

If it fits on the schedule. What do we do on Sunday mornings? We go to church. And that's what they were doing.

They were going through the motions. So Nehemiah helped them get back into having their priorities and putting God first. But it's interesting, when God said to bring your firstfruits and bring your children, bring the firstborn of your children, they were to sacrifice animals, but redeem the sons.

He's not promoting child sacrifice here. He's saying, give me the firstborn. Give me your child.

And that comes from Exodus 13. Then the Lord spoke to Moses saying, sanctify to me, which is to set apart to me every firstborn, the first offspring of every womb among the sons of Israel, both of man and of beast, it belongs to me. So God spared the firstborn of Israel in the Passover by not destroying them along with the Egyptians.

So Nehemiah is closing this out here. He's saying, okay, you're bringing the firstfruit of your labor, but also bring your children. Dedicate your children to God because they're allowing the pagan wives to come in and marry, intermarry with the children of Israel, the pagan, you know what that is, right? The not Christians, back then weren't Christians, weren't believers in Yahweh.

They weren't Jews. So the people were allowing these pagan cultures to redirect and pollute the children of God. So that's basically how Nehemiah ended.

He said, okay, you're bringing your firstfruits, you're worshiping God in action, but your hearts are not right. You're drawing away from God in what you're doing. They were not honoring the Sabbath anymore.

I would encourage people to keep the Sabbath, not as a law, but to have a day of rest where you turn off your phone. You will not die. You cease doing what you've been doing all week and you take time and you make it a day unto the Lord.

Okay, maybe we're gonna pray or spend time as a family or just not do anything and have a rest to where you remember God and his faithfulness because if not, do you get caught up in the busyness? Every day flows into the next. So they weren't taking breaks. They weren't remembering God.

They're allowing pagan influence to come in. Is anybody allowing pagan influence to come into your homes? Because a lot of times we're naive about this, aren't we? We don't know what's really coming in and affecting our children, and it can at a very deep level. So that's how Nehemiah ends.

It was a positive story, and then it got a little negative because he had to rebuke the people. The temple, the wall was built, but now the temple has trash in it and garbage in it. They're allowing the temple, the holy, we can look at our own lives, allowing trash and garbage into our own lives and going through the motions, right, giving God his due.

That's why it's called religion, doing certain things, but the heart is not right. God says, give me your heart. Don't go through the motions.

I want obedience, not sacrifice. I want your heart, not going, well, I did this at the church or I gave here, but if our heart's far from God, that's what we're gonna be, we should strive to get back to God in that area. So that's Nehemiah in a nutshell, if I could recap and then come back to where it is now ending.

So the lessons I think I just explained for 35 minutes that we can get from Nehemiah is making sure there's a, if you don't have a burden, maybe some of you are sitting here without a burden. Like, Shane, I don't know what to do with God, for God. I don't really have that excitement.

I'm actually bored. I don't wanna read the Bible. I don't wanna do anything for God.

Then what you need is spiritual resuscitation. You need the Spirit of God to revive you and you should sing that song, even if you don't mean it, say, Lord, help me sing this song, Holy Spirit, you're welcome here. Holy Spirit, you're welcome in my heart.

Would you take over? Would you remove this callousness that is set in, this hard heart that is set in? Lord, would you give me a heart of flesh again? I wanna have a passion for you. God, please, I don't want where I'm going. I don't want this dullness.

I don't want to be bored in church. Lord, I want this. Would you help me? Oh, that's a prayer he will answer.

But be careful, because sometimes it takes hard things. It takes doing hard things, removing things that are a distraction, removing things that are pulling us away from God, making time for him, so you'll have to fight the flesh every step of the way. And that's why next Wednesday, I wanna present that book and help

you in this area of starving the flesh and removing the appetites of the flesh so you can be filled with the Spirit of God.

I believe that they are connected. When we are filling the flesh with the things of the world, do you feel alive to the things of God? There's no way. There's no way, because we're either starving for God and wanting more of him, or we're so full of the flesh that we don't want anything to do with God, other than going through the motions.

And we'll stay in comfortable Christianity as long as we can until a sermon wakes us up, or until the word of God wakes us up, or until worship wakes us up.

Audio: <https://sermonindex1.b-cdn.net/31/SID31952.mp3>

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