

What Matters to God
Nehemiah 7
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(Lord's Day Service, November 12, 2017)

Nehemiah 7

¹ Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed, ² I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many. ³ And I said to them, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes." ⁴ The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.

⁵ Then my God put it into my heart to assemble the nobles and the officials and the people to be enrolled by genealogy. And I found the book of the genealogy of those who came up at the first, and I found written in it:

⁶ These were the people of the province who came up out of the captivity of those exiles whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried into exile. They returned to Jerusalem and Judah, each to his town. ⁷ They came with Zerubbabel, Jeshua, Nehemiah, Azariah, Raamiah, Nahamani, Mordecai, Bilshan, Mispereth, Bigvai, Nehum, Baanah.

The number of the men of the people of Israel: ⁸ the sons of Parosh, 2,172. ⁹ The sons of Shephatiah, 372. ¹⁰ The sons of Arah, 652. ¹¹ The sons of Pahath-moab, namely the sons of Jeshua and Joab, 2,818. ¹² The sons of Elam, 1,254. ¹³ The sons of Zattu, 845. ¹⁴ The sons of Zaccai, 760. ¹⁵ The sons of Binnui, 648. ¹⁶ The sons of Bebai, 628. ¹⁷ The sons of Azgad, 2,322. ¹⁸ The sons of Adonikam, 667. ¹⁹ The sons of Bigvai, 2,067. ²⁰ The sons of Adin, 655. ²¹ The sons of Ater, namely of Hezekiah, 98. ²² The sons of Hashum, 328. ²³ The sons of Bezai, 324. ²⁴ The sons of Hariph, 112. ²⁵ The sons of Gibeon, 95. ²⁶ The men of Bethlehem and Netophah, 188. ²⁷ The men of Anathoth, 128. ²⁸ The men of Beth-azmaveth, 42. ²⁹ The men of Kiriath-jearim, Chephirah, and Beeroth, 743. ³⁰ The men of Ramah and Geba, 621. ³¹ The men of Michmas, 122. ³² The men of Bethel and Ai, 123. ³³ The men of the other Nebo, 52. ³⁴ The sons of the other Elam, 1,254. ³⁵ The sons of Harim, 320. ³⁶ The sons of Jericho, 345. ³⁷ The sons of Lod, Hadid, and Ono, 721. ³⁸ The sons of Senaah, 3,930.

³⁹ The priests: the sons of Jedaiah, namely the house of Jeshua, 973. ⁴⁰ The sons of Immer, 1,052. ⁴¹ The sons of Pashhur, 1,247. ⁴² The sons of Harim, 1,017.

⁴³ The Levites: the sons of Jeshua, namely of Kadmiel of the sons of Hodevah, 74. ⁴⁴ The singers: the sons of Asaph, 148. ⁴⁵ The gatekeepers: the sons of Shallum, the sons of Ater, the sons of Talmon, the sons of Akkub, the sons of Hatita, the sons of Shobai, 138.

⁴⁶ The temple servants: the sons of Ziha, the sons of Hasupha, the sons of Tabbaoth, ⁴⁷ the sons of Keros, the sons of Sia, the sons of Padon, ⁴⁸ the sons of Lebana, the sons of Hagaba, the sons of Shalmai, ⁴⁹ the sons of Hanan, the sons of Giddel, the sons of Gahar, ⁵⁰ the sons of Reaiah, the

sons of Rezin, the sons of Nekoda,⁵¹ the sons of Gazzam, the sons of Uzza, the sons of Paseah,⁵² the sons of Besai, the sons of Meunim, the sons of Nephushesim,⁵³ the sons of Bakbuk, the sons of Hakupha, the sons of Harhur,⁵⁴ the sons of Bazlith, the sons of Mehida, the sons of Harsha,⁵⁵ the sons of Barkos, the sons of Sisera, the sons of Temah,⁵⁶ the sons of Neziah, the sons of Hatipha.

⁵⁷ The sons of Solomon's servants: the sons of Sotai, the sons of Sophereth, the sons of Perida,⁵⁸ the sons of Jaala, the sons of Darkon, the sons of Giddel,⁵⁹ the sons of Shephatiah, the sons of Hattil, the sons of Pochereth-hazzebaim, the sons of Amon.

⁶⁰ All the temple servants and the sons of Solomon's servants were 392.

⁶¹ The following were those who came up from Tel-melah, Tel-harsha, Cherub, Addon, and Immer, but they could not prove their fathers' houses nor their descent, whether they belonged to Israel: ⁶² the sons of Delaiah, the sons of Tobiah, the sons of Nekoda, 642. ⁶³ Also, of the priests: the sons of Hobaiah, the sons of Hakkoz, the sons of Barzillai (who had taken a wife of the daughters of Barzillai the Gileadite and was called by their name). ⁶⁴ These sought their registration among those enrolled in the genealogies, but it was not found there, so they were excluded from the priesthood as unclean. ⁶⁵ The governor told them that they were not to partake of the most holy food until a priest with Urim and Thummim should arise.

⁶⁶ The whole assembly together was 42,360, ⁶⁷ besides their male and female servants, of whom there were 7,337. And they had 245 singers, male and female. ⁶⁸ Their horses were 736, their mules 245, ⁶⁹ their camels 435, and their donkeys 6,720.

⁷⁰ Now some of the heads of fathers' houses gave to the work. The governor gave to the treasury 1,000 darics of gold, 50 basins, 30 priests' garments and 500 minas of silver. ⁷¹ And some of the heads of fathers' houses gave into the treasury of the work 20,000 darics of gold and 2,200 minas of silver. ⁷² And what the rest of the people gave was 20,000 darics of gold, 2,000 minas of silver, and 67 priests' garments.

⁷³ So the priests, the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, some of the people, the temple servants, and all Israel, lived in their towns.

And when the seventh month had come, the people of Israel were in their towns.

Introduction

Have you ever struggled with feelings that your life is not worthwhile? What in the world am I doing this for? What am I accomplishing that really matters? How can I spend my life so that it counts for something worthwhile? The answer to these questions is to spend our lives so that they count for God and His purpose. If our lives count for God, then they count for eternity. The key question then is: how can I live in a way that my life counts for God?

Nehemiah 7 has some answers to this important question. It is one of those chapters that makes you wonder why God took space in the Bible for it. It especially makes you wonder when you

realize the list is in Ezra 2 as well. Why would God put this long list of names in the Bible twice? It is not the most memorable chapter in your Bible reading, but this chapter serves as a hinge or a pivot in the book of Nehemiah. Chapters 1-6 describes the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem, the city, and the nation. Chapters 8-13 tell about the restoration of the people of Judah. Chapter 7 begins by describing the precautions Nehemiah took to guard the newly walled city from attack, thus wrapping up the first half of the book. The rest of the chapter shows how Nehemiah went about the repopulation of Jerusalem.

One writer writes, “Armed with this fortitude, he turned obstacles into opportunities and outward trials into personal triumphs.”

There is a little bit of a difference in Ezra 2. In Ezra, there is a chapter with a list of the people who left in 536 B.C. from Babylon. In Nehemiah, there is an updated list of people who arrived to rebuild Judah in 444 B.C.

We will talk about 2 things in this chapter: the list and the lessons on what matters to God so we can live worthy lives that count for God.

I. The List

A. The reason [1-5]

God actually wanted Nehemiah to write these names in the Bible using this genealogy. We see the Divine cares about the details.

B. The names [6-60]

1. The original leaders who returned with Zerubbabel and Jeshua [6-7]

Zerubbabel was the civil leader, and Jeshua was the religious leader. With Cyrus' permission, they brought the first wave of exiles to Judah. These leaders are also mentioned in the books of Haggai and Zechariah. Zerubbabel was of the royal line of Judah, and Jeshua was descended from 14 generations of high priests. They were the political and religious leaders. The Nehemiah mentioned in verse 7 is a different Nehemiah from the author of the book.

2. Jews who were laymen listed according to the various families or clans [8-25]

This is a long and numerically significant list. These are the 18 individuals from whom the then-living descendants came.

3. Jews who were laymen listed according to their villages [26-38]

This is similar to the previous group but maybe they did not know who were their forefathers. They knew they were kind of related so they lived in the same village. These

were the towns from which the families of the people had come from originally. Twenty towns are listed where the original exiles settled.

4. Priests [39-42]

The priests were descendants of Aaron, Moses' brother. They were responsible for the service of the temple, its altar, and feasts. David organized the priests into 24 families each responsible for 2-3 weeks of temple duty. Nehemiah's list only mentions 4 of these families, presumably the only ones who returned from Babylon.

5. Levites [43]

The Levites were descendants of Levi, 1 of the 12 patriarchs. "Patriarch" means "father". There were 12 fathers of Israelites, the sons of Jacob. Out of these 12 sons came 12 tribes of Israel. The Levites served to assist the priests descended from Aaron. A small number of Levites are listed, indicating only a small number had returned from Babylon.

6. Singers [44]

The singers were taken from among the Levites. Their task was to assist the temple worship.

7. Gatekeepers [45]

The Levites, singers, and gatekeepers were temple staff appointed by Nehemiah according to verse 1. They were also from Levites.

8. Temple servants [45-56]

The temple servants assisted the Levites, just as the Levites assisted the priests. There was a healthy hierarchy in serving the Lord together. The Gibeonites were appointed to be the temple servants after having deceived the Israelites at the time of conquest. This is recorded in Joshua 9. These might have been their descendants now incorporated to the nation by circumcision.

9. The descendants of the servants of Solomon [57-60]

This group was closely linked to the previous ones. Possibly, they might have been also foreigners working under the king during exile. These non-Jews possibly willingly left the secure life in Babylon to serve Israel's God.

10. Those whose ancestry could not prove their genealogies [61-65]

There are 2 categories of people here: (1) laymen and (2) those who claimed to be priests but could not claim their ancestry. This was a problem because priesthood was a matter of ritual purity and contamination for the whole people. A decision was made to exclude

these people from priestly functions until their case could be decided by sacred casting of lots, known as Urim and Thummim. If they actually were not the priests and they participated in priestly activities, they would defile the whole nation.

C. The total [66-73] - 42,360

D. The relevance

1. To update the list of the people to repopulate Jerusalem

They had to establish citizenship to allow proper allotment of land.

2. To show the faithfulness of God

Whenever Israelites were in exile and when they repented, God always promises that they would return. He would forgive them and return them to their land.

3. To show the genealogy of Jesus Christ

The biological genealogy of the patriarchs follows the genealogy of Jesus Christ. We know this because Romans 9:5 says, *“To them belong the patriarch, and from their race, according to the flesh, is the Christ, who is God over all, blessed forever. Amen.”* From a historical-salvation perspective, these genealogical records are important to prove that the Messiah was descended from the tribe of Judah and the lineage of David. The biological genealogies of the Bible (Old and New Testament) follows the genealogies of Jesus Christ. This proves that Jesus was actually born to be the Savior of the world.

We have to put our faith in Jesus Christ because there is a spiritual genealogy in the Bible. At the end of history there will be judgment. Just as the Israelites had their names written in that genealogy, our names have to be written in the Lamb’s book of life. Revelation 21:27 says, *“But nothing unclean will ever enter it, nor anyone who does what is detestable or false, but only those who are written in the Lamb’s book life.”* It is important that we are included in the genealogy of Jesus Christ.

II. The Lessons

A. You matter to God [5]

People gathered together to take census. Why? Each of the names that are written in this chapter mattered to God. People matter to God although these names do not mean anything to us. All of the genealogies in the Bible lead to the genealogy of Jesus Christ. Each matter to God; therefore, you matter to God.

Let's look at Isaiah 49:14-15, *"But Zion said, 'The LORD has forsaken me; my Lord has forgotten me.' Can a woman forget her nursing child, that she should have no compassion on the son of her womb? Even these may forget, yet I will not forget you."*

John 10:3 says, *"To him the gatekeeper opens. The sheep hear his voice, and he calls his own sheep by name and leads them out."*

He knows each and every one of us by name. This list was not for God as if He would forget names. This list is for us to know that God knows each person in this chapter. Each and everyone matters to God.

We can sometimes misunderstand the self-sufficiency of God. Self-sufficiency means that God does not need anything, and God does not need us or our help. He is totally sufficient by Himself. Sometimes, we can misunderstand this to mean that God does not care for us, He wants to be by Himself, and God does not want to be with us. A question we ask in light of our understanding of God's self-sufficiency is, "Are we dispensable or indispensable?"

There's a controversial line in the song "What a Beautiful Name" that says, "You didn't want heaven without us." To some people, the line makes God sound like a needy God who saved us for Himself because He doesn't want to be alone and He needs us. In terms of the self-sufficiency of God, of course we are dispensable and God does not need us. But in terms of God's eternal love, we are indispensable. It is not that He needs us, but He wants us. He ordained us to image Himself.

God knows each of you. As pastors, we receive small group pictures with names. As much as we could, we see your faces and try to remember your names. But even if I or other pastors fail to remember your name, there is One who will never forget you. He created you in His image. He put you here in this place and time for His purpose.

Invest your life building Jesus into people. Just as you matter to God, people around you matter to God. Invest your life building Jesus Christ into people, and your life will count for God and for eternity. It will not be easy. Building the walls was back-breaking, but building people will be heart-breaking. It is very difficult to serve the Lord and love people, but only when you are broken, you can build the kingdom of God.

Individually, you are important. Individuals make up families. Families are also important. This list contains many family groups. According to the Bible, God designed the family as the most foundational unit in society. The family, then, is the building block of the local church. The family is important just as the individual is important. This is not to devalue singles who are a vital part of God's family. A single person is like a family with less members and thus they have more time to express the love of Jesus Christ. The church is stronger when the families in the church are also stronger. Is it any wonder that Satan is attacking marriages and families in society? You, your marriage, and your family matter to God.

In difficult times, we forget that, and we are not convinced that we matter to God. Remember you are of God. You belong to God. Get rid of the notion that you are yours, that God does not love you, and that He does not care. He cares more about you than you. He cares more about your children than you. God is always working for your good, your joy, and for His glory. When you think something is going wrong in your life, nothing is going wrong in God's eyes. You are just going through what will eventually be made right and glorious for His kingdom.

B. **Your worship matters to God [1, 73]**

This chapter begins and ends with worship. Worship officials were also guarding the wall, but, as they were there, they were there to worship. As we look into the history of Israel, they went into war with worship. This is shown in Joshua 6:3-4,

“You shall march around the city, all the men of war going around the city once. Thus shall you do for six days. Seven priests shall bear seven trumpets of rams' horns before the ark. On the seventh day you shall march around the city seven times, and the priests shall blow the trumpets.”

If you want your life to count for God, grow as a worshiper in knowing God in His infinite beauty. The worth an individual depends on his or her relationship with God and what kind of worshiper he or she is. If our individual worship declines, the morality of the nation declines. The Westminster Shorter Catechism states, “Man's chief end is to glorify God (worship God, and as a result) to enjoy Him forever.”

We should never neglect worship even for the sake of ministry. This is what Jesus says to Martha and Mary. Martha was doing a lot of ministry and a lot of work. There is nothing wrong with that, but when Martha was criticizing Mary, who was sitting and worshipping at the feet of Jesus, Jesus says in Luke 10:41-42, *“But the Lord answered her, ‘Martha, Martha, you are anxious and troubled about many things, but one thing is necessary. Mary has chosen the good portion, which will not be taken away from her.’”* Your ministry is useless and without power unless you worship.

What are your major distractions from prioritizing the worship of God? How can we help ourselves or those to whom we are ministering to re-prioritize worship? The church should be concerned about ministry and many causes: feeding the poor, abortion, trafficking, evangelism, missions, reaching out to students and international students on this campus. However, none of these should come before worship. Worshiping God and seeking His face must be the focus of the church of Jesus Christ. Everything we do for other people has to be out of our worship to God. Nehemiah's relationship to God mattered to God. His ministry was the overflow of worship time with God. This is why it says in verse 5, *“Then my God put it into my heart”*. Nehemiah was in a time of worship and then he did everything else in this chapter.

There will be several things we will do in heaven. One of them is worship. We will probably work in serving the Lord. Maybe to some of you worship is boring. But it will

be like a concert for music you love. Some of you might not like working and you thought there will be eternal rest in heaven. Work in heaven is like what you enjoy to do. Whatever you enjoy, serving the Lord will be so joyful and amazing, you will want to do that eternally. We will be doing this together.

C. **Your work matters to God [1-2]**

When we live like this, worshiping and working, we are practicing what we will do in heaven. The worship of God leads to victory; worship of God is the victory in Jesus Christ. We need to work, and we need to practice how to be in heaven in this world and learn to serve.

The people listed in this chapter had different works and different callings in their lives. God has put you here at this point in history to fulfill the role that He has ordained for you. The previous generation has passed the torch to you. Carry it faithfully and pass it on to the next generation. One reason Christians today are so carried away by the world is that they are ignorant of church history: how God has worked through the ages through His people who were faithful to His calling.

Jim Elliot, who laid down his life at 28 for the cause of the gospel, wrote in his diary, "Wherever you are, be all there. Live to the hilt every situation you believe to be the will of God." Commit yourself to the things that matter to God. Tirelessly, ceaselessly, serve and work for God and for other people. That is how you make your life count for Him.

People remember our greatest successes or failures, but God remembers our consistent faithfulness. Be faithful in the mundanes of your life. If you want to please people, you go for extraordinary. If you want to please God, be consistently faithful. Faithfully work hard in your quietness, and let the result of your work be your voice in the world. The world will see and hear Jesus through you. What do people who live according to God's calling look like? They are just faithfully serving Jesus. They are full of Jesus. If you want to be like Jesus, then be much with Jesus. Nehemiah's heart was stolen with the glory of God. He was not preoccupied with anything else. A preoccupied heart with other things will be weak; a heart occupied with Jesus will be resilient. When a heart is stolen by Jesus then the city can be restored. Do not try to be famous. Be faithful for the Lord. God is looking for faithful, God-fearing men and women who will have the courage and conviction to serve Him come what may.

There is a correlation between kingdom workers and baseball players. You need to step on a home plate so that the run counts. Be at home. Be at the place of your calling. Be faithful. Place your feet there. Go with all your heart so that the runs will count for the people of God.

My calling is to take care of my family, to take care of CFC, and strengthen the next generation of leaders for the glory of God. I can name nice places. But when I come back and see the cornfields and smell the south farms, I am at home. This is my calling. We need to do this together. This is your home. Wherever you are, God has called you. It's

going to be hard and rough. But God who is for us is with you at home, the place of your calling. If He called you, He will be with you.

D. **Your character matters to God [2]**

What good are strong new gates if nobody is guarding them and controlling who enters and leaves the city? What good are the walls if the gates are open to every foe who wants to enter? The Great Wall of China was penetrated through several times, each time because guards were bribed. Gates and walls are only as good as the people who guard them. We need to build our character.

Nehemiah was an exemplary leader who knew to delegate responsibility to other competent men. Hanani was a civic leader, and Hananiah was a military leader. Leadership and character matter to God. Proper leadership comes from proper lordship in their lives. Nehemiah will eventually leave the city so he had to teach and train leaders. Someone said, “The greatest ability is dependability.” Nehemiah chose people of character. We need to be in essence strong and beautiful for the glory of Christ. Some authors write: “We see the tragedy of weak men in important places, little men in big jobs” and “When little men cast long shadows, it is a sign that the sun is setting.” Godly character matters to God. Ministry of skills are necessary but the main requirement is godly character.

1. Faithfulness [2]

Hebrew word for “faithful” means “reliable, truthful, firm”. Hananiah was a man who you could depend on. He spoke the truth. If he promised to do something, he did it. If you want your life to count for God, work to become a faithful person. Faithfulness is the fruit of the Holy Spirit, according to Galatians 5:22, “*But the fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, self-control; against such things there is no law.*”

Luke 16:10 says, “*One who is faithful in a very little is also faithful in much, and one who is dishonest in a very little is also dishonest in much.*”

Faithfulness is the result. The fear of God is the cause.

2. Fear of God [2]

What is the fear of God? To fear God is to revere Him, to understand and stand in awe of His characteristics and His perfections. To fear God essentially means to worship Him. Solomon said in Proverbs 9:10, “*The fear of the LORD is the beginning of wisdom, and the knowledge of the Holy One is insight.*” The fear of the Lord is important because it enables people to make wise decisions.

People lack wisdom because they do not fear God. They see God as a buddy who simply forgives their sins and answers their prayers, but there is no fear of a holy God who is at

times mentioned in the Bible as a consuming fire. This is the reason why so many believers live such foolish and wasteful lives. Many Christians lack fear because we have anemic, feel-good preaching in the church these days. There is no reason to fear God. A pastor said he does not preach on sin anymore because his people were already discouraged. He said preaching on sin would only make it worse and thus they need encouragement. If we do not preach on sin, we will not be preaching and teaching the Bible. We would not be preaching about what causes discouragement and disillusionment and bad things that happen in their lives. We must preach sin along with the grace and forgiveness of Jesus Christ. We need to raise people who will fear the Lord and live wise lives.

In verse two, it says, he was *more faithful* and God-fearing than many. We do not have to choose perfect people to be leaders; otherwise, none of us would be leaders and pastors. Because it says *more faithful*, it means we can grow in our faithfulness and our fear of God. Our fear of God grows out of our knowledge of God. The person who meditates on God's Word day and night prospers in everything He does. We must be people who fear God so we will be faithful in our lives. Our devotion our of fear of God leads to our dedication and faithfulness in our daily lives.

CEOs are hired to make decisions, though not all of them are amazing decisions. About 95% of the decisions are what high school grads can make. But CEOs get paid for the 5% of decisions that can ruin or make a company. We need to attain wisdom from God. As we become leaders of families and organizations, we need to be wise to lead many others to Him.

Nehemiah was brilliant as a leader because he was broken as a follower. Broken followers who fear God become brilliant leaders who are faithful in their callings before the Lord.

E. **Your belonging matters to God**

1. Citizenship [3, 64, 70-72]

The Israelites were faithful to their citizenship. The Bible always tells us to be faithful citizens to our nation so that we can not only picture the faithful citizenship of heaven but also create an atmosphere that is conducive for the Gospel to be preached. They were legal in their citizenship. They gave back financially. What they were giving would be worth around 5 million dollars today. They were providing protection for the city. Just as we need to be good earthly citizens in this world, we need to be good heavenly citizens for the kingdom of God.

2. Heavenly citizenship

Make sure you are written in the book of life. Make sure you are a heavenly citizen. Make sure Jesus knows your name. He knows everyone in the omniscient sense but

maybe not in personal knowledge. Matthew 7:23 says, *“And then I will declare to them, ‘I never knew you; depart from me, you workers of lawlessness.’”*

Through your faith in Jesus Christ, your sins are cleansed. By His grace, you are living every day as a citizen of God’s kingdom in earthly kingdoms. We need to pay tithes and offerings as we belong to the church of Jesus Christ. We need to be members of the local church, guarding each other from the dangers of this world. We need to be consistently faithful, especially in managing success.

Make sure we guard each other from falling. Nehemiah trusted God, but he also set up a watch. Right after the success of building the wall, he was very watchful for the people. Sometimes parents can be deceived in two ways: wonderful and prodigal children. It is a long discipleship. When kids are doing terrible, do not be deceived to think they are out of the hand of God. Keep praying. You can be deceived with angelic, good kids. Sometimes kids are good but they can be away from Lord. Do not be deceived. Be faithful until the end. Watch and guard your family, one another, your small group, your heart. The Lord is going to be with us. Especially in a time of success, it is a critical time to be on guard. If there was a time Nehemiah would be tempted to take credit, it would be at the completion of the wall. But he was making sure pride did not kick in.

Why do people fall when they become successful? This is because, before the success, their motive was for their own glory. When they become successful, they become proud saying, “I did well.” We need to be humble before the Lord before and after we do things. We need to keep being faithful and trusting in the Lord. Especially learn to manage success in your life. Ephesians 6:13 says, *“Therefore take up the whole armor of God, that you may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand firm.”*

Always guard your heart because it is alive and dynamic. Understand the dynamic aspect of your spiritual life. Spiritual life is not like riding a bicycle, where once you do it, you never forget. No, spiritual life is like eating. Even though you had wonderful dinner yesterday, you will be hungry again in the morning. You have to keep eating the Word and grace of God so that you will be strong enough to overcome. The opposite is true when you fail. You are not permanently there in your failure. Even when you fail, you can be forgiven. God is working in your life even when you fail. When you fail, it is more like a GPS. You go the wrong way and some consequences happen (you take more time and money), but He is going to get you back by recalculating. Our spiritual lives are dynamic, so you have to keep on going to the Lord for daily bread and grace. Learn how to manage successes and failures in your life.

As we guard our hearts, we need to guard the next generation. We need not to forget God but also not to forget to tell of God. Every ministry is one generation short of destruction. God’s people must be on guard. Judges 2:10 says, *“And all that generation also were gathered to their fathers. And there arose another generation after them who did not know the LORD or the work that he had done for Israel.”* They did not know the work they had done for Israel. Their parents did not tell them. They did not know the Lord because they did not know God’s work in Moses’ and Joshua’s generation.

The faith of the next generation is not exclusively our fault or our responsibility. They are responsible for what they do in their spiritual life. We are responsible to get them there and to tell them what God has done in our lives thru testimonies. If they do not know the work God had done for us, that is our responsibility and fault. We have to do our part. We have to pray for ourselves and for the next generation.

Conclusion

I was invited to Thanksgiving dinner by all the areas. I went to the CRH Thanksgiving dinner. In the past, people did not dress up for the dinner, but it was like a fashion show. It was wonderful to see that. I just prayed that they dressed to wear Christ, to have beauty on the inside. Even though I did not know most of them, I felt like I belonged. If anybody walked into that room, they probably would feel like they belonged to that area. I'm sure that would be the same in the other areas. I pray that will always happen if *anybody* walks into your small group, area, CFC, and the church of Jesus Christ. That should be our goal.

Few weeks ago, it was my mother's 80th birthday. My father passed away in 1991, the year my first child was born. My mother wanted to visit my father. We went to the grave, and written there is his name and this phrase, "Love never fails." That is the promise of God: that the love of Jesus never fails and nothing can separate us from the love of God.

There will be a time of worship together one day. No matter what happens, we will all be together again. At least for the Chungs, the family continues. I do not know if it will continue to carry on, but my prayer is that my family will be faithful until the end. Will it continue in your family? Will it continue in the generation of CFC? Pray that we do this together and that we will be faithful until the end.

Let's pray.