



“Coming Home to Faith Is Complicated”

Today’s message on Nehemiah 11-13 explores the journey of returning to faith, highlighting that while the initial act and joy are relatively straightforward, the subsequent work of "reforming" one's life can be far more complex.

Background:

Ezra-Nehemiah is originally one book focused on three leaders:

Zerubbabel	Ezra	Nehemiah
First Wave: Temple	Second Wave: Torah and Community	Third Wave: Repopulating city of Jerusalem and rebuilding the city walls

Big idea: Today’s text shows us what it means to return to God fully.

The message is structured around three main aspects of this return:

1. **The Act of Returning (Nehemiah 11:1):** This section emphasizes the practical decisions involved in committing to God's plan. Just as the people in Nehemiah's time cast lots or volunteered to repopulate Jerusalem, so too do we make choices about the direction of our lives in our return to faith.
2. **The Joy of Returning (Nehemiah 12:43):** This part focuses on the profound celebration and happiness that accompanies a renewed commitment to God. The passage describes great sacrifices and rejoicing, echoing the heavenly joy over a repenting sinner mentioned in Luke 15:7.
3. **The Job of Returning (Nehemiah 13):** This final section delves into the necessary reforms that follow the initial return to faith. It outlines several key areas of spiritual "housekeeping":

- **Returning to the Bible (13:1a):** Emphasizing the importance of God's Word.
- **Restoring proper worship (13:2-22):** Addressing issues like mixed multitudes, removing obstacles to worship (like Tobiah the freeloader), supporting spiritual leaders, and honoring the Sabbath.
- **Rejecting mixed marriages (13:23-29):** Highlighting the dangers of spiritual compromise and the resulting ignorance in future generations.

In summary, while it may be easy to return to a church building, truly returning to God involves the more challenging work of rebuilding a life in alignment with His will. Coming home to faith is indeed complicated, but ultimately, profoundly rewarding.