

## MESSAGE OUTLINE

### Unleash Ministry Unleash Vision

#### Nehemiah 2:11–18 (NIV)

<sup>11</sup> I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days <sup>12</sup> I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

<sup>13</sup> By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. <sup>14</sup> Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; <sup>15</sup> so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. <sup>16</sup> The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

<sup>17</sup> Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." <sup>18</sup> I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

#### Heart-Vision

If you want to build a ship, don't drum up the men to gather wood, divide the work, and give orders. Instead, teach them to yearn for the vast and endless sea."

-Antoine de Saint-Exupéry

#### Weeping over Jerusalem (The Birthing Place of Vision is Heart Ache)

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. -Nehemiah 1:3–4

As he approached Jerusalem and saw the city, he wept over it and said, "If you, even you, had only known on this day what would bring you peace—but now it is hidden from your eyes. -Luke 19:41–44

## The Valley of Vision : A collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions

Lord, High and Holy, Meek and Lowly,  
Thou hast brought me to the valley of vision,  
where I live in the depths but see thee in the heights;  
hemmed in by mountains of sin I behold thy glory.

Let me learn by paradox  
that the way down is the way up,  
that to be low is to be high,  
that the broken heart is the healed heart,  
that the contrite spirit is the rejoicing spirit,  
that the repenting soul is the victorious soul,  
that to have nothing is to possess all,  
that to bear the cross is to wear the crown,  
that to give is to receive,  
that the valley is the place of vision.  
Lord, in the daytime stars can be seen from deepest wells,  
and the deeper the wells the brighter thy stars shine;  
Let me find thy light in my darkness,  
thy life in my death,  
thy joy in my sorrow,  
thy grace in my sin,  
thy riches in my poverty,  
thy glory in my valley.

#### Re-Build

**Isaiah 61:4** They will rebuild the ancient ruins and restore the places long devastated; they will renew the ruined cities that have been devastated for generations.

"There is only the fight to recover what has been lost  
And found and lost again and again: and now, under conditions  
That seem unpropitious. But perhaps neither gain nor loss.  
For us, there is only the trying. The rest is not our business."

-T.S. Eliot, Four Quartets

## SMALL GROUP QUESTIONS

October 26, 2025

*As needed, refer to the Order of Worship and Resources at [solanabeach.church](http://solanabeach.church) for sermon video, message outline, resources and small group questions print version.*

**CONNECT WITH GOD** (Select one of the below practices or choose a practice from a different week.)

- **In-Situ Praying with Emotions & Images:** Have some blank paper and pencils or markers available for this practice.
  - In your journal or quietly on your own, consider what is preoccupying your mind today? A situation, a relationship, a task, a fear, and anticipation. Describe this.
  - What emotion do you feel about this? What image or images would describe your emotion about this?
  - Draw this preoccupation and/or the emotions of it.
  - Explain your drawing to God.
- **Scripture Meditation:** Reflect on God's generosity in a time of stillness, allowing for silence and cultivating an awareness of God's presence with you in this spacious moment.
  - After a time of silence, receive the words of [Psalm 145](#).
  - Meditate on the passage (it may be helpful to choose one phrase or verse as your focal point.)
  - In a continued posture of openness, meditate on God's generosity to you.
  - Ask the Spirit to saturate your heart with the generosity of God. End your prayer with silence, once again cultivating an awareness of God's presence with you in this spacious moment.

## CONNECT WITH EACH OTHER

Before beginning your time in the message and scripture passage, consider asking each person: What is one thing you have felt inspired to do?

## TIME FOR PERSONAL AND SHARED REFLECTION

- **Alone:** Read Nehemiah 2:11-18. Offer an extended time for personal, quiet reflection. Reflect/journal on one or more of the following prompts:
  - What is one thing you most desire for your community?
  - How have you seen God's hand at work in your own life? Through challenges or calling?
- **Together:** in pairs or smaller groups: Share your reflections from your time of journaling. Remember to listen with intentionality, and resist the temptation to fix or give advice.

## CONNECT WITH SCRIPTURE

If needed, read the passage again. Then select the best questions or customize the questions for your group.

- Review the sermon outline.
- How does this week's sermon tie in with last week's sermon theme of attentiveness?
- What is "heart-vision?"
- What do you think about the idea that the birthing place of vision is heart-ache?
- Why do you think Nehemiah began by keeping what God put on his heart secret?
- Consider the night-inspection of the walls. What does that symbolize?
- How does Isaiah 61:4 also speak to the 'rebuilding' in Nehemiah?
- What does this passage teach you about vision and community?
- How is Nehemiah a model of stewardship?

## ENGAGE AND EXPLORE

Together: explore this quote by Henri Nouwen, in connection with the passage and message.

"The spiritual life is a vision of the heart. Seeing with the eyes of God leads to loving with the heart of God."

## PRAYER

As a whole group or in smaller groups, share your heart and hope for our SBPC community. Then, pray together using the prayer from **The Valley of Vision: A collection of Puritan Prayers & Devotions** found in your message outline.