

Becoming One of the Faithful Few Nehemiah 7

Introduction:

1. God's Word places a very high precedence on the character quality of faithfulness. **1 Corinthians 4:2** states, *"Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful."*
2. The word "faithful" carries the idea of trustworthiness. If you are faithful, it means that you can be trusted; you can be counted on to do what you are asked to do.
3. Paul told Timothy to take what he had learned and teach it *"to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also."* **2 Timothy 2:2**
4. Another example is in our text (vs. 2). Hananiah had a testimony that he was a *"faithful man."* Nehemiah placed this faithful man in charge of Jerusalem.
5. This chapter lists the names of faithful people that had left the comforts of Babylon and traveled to their homeland of Israel to help restore their capital city, Jerusalem. This is a list of faithful people that endured great hardship in order to honor their God. vs. 5-6
 - Little did they know that their names would be recorded by God for people to read in the centuries that would follow.
6. As you read God's Word you will find something that is true in every age - there has always been a shortage of faithful people to God. **Proverbs 20:6; Ezekiel 22:30; Matthew 9:37; Philippians 2:20-21**
7. Because of this, God carefully notes a faithful man or woman. **Example: Abraham -Genesis 18:19, 19:29; Galatians 3:9**
8. Do you desire to be one of the faithful few that God can trust? Let us look at this courageous group here in Nehemiah 7 and learn what it is going to take to become one of the faithful few.

First, it takes a heart that passionately seeks God.

1. Verse 6 explains that these were people that had been taken captive to Babylon. Many of these would have been second generation kids that were born in Babylon. It was the only home they had ever known.
2. In addition to this, the Jews had become very prosperous in Babylon. Yet God records the names of these faithful few that went up out of Babylon.
3. Cyrus was king of the Persian Empire and made a decree that the Jews could return to their homeland and rebuild God's temple in Jerusalem. **Ezra 1:1-2**
4. There was a remnant that had such a heart for their God that they willingly left their home in Babylon and took off for Jerusalem. **Ezra 1:3, 5**
5. Remember this, you will never be one of God's faithful few unless you have a heart that genuinely seeks and desires God. These people desired God more than they desired the pleasures and riches of Babylon. **Hebrews 11:25-26**
6. If you are to be one of the faithful few, you must love God more than you love the things of this world. In 2 Timothy 2 the *"faithful men"* of verse 2 are the ones that refuse to entangle themselves with the affairs of this life (verse 4).
7. If you love this world more than you love God and His Word, you cannot be one of the faithful ones that God can trust. **2 Timothy 4:10; 1 John 2:15**

Second, it takes a willingness to leave your comfort zone.

1. As we cross-reference **Ezra 1:3-4**, we see that there were two groups of Jews that lived in Babylon.
 - A group who believed God was with them and they were willing to leave the comforts of Babylon and go and build God's temple in Jerusalem. vs. 3
 - A group who chose to remain in their comfort zone of Babylon. vs. 4
2. What a picture of believers today. There are Christians who are very satisfied where they are in their Christian lives. They are never going to stretch themselves beyond where they are right now. They are locked into a comfort zone and they are not moving.
3. You have other believers who are constantly striving to grow in their faith and serve God with zeal and passion. These are the faithful ones that God can trust and God can really use.
4. Do you know the kind of person who leaves his comfort zone in God's work? It is the person who fears God and nothing else. **Nehemiah 7:2**
 - To fear God means that you respect and reverence God more than anything else in your life. God is your all in all - your everything.
5. If you fear man or if you fear losing earthly possessions or if you fear losing your position or fear anything else, you will not fear God, and be willing to leave your comfort zone. **2 Timothy 1:7-9**
6. I want to challenge some of you today to leave the spiritual comfort zone you are in and decide that you will be like this faithful remnant in Nehemiah 7, and pioneer some new spiritual ground.

Third, it takes courage to stand against the majority.

1. As I said in the introduction of this message, those who are faithful to God have always been in the minority.
2. They tend to stand out in this world (like a sore thumb), sometimes viewed as kooks, radicals, fools, etc. **1 Corinthians 4:10, 13**
3. If we are to be faithful men and women, we must seek God's approval and God's commendation above all else (this was Paul's motivation). **Galatians 1:10; Ephesians 6:6**
4. I'm sure this remnant of Jews that left Babylon and took off for the broken down rubbish of Jerusalem must have seemed like a bunch of nuts. Notice verse 4. The people were few, and most of them did not have houses to live in.
5. I wonder what some of their friends and family said to them as they were packing up and about to leave on the long journey to Jerusalem and leave their homes, businesses, material possessions, etc.
6. They had no idea what lay ahead, but they had courage to trust God and live for something higher than their personal comforts.
7. Paul exhorted Timothy to remain faithful, even though he could expect to be in the minority. **2 Timothy 1:13-15, 4:2-5**
8. Christian, do you want to be one of the faithful few? Don't expect the world to pat you on the back and encourage you and applaud your dedication to God. They won't understand.

In Conclusion:

1. But one day all of us will stand before our Savior at the Judgment Seat of Christ. Can you imagine what it will be like to look our Savior in the eyes?
2. As they hear, "*Well done... faithful servant,*" do you think those who have been faithful will be overjoyed?
3. What about those who were not faithful? O the regret of a life not lived unto Christ.
4. Notice Paul's words in **2 Timothy 4:7-8**. O the joy of a life lived faithfully unto Christ. May God find us faithful!