

The Watford Word

www.watfordchurchofchrist.org

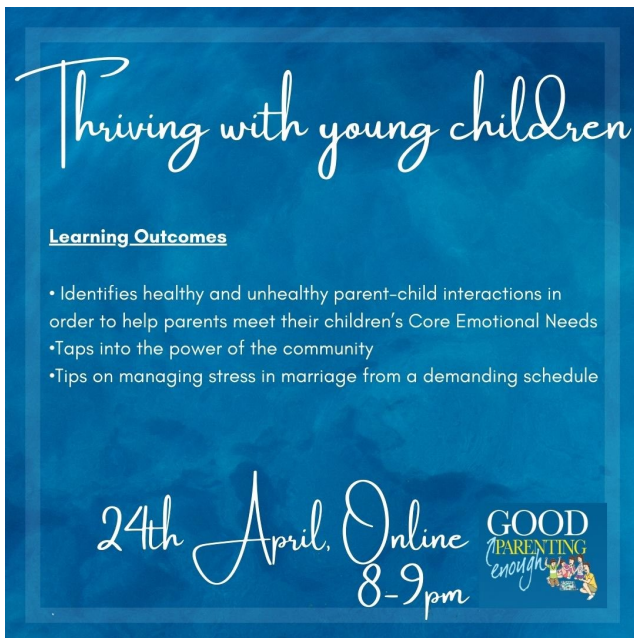
What's on

Sunday 25 February - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking on Esther

Sunday 03 March - 10:30AM. Stefan speaking on the Samaritan woman

Sunday 10 March - 10:30AM. Malcolm speaking

ADVANCED NOTICE



Thriving with young children

Learning Outcomes

- Identifies healthy and unhealthy parent-child interactions in order to help parents meet their children's Core Emotional Needs
- Taps into the power of the community
- Tips on managing stress in marriage from a demanding schedule

24th April, Online 8-9pm

GOOD PARENTING enough

Pentecost Sunday 19 May - 10:30AM.
International Sunday with food from around the world. Would someone like to coordinate the food?

A New Thing – Nehemiah

For today's article on Nehemiah I am indebted to my friend Fabian Ying from the Thames Valley churches of Christ (with some editing from me).

Dates of Key Events in Nehemiah's time

445 BC: Nehemiah asks King Artaxerxes I to go Jerusalem to build a wall, finishing it after 52 days.

445 - 433 BC: Nehemiah serves as governor in Jerusalem and surrounding areas ("in the land of Judah")

433 BC: Nehemiah briefly returns to Artaxerxes, and then comes back to Jerusalem to start a second term as governor.

The events in the book of Nehemiah happen during the reign of King Artaxerxes I, the king of Persia, who ruled between 464 BC until 423 BC.

Locations - Jerusalem and Susa (winter resort of Persian kings)

General and Cultural Situation

The era of Jewish kings ended in 587 BC with the sack of Jerusalem under the Babylonians, with the city and temple destroyed and a large portion of Jews deported to Babylon.

In 538 BC, Cyrus defeated Babylon and decrees that captives can return home. The Persians had a policy of returning deported peoples to their homeland and restoring the worship of their gods, encouraging them to seek the king's welfare by a proper worship of their own gods (or in other words, the Persian kings wanted to appease the other gods as well).

For the Jewish people, the Old Testament describes three main returns during this period:

In 536 BC, 50,000 Jews returned under Zerubbabel (aka Sheshbazzar) and Joshua the High Priest (Ezra 1 and 2) to found the remnant and start rebuilding the temple, but the rebuilding stopped soon after due to opposition (Ezra 4). 15 years later, the temple rebuilding resumed and completed after another four years in 516 BC (Ezra 5 and 6)

In 457 BC, 2,000 returned with Ezra who brought about a spiritual restoration (Ezra 7 - 10). He was tasked to help the Jews to observe the Law of God. He restored the proper temple

service and dealt with the sin of intermarriage among the Jews.

In 445 BC, Nehemiah brought a third group back and rebuilt the walls, bringing about political restoration, as well as further spiritual and cultural restoration.

General Facts About Nehemiah

Nehemiah was a cupbearer for the King of Persia. A cupbearer was a high official in the royal household, whose basic duty is to choose and taste the wine to demonstrate that it was not poisoned and presenting it to the king. This role gives frequent access to the king's presence, and made him potentially a man of influence.

Other Major Characters

Ezra and Zerubbabel (see above on the first two returns to Jerusalem)

'New Thing' Lessons

He was moved to the heart after hearing about the state of Jerusalem and responded by prayer (Neh 1:4). Only after praying over a period of several months did he act (Neh 1:5-11).

Before embarking on the "new" mission, he assessed the situation carefully and came up with a plan (Neh 2:11-16, also 2:7-9).

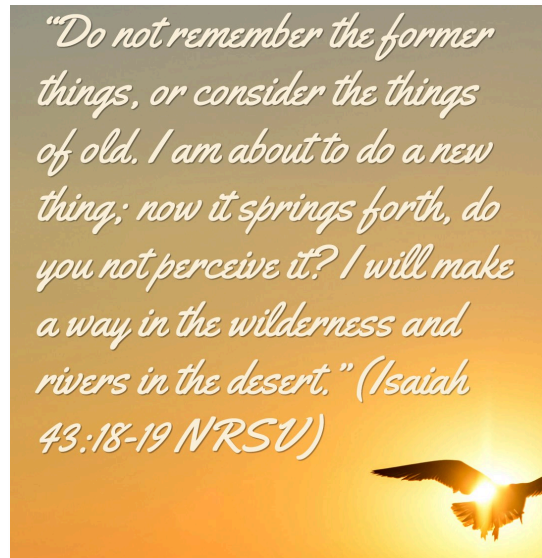
He involved the whole community in this "new" project of rebuilding the wall (Neh 3, as well as delegation of duties described in Neh 7:1-3)

He faced opposition just like Zerubbabel in Ezra 4, but persevered through it (Neh 4 and 6)

He led by example with ethical leadership while being governor (Neh 5)

He stayed focused on the goal during times of opposition and distractions, while adapting his approach to the environment and circumstances (Neh 6)

He understood that the rebuilding of the wall wasn't the ultimate goal in itself, but a means to bring spiritual restoration to the people and protect it (Neh 7-13)



His fear of and reverence for God was greater than his fear of his enemies, which gave him the courage to embark on this "new" mission as well as persevere and respond to opposition (see examples in his prayers and speeches in Neh 1:5-11, Neh 2:20, Neh 4:14, 20, Neh 5:9, Neh 9:5-37, Neh 13:14, 18, 22, 29 - note the many occurrences of "remember me, my God")

God bless, Fabian

Don't forget the daily devotional podcasts accompany the 'A New Thing' teaching and preaching series. You can find them in the Watford podcast feed (below) or my personal podcast — RSS feed: <https://audioboom.com/channels/4909728.rss>

Watford Media

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCj9Qa8D9zumJZdoAtARDUww>

Podcast: <https://www.podbean.com/pu/pbblog-aiinq-1aef90>