

## **What's at the Center?**

Lessons from Nehemiah

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### **I. Introduction**

### **II. Centrality of the Gospel**

What is the Gospel? It is the good news that, though we as humans are rebellious creatures, God in His infinite mercy has pledged to rescue His people from their rebellion, their self-destruction through Jesus. In other words, salvation, deliverance, blessing is from *God alone*.

#### **A. Prayer**

1. Cries for Help (1:4ff; 2:4; 4:4, 9; 6:9)

2. Cries to Remember (5:19; 6:14; 13:14, 22, 29, 31)

**B. Confidence in God's Favor (2:8, 20; 4:14-15, 20; 6:16; 7:5; 8:10)**

**C. Godly Ambition (cf. Phil 2:1ff)**

### III. Centrality of the Scriptures

A. For Nehemiah Personally (1:8ff; 5:15; 6:10-13; 13:14, 22, 31)

B. For the Community (4:20; 5:9; 8:1ff; 9:3; 10:29; 13:1)

### IV. Centrality of the Church (cf. Ps 137:5-6; Mt 16:17-19)

*“Christ’s promise introduces us to a radical, countercultural idea: the satisfaction of individual ambition is linked to our collective identity as the people of God. The individual Christian simply cannot understand his purpose, and therefore his ambition, in purely individual terms. This community Christ is building is something he loves—and not in a merely abstract way. He cherishes it as a husband cherishes his wife. He prizes it as his greatest possession. And he pursues it, even to the point of sacrificing his own life for the church—for us. If Christ displayed such a love and ambition for the church, shouldn’t we also? Should we not prize and pursue that which Jesus himself prizes and pursues? Shouldn’t our ambition be modeled after his?... Ambition for the church compels us to join our imperfect self with other imperfect selves to form an imperfect community – all for the glory of God.” Dave Harvey, *Rescuing Ambition**

### V. Centrality of Christ