



Message Transcript **Difference Makers**

Jeff Schwarzentraub

That he has for us. Father in heaven, we give you all the glory. We give you all the honor, and we give you all the praise. We thank you for the privilege of worshiping your great name today. Just to sing that last song about the gospel just thrills our heart, and we look forward to meeting you face to face. Father, we pray this day, too, for high five that's coming up this week. We pray for the myriad of volunteers and young kids that are coming. We pray for your spirit to have your way among them. And you would draw many students, many kids, unto faith in the Lord Jesus Christ. Father, that you protect them from all evil and the Lord, that you would do a work that would not only have impact in this generation, but for many generations to come. Father, we love you and we bless you, and we're privileged to be able to hear your living and active word because we as a people believe that every time it is faithfully and accurately proclaimed that you are speaking. So speak, Lord, for we are ready to hear what you have to tell us. And so now for all those who have gathered who desire to hear the Lord Jesus Christ speak directly to you, who will believe what he says and who will by faith, put into practice what he shows you, will you agree with me very loudly this morning by saying the word amen? Amen. This morning. I want to start with a question. How many this week read Nehemiah eleven and twelve. We're in church. Don't lie. It's okay if you didn't. How many? Okay. That's kind of about what I thought, you know, as I was preparing this message over the last couple weeks, I mean, there were several times where I was in the word, where I felt like a UFC fighter because I was about ready to tap out. Because when you look at this text, you look at this text and it looks like a graduation list, is what it looks like. It's what it reads like. But as I

was doing this, I was prompted by so many other things in the word, like two Timothy 3:16 that says, all scripture is God breathed and useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training in righteousness. So the man of God will be thoroughly equipped for every good work. And above all, you must understand that no prophecy had its origin in the will of man, but men, moved by the Holy Spirit spoke from God. I believe that every word in the Bible was given to us by God's Holy spirit and has significance and meaning. And if we believe what the word says about itself, then every part of the Bible is true. Amen do you believe that with me? And so as I was preparing the last couple of weeks, I was saying, okay, Lord, give me clues, give me insight, give me something that we can share. Because at brave, we don't skip over parts of the word. We don't just say, well, that's just a genealogy, or that's just about marriage, or that's just, we don't want to do that. That's a tough topic. We plow through the word because we believe that this is God speaking. And he doesn't need a pro agent. He just needs somebody to proclaim what he's trying to say. Even as we're praying as a team this morning, Pastor John was praying. He said, Lord, let this be the best proclamation of Nehemiah eleven and twelve in church history. How many of you ever heard a message on Nehemiah eleven and twelve? It'll be the best one you ever heard, right? So thank you, John, for God answering your prayer. But when you hear this, the reason we're going through it is because as I was doing, I saw more and more insight, because really what you're seeing is faithful people that are doing the very things of God. Because the book of Nehemiah is not just about Nehemiah building a wall that was done in 52 days, that was already completed. God was never about the wall. God

was about the people that were going to indwell the city once the wall was built, because God wanted Israel to be a light unto all the nations. And so what you have here, what's highlighted is a group of faithful people that were difference makers. Now all of us as christians want to make a difference. And I got news for you. If you've repented of your faith and trusted in Jesus Christ as your personal lord and savior, you are a difference maker. You're indwelled by his holy spirit. You've been given a new title called Saint. You've been given a new identity in Christ. And God is working in and through you to not only impact this generation, but many of the generations to come. And so the more and more I read this, I felt like it was a group of people sitting at a graduation as their names were read. And you know what it's like to speak at a graduation, even if you've never been the one speaking, it's always the same message. It just has a different title. You know, sometimes it's like you can make a difference. This generation's the answer. Make it happen now. Make your mark. Now is the time. And then there's about ten to 20 minutes of storytelling that lets the people know they're hearing, you can do this. That's what I believe we have here in history. We see a group of people that followed God and. And made a difference for him and as a believer in Christ, because you want to make a difference, God wants to show you today how it is through his holy spirit that he can make a difference through you. So if you're looking forward to hearing that, I got good news for you. Open your bible up to Nehemiah, chapter eleven. And as you're turning there, as we've already talked about, the wall has now been built. The city has been established. There are leaders that are living in that city, but God is wanting to populate the city. And the question becomes,

how do we get all of God's people in the place where God is trying to do his work? And how do we get these difference makers to come together so that collectively they can make a difference? Because God's heart for Israel has always been to be a light to all the other nations, to be a light unto the world. And this is where our story picks up in Nehemiah, chapter eleven. And I'm going to give you four truths about being a difference maker today, that if you'll adhere to, God will use your life to make a significant difference, not only in your life and in those near you, but perhaps in generations to come. And the first is difference makers follow God's directives and invite others to join them. Difference makers always follow God's directives and then invite others to join them. Notice the word. Nehemiah eleven one. Now, the leaders of the people lived in Jerusalem, but the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of every ten to live in Jerusalem, the holy city, while nine tenths remained in the other cities. And the people blessed all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem. Now, these are the heads of the provinces who lived in Jerusalem. But in the cities of Judah, each lived on his own property in their own cities. The Israelites, the priests, the Levites, the Temple servants, the descendants of Solomon's servants. Some of the sons of Judah and some of the sons of Benjamin lived in Jerusalem. So what we have here is we have a group of people that are already living there, but they need other people to come join them. Now, who is living there? The leaders. I want to be a leader. I want to be a leader. What do leaders do? What do leaders in the kingdom do? They listen to what God says, and they go model what God's doing so, the leaders are already in the city. The leaders don't need to be beckoned to come. Because why?

Because the leaders are already doing what God has asked them to do. Nehemiah was the leader. God told him to go rebuild the wall. So what did he do? He went and invited others to come build the wall with him. So who's with Nehemiah? All the leaders, all the ones that are making a difference now that the wall is built, they're inviting all those from the suburbs. Hey, come join us. And so they cast lots so that one out of every ten that's living in the suburbs can come and populate this city. Now, the city wasn't all that attractive because for 130 plus years it's been a disgrace. It's been demolished, it's been burned with fire. Nobody wants to go from the comfortable suburbs into the inner city, do they? So they cast lots. But it wasn't just like it cast a lot. And like, oh, doggone it, I'm chosen. I guess I'll go to Jerusalem. Because notice what you read in verse two. It says, and the people blessed all the men who volunteered to live in Jerusalem. They cast lots that fell on them, but they had a choice as to whether they were going to follow that or not. Now, just a quick word on casting lots. We see this about 50 plus times all throughout scripture. They cast lots. They cast lots. They cast lots. They cast lots. We see it all up into about acts one, which I believe is the last time we see it, where they're going to choose who's going to replace Judas Iscariot as an apostle. And they cast lots to see which of the men they're going to pick. But what happens in acts chapter two, the Holy Spirit comes and indwells every single person who believes. Now you have the counselor, now you have the one alongside. Now you have God of God living inside of you. You don't need to cast lots anymore because the spirit of God is inside of you and can direct and can guide and can align with the word and other people that are believers. So you can know the will of God

because of the spirit who lives in you. Amen. But it was almost like these guys were voluntold, wasn't it? They cast lots and it fell on you. But then you had to make a decision. Am I going to do what God wants me to do? Same as today. You can hear the word, you can hear the truth. You can say, I know what I need to do. But like James 4:17 says, anyone who knows the good he ought to do and does not do it. Sins you didn't have to. God doesn't make people do what he says, but here's what God's will is. And so they applauded and cheered for those that the lots fell on that said, okay, we're going. We're taking our family here. We're gonna leave the comfortable suburbs. We're gonna move into this city not knowing what's going to happen. And if you want to make a difference, you have to follow God's directives. But more importantly, you have to invite others to join. You understand this. Discipleship is not just me and God. Discipleship is not just you and God. It's not just about the songs you sing, the prayers you pray, the Bible you read, the small group you're in, the church you attend. It's not just this. It's about doing those things to grow your faith. And then what? Inviting other people to do it with you? Like, come, let's do this together. Come to my church. Come sing with me. Come hear the word of the Lord. Let's do this together. Come be a part of this. Hey, I'm starting a cadre. Come be a part of it. Come see how we do things. And here's the challenge. So often when it comes to discipleship and that word in the church, we think discipleship is just teaching. So you know stuff in your head. Discipleship is becoming like the person of Jesus. And what did he say? Follow me, and I'll make you fishers and men. He followed his father's directives and then invited other people. Come do exactly what I'm doing. I'll show you

how to preach. I'll show you how to teach. I'll show you how to cast out demons. I'll show you how to heal people. You want to know what compassion looks like? Follow me and I'll show you. You want to know what it's like to align yourself with truth? Follow me and I'll show you. Why don't we do that more often? Because we falsely believe that discipleship's just about me and God. And by the way, we don't want other people to see our struggles. How are you going to learn what a good marriage looks like if you can't get around people that have some good marriages that can help you? Some of you are brand new as believers, and you hear your pastor, like me, say, all the word of God is true. It's awesome. But if you're like what I was when I first came to Christ, I didn't know what a Philippian was. I didn't know what a Corinthian was. I didn't know anything. So what did I do? I got around. People that did started saying, explain this to me. I needed to understand, what's that mean? What's that mean? What's that mean? What's that mean? What's marriage look like? What's it mean? What's it mean? What's it mean? My wife and I have a good marriage. We don't have a perfect marriage. I mean, you hear me talk about our struggles and our vulnerabilities. We have a good marriage. We love each other. But if you came to my house and watched how I treat my wife or you came to my house and watched how Kim treated me, you'd see what that looks like and you'd go, oh, but you'd also see this. You'd also see the times where we don't do it well and we have to go back and say, I was wrong and I didn't do this right, or, I'm apologizing to my kids. Cause they saw the way I treated their mom, or vice versa. And you get to see that. But the reason so many christians are impoverished and don't know how to do stuff is we don't

have disciple making taking place in the church. We can have good teaching, but then nobody shares anything. And here's what you falsely believe. As soon as I know enough, as soon as I got it figured out, as soon as I'm perfected in all those areas, I'll invite people in so I can show them what it looks like. Friends, you will meet Jesus first. You'll never know the Bible well enough. You'll never have a perfect dating life. Enough. You'll never have perfect marriage life. Enough. You'll never be a perfect parent. Enough. You'll never be perfect in leading a group. Enough. You're never going to get to the place you think you need to get in order to help people. How do you learn to do it? Just do it now with what you have and invite people in. That's how I've grown my whole ministry. If I were waiting until I was a good preacher, I'd still be waiting. Do you understand what I'm saying? I mean, you have to start where God has you. You have to invite people in discipleship. Is God working through me to others? It's not just God and I growing. It's God growing me so I can share what he's doing in my life. So other people can see, oh, he's growing. Oh, she's growing. Oh, that's how it works. And then we help each other to grow to perfection in Christ. And it works this way in life, too. It's not just discipleship. When we demonstrate a behavior that we do and invite others to do it, it changes them as well. I don't know if you know this about me, but you may. I'm a very avid indoor enthusiast. I didn't move to Colorado because of the mountains and because of mountain biking and skiing. And don't get me wrong, I like being in the mountains. Don't get me wrong. I enjoy the beauty. Don't get me wrong, I love the beauty of what the Lord's done. It refreshes me to be up in the mountains, but I'm not one of those that has to go do a bunch of activity, especially at my age, to say it

wasn't that great because I don't need it. But I have a friend who always invites me to go do stuff out in the wild. You want to go camping with us? My answer is always no. But we always end up going somehow because he invites us, he models it, he makes it look fun, and he invites, and he knows me well enough now when he invites me that I'm probably going to say no. And so he'll go to my wife or my daughter's, like he did last week because it was their birthday. And he said, don't you want to come to Moab for your birthday? And they were like, yes. So we're going. So last week we went to Moab, and he kept telling me about all the stuff that we were going to do, and it didn't thrill me. It wasn't like, oh, great, we get to ride razors up in the mountains. Whoopity doo. I mean, it doesn't thrill me. And then when we got there on Friday of last week, we decided we're going to ride these razors. You ever seen those things? Those side by sides has like four seats and these big wheels? It's not that you just take terrain like asphalt. You go over the mountains in these things with no trails. So I'm pretending that I'm brave in the passenger seat while he's showing me what we're going to do. And I'm not enjoying it much at all at this point in time. But the more we did it, then he said, you do it. And I got in and I started to do it. And you know what? I started to like it. And the longer I did it, the more I like it. By the time we were done with the day, I'm like, that was awesome. Now hear me. We would have never done that as a family if it was me leading our family. I needed somebody else that could model it and do it and invite me to do it so that I would go do it. The same is true spiritually. People are looking to see, is there anybody out there? Is there any men, is there any women, are there any boys or any girls that really love Jesus? Anybody really gets joy from doing this? Is there a

way to share your faith in a way that's not totally offensive? That's really easy? I mean, I want to know. I don't think that there is. And when you invite people to do something like that, they watch you do it and say, I can do that. If we went back to Moab, I could do razors without my friend. I know how to do it now, but I wouldn't have known how to do it before last week. Do you see what I'm saying? The whole Bible is about following God's directives and inviting other people to do it, too. And when you invite other people to do it too, it makes a difference. You want to hear some biblical examples of this? You guys are all thinking about me on a razor somewhere. I mean, think about this. Noah followed God and built an ark and invited the world to follow him into it. Moses followed God and invited the Israelites to escape the bondage of Egypt and slavery. Joshua followed God and invited the Israelites to enter the promised land. Esther followed God and invited the king to save her people. David followed God and invited the scared israelite army to follow him. Gideon followed God and invited 300 men into a battle. Though massively outnumbered, Mary, the mother of Jesus, followed God and invited people to believe that she was the mother of the Messiah. And then what we have in the New Testament is the second person of the Trinity. Jesus Christ became flesh and made his dwelling among us. Although he always existed, he became the God man and lived among us. And then what we have is who we follow is Christ. John the Baptist followed Christ and invited the Pharisees, the religious leaders of the day and the king to repent and believe in Jesus. Peter followed Christ and invited all the Jews to repent and believe the gospel. Paul followed Christ and invited all the gentiles to believe the gospel. And after Judas Iscariot's death, the apostles followed

Christ and invited the world to believe the gospel. And Jesus Christ, who is God of God, followed the directives of his father died on the cross for our sins, rose from the dead, and then invited the world to experience his forgiveness. I mean, do you see this model? Follow me, I'll make you fishers of men. Paul says, be imitators of me as I am of Christ. What's the motto? Why are you here? It's not just to learn information in your head. So you're like, oh, I know how to do this better. It's, as I'm doing this better, I want you to watch how I'm doing this better. I want you to come be a part of how I'm doing this better. And how you grow is as you model all that in front of people, that's why we have many people who are converted, but very few people that know what to do, because they would say, well, my parents weren't christians, and I didn't see this model for me and my family, and I didn't see it going on. Well, then find somebody who is and say, can I just come watch what you do? Because the christian life needs to be modeled. It needs to be lived, and you can't wait until you have it all figured out to begin to model it. And part of what we get to model that Jesus didn't have to model is our inability to do it sometimes. And to say, you know what? I'm sorry, I didn't do that. Well, what you just saw right there was a great example of why Christ died for my sins, because that's an area that I'm still growing in. That's what disciple making looks like. And people that are going to make a difference, they follow God's directives and invite others to join them. Who are you inviting to join you? For those of you that are following Christ, who are you inviting in? Because there's all sorts of people that are looking for. They're just looking for an invitation. There's some people that don't come to church. Cause they're waiting for somebody to invite them. There's some people

that don't join a cadre. Cause they're looking for somebody to invite them. There's some people that aren't in the core serving in the church. Cause nobody's really invited them to do anything. And it's not that these people are bad people. They're just saying, I don't think I'm really that needed, and I really don't think there's a way. And there's some people that are struggling in their marriage. Cause they've never had a married couple, invite them in and say, hey, we've been through that too. And some people are struggling in their parenting because they don't know what they're doing. But there's parents that haven't invited them in, say, hey, we're not perfect parents. We can show you what we've done. Here's what's worked well, here's what hasn't. You know, that kind of thing. Who are you inviting into your life that they can see what you do. They can experience who you are so that they can see the manifested Christ in you. If we're gonna be difference makers, we gotta follow God's directives and invite others to join us. Number two is this. Difference makers motivate God's people to deploy their unique gifts for the Lord. Difference makers motivate God's people to deploy their unique gifts for the Lord. Difference makers don't just tell people, you got to do this, and you have to do it in this way, and this is the way it's always been done, and that's the way you have to do it. And blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. Because there are some of you that come to church that say this, I can't sing so well, I can't play an instrument, and I'm not a preacher. I guess there's no jobs available for someone like me. And you're wrong. Cause no matter how you're gifted, God's the one that gifted you that way to build up the body so that we can advance the gospel, no matter who you are. And the issue is finding your unique ability, your spiritual gifting, and how God made

you with your personality and your experience and all the different things to come together and be who God wants you to be, doing it his way. And when you motivate people to deploy their gifts in their way for the Lord, rather than using the gifts you think you have for yourself and then giving the Lord the scraps, everything changes. Now, be patient with me. As I read these names starting in the middle of verse four, listen to some of these. Listen to some of these people that were motivated. And as we read through this list, think about all the different job descriptions you hear in this that they had in Israel. Verse four, from the sons of Judah, Ephea, the son of Uzziah, the son of Zechariah, the son of Amariah, the son of Shepataiah, the son of Mahaliel, the sons of Perez, and we'll talk about him in a second. And Messiah, the son of Baruch, the son of Chohoza, the son of Haziah, the son of Adaiiah, the son of Jo Arab, the son of Zechariah, the son of the Silonite. All the sons of Perez who lived in Jerusalem were 468 able men. Able men means that they were powerful men of great capacity. They were really awesome guys. They were godly men. The men that came from Perez. You remember where Perez came from? Go back and read Genesis 38 this week. You'll see that Judah got his daughter in law pregnant, not knowing that's who she was. So Perez was born out of wedlock. Perez was born in a way he didn't have the right family, and it didn't look so good when he got started. By the time we're getting here, there's 468 powerful, great capacity men that are under his charge. You know what that tells me? It doesn't matter where you start, and it doesn't matter who your mom and dad were, and it doesn't matter your economic background, and it doesn't matter the odds that are against you. If you put yourself into position with God

and use what he gave you, he will use you to make a difference in this generation that will carry on to the next. Isn't that good news this morning? I love that. Verse seven. Now these are the sons of Benjamin Salu the son of Meshulam, the son of Joad, the son of Padiah, the son of Kaliah, the son of Maceiah, the son of Ithiel, the son of Josiah, and after him, Gabai and Salai. 928 Joel the son of Zikri was their overseer, and Judah the son of Heshuna was second in command of the city. From the priest Jedaiah the son of Joiam, Jachin Seraiah the son of Hilkiyah, the son of Methulam, the son of Zadok, the son of Merioth, the son of Eteob, the leader of the house of God, and their kinsmen who performed work in the temple. There were 822. Andidaiah the son of Jehoram, the son of Peliah, the son of Amzi, the son of Zechariah, the son of Pashur, the son of Melchia and his kinsmen, heads of fathers households 242 and Amishiah the son of Azarel, the son of Isaiah, the son of Mashilimoth, the son of Immer and their brothers, valiant warriors 128 and their overseer Zabdiel the son of HegEdalem, which actually means great ones. Now from the levites. Now we get into the leviTees. We've been talking about the priests. Here's the leviTees. Shemaiah, the son of Hashub, the son of Acharim, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Boni, the son of Shabiath, the son of Jozabad, from the leaders of the Levites, who were in charge of the outside work of the house of God. And Mataniah, the son of Micah, the son of Zebdi, the son of Asaph, who. Who was the leader in the beginning, the thanksgiving at prayer, and back Bookiah. Remember, we had back book. Now, there's Bakbokiah. I mean, both interchangeable names. The second among the Brethren, and Abda, the son of Shema, the son of Galile, the son of Jeduthan. Now, Jeduthan and Asaph were

worship leaders, and you're gonna see this played out in just a minute. All the Levites in the holy city were 284. Also the gatekeepers, Akub, Talmun and their brethren, who kept Watch at the gates, were 172. Now, listen. The rest of Israel, of the priests and of the Levites, were in the cities of Judah, each on his own inheritance. But the temple servants were living in Ophel and Zihah and Gizpah were in charge of the temple servants. Now, the overseer of the Levites in Jerusalem was Uzi, the son of Bani, the son of Hashabiah, the son of Mataniah, the son of Micah. From the sons of Asaph, who were the singers for the service of God. What do you see here? You see about six or seven generations from Asaph, who wrote some of the psalms, who was inspired by the lord to lead worship. And you see generations of his sons afterwards that are doing what? They're still leading worship. They're still leading the people of God in worship, which is an amazing testimony. Verse 23. For there was a commandment from the king concerning them and a firm regulation for the song leaders day by day. Pethathiah, the son of Meshezabel, of the sons of Zerah, the sons of Judah, was the king's representatives in all matters concerning the people. Now, why read all these names? You ever been to a graduation ceremony? Some of the most boring events in history. And you get dressed up and you sit in an uncomfortable gym that's overheated, and you wave this like a fan, and you're watching all these people wear caps and gowns and things that they never wear before, and you don't really care about anybody except the one or two that you know that are sitting there and you wait on pins and needles through all the pomp and circumstance and all the speeches that are boring and everybody that's saying everything just to watch the

person you know walk across the stage and hear their first, middle and last name. And even though they say, hold all your applause to the end, something inside of you is like, yes. Cause you know their story. And here's what you see here. God knows their story. And here's what you see here. God knows your story. He knows every single way that you serve. He knows you by name. Fear not, for I have called you by name. You're mine. I know who you are. And if you're born again, your name is written in the Lamb's book of life. He knows your name. And friends, I'll sit there a long time on judgment day to hear my name read. I promise you that. I want to see if Jesus can pronounce my name. I want to see how it's actually said for real. But all kidding aside, I mean, look at this. It's this whole pattern. And what we see in the New Testament is that we're saved by grace through faith. It's not our own doing. It's a gift of God. So no one should boast. But why? For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works which God prepared beforehand so that we would walk in them.

Everything in the New Testament screams that you matter. Everything in the New Testament screams that you're indwelt with the holy spirit if you've repented and believed in Christ and that God wants to do a work through you to make a difference in this generation and all the generations. And it's not your best efforts, and it's not your best gift, but it's deploying how he made you to do what he called you to do. Did you pick up on all the different job descriptions that you had in here? Let me just highlight a few. You had able men. So you had these great, capable men. You had overseers. You had second in command of the city. You had priests, you had leaders of the House of God. You had those that performed the work of the temple. You had head of

the father's household. You had valiant warriors, you had great ones. You had those that were in charge of the work outside of the house of God. You had leaders in the beginning that led to thanksgiving and prayer, worship leaders, gatekeepers, those who kept watch at the gates. You had priests, temple servants. You had overseers, you had the singers for the service of the house of God, songs leaders and you had the kings and representatives, you had lieutenants, you had all these different things. Here's the problem we have in the church. We falsely believe that if we're saved, there's only one thing we can do and we gotta squeeze into that mold. Okay, I guess I'm saved. I guess I gotta drop everything. I guess I gotta go to seminary. I guess I gotta be a pastor. I guess you don't. Unless God wants you to do that. If you're a veterinarian like my dad was, be a great veterinarian for the glory of God. If you're an attorney, be an attorney for the glory of God. If you're a teacher, be a teacher for the glory of God. If you're called to work inside the house of God, work inside the house of God to the glory of God. If you're called to serve God outside the house, you serve God outside the house to the glory of God. But when we gather, know that we are living stones and we are there to encourage one another and build one another up, so we can be the fullness of what we're called to be, so that we can see transformation in our world outside the purpose of amen. Give God some praise on that. Some churches, some pastors, I mean, I'm all about the move of the spirit, but I don't believe. When I read through the New Testament it was all about let's get christians together, let's gather so the Holy Spirit can fall on us and we can just experience tingles and goosebumps and fall to the ground and then it'll be awesome. I don't see that. I don't

think it's about what happens here. If what happens here is real, then people are gonna feel it out there. So the purpose of gifts is to build each other up so that we can go advance the gospel. Church is not about just meeting so that we think we have an encounter with God and we feel good. It's so that we can encounter the resurrected Christ personally, so that we can be built up in our life, so that we can go make a difference Monday through Saturday, outside in the world in front of many people who don't believe, in front of many people that will never have a witness other than you. That's the purpose of the church. It doesn't end here. It's not about oh so good service and God's moving. I gotta go here to feel God and do, it's not about that, you know that God's moving. If there's transformation out there, that's how you know he's moving. And that's what you see in the New Testament so many times where the Holy Spirit showed up, it wasn't just in the synagogue or in the churches. He did. But he also showed up when they're out sharing the gospel and living their lives and doing different things. And Philip's walking down a road, the spirit of God says, run up to the chariot and go talk to that guy. He noticed he's reading from Isaiah 53. He said, do you know what you're reading? He's like, no. He ends up explaining to him how that's all about Christ and leads him to the Lord. And the guy says, well, here's some water. Shall I not be baptized? He baptizes them and disappears. So the ethiopian eunuchs say, I mean, miraculous. Where did it happen? It didn't happen in the church. It happened out there. Why? Because he had been getting built up by others in the body of Christ. And when he was sent and when he went, God was showing up in him. Amen. I mean, if we're going to deploy our best gifts, it means you don't have to be what somebody

else wants you to be. You know, all the different gifts. I mean, I love rolling in here on a Sunday morning just to see some of the gifts deployed. People in the parking lot, people that greet you, people that take your children and invest in them because they don't see themselves as babysitters. They see themselves investing the gospel in your kids. Middle school, high school, pastors, worship teams, production team, all these different things that are going on that you wouldn't even know majority of the people by name. But I promise you, you're thankful for them, because when they deploy their gifts, that's what God does. Have you ever wondered why you're here? I don't just mean in this world, but why Denver? Why do you live in Denver right now? Have you ever thought about that? Did you say no? I'm about to tell you why, brother. Because God sovereignly chose this space for you to be. And as long as you're in this space, God wants you to bloom where you're planted. Why? Because he wants to transform cities. Hear the word of the Lord from Jeremiah 29 seven. As he writes to the people who were in exile in Babylon, a place they didn't want to be. He says to them in Babylon, seek the welfare of the city where I have sent you into exile, and pray to the Lord on its behalf, for in its welfare you will have welfare well, I'm not really where I want to be. That's okay. Then. You pray where you are for the city that you're in. And as that city is blessed, you'll get blessed, too. He doesn't say, when you live in a city and it doesn't go your way politically, move to a red state so that it can be more comfortable for you and more aligned with your beliefs. Anybody can do that. What's he want to do? God wants to transform Denver, Colorado, Colorado Springs, the entire Front range. And you're here to make a difference for that. And translation,

here's what God says. You live for me here. You asked me to bless this city here, and I bless it here. You, I promise you you'll be blessed. I mean, if you just wanted to go somewhere where you could pick a church that was good, go to Dallas or Atlanta. And then you could pick your favorite youth group on Wednesday night. You can pick your favorite young adults group on Thursday night. You can pick your favorite prayer time on Friday night, your favorite worship team on Saturday night, and your favorite preacher on Sunday. And you can be like, it's so good to live in Dallas, so good to be in Atlanta. You come here, you don't get those choices. But here's what you get here that you don't get there. We got a whole city, 2 million people, looking for somebody to show them that there's a better way. And who better than you? That's why you're here. Amen. Now God can call you to leave. I don't have any problem with that. I mean, God moves us different places. We're transient. We live in a transient culture. Just make sure with where you're going, you're going for Jesus first and not your job. Just make sure you're going for Jesus first and not your political conviction. I mean, that's what he wants. Why? Because he's building up the body of Christ. If you get a chance this week, read through first corinthians, chapter twelve. It'll tell you how he's arranged all the parts of the body just the way he wanted. He gave you the gifts he wanted. He's bringing you together. So everything the Lord wants to get done, he has gifts to get it done here. And in case you're wondering, and I've said this before, how can I serve at brave? There's no place to get involved at brave. Here's how. Find the thing you're frustrated about the most and go fix it. Well, I can't stand the way the checking. That's because you're good administratively. Go fix it. I don't like the way the

kids go fix it. Well, the way they do, Cadre, go fix it. I mean, be a help, not a burden. Anybody can sit around and find problems with any church, in any culture, anywhere. Plain armchair church doesn't help anybody. Right? What helps is when you see a need and you're like, God, I got it. You're calling me to make a difference and I'm not coming in because I'm smarter, better, but I'm just going to offer my services to that. Say hey, if you can use me here, I think I can help you here. That's it. And then build up the body so that we can take out the gospel. Even better. Amen. Motivate people to deploy their unique gifts for the Lord. I mean, I didn't even mention our brave shield team. We got brave shield all over three campuses. I mean there's teams everywhere doing all sorts of stuff that you don't even know about. So follow his directives, invite others to join you. Motivate God's people to deploy their gifts. And then third, I love this one. It's maybe my favorite point. Champion God's people who serve willingly and anonymously. Champion God's people who serve willingly and anonymously. Now in verses 25 and following to the end of the chapter, you're going to hear about Judah and you're going to hear about Benjamin. Those were the two tribes that surrounded Jerusalem. And you're just going to hear about these cities and you're not going to hear much about the people in them. But all these cities that are mentioned had lots of people in them that didn't get named in this passage. Notice this. Now as for the villages with their field, some of the sons of Judah lived in Kiriath Arba, which is also called Hebron and its towns in Dibon and its towns in Jechabziel and its villages and in Jeshua and in Moloda and in Bethpalette and in Harzashua and in Beersheba and its towns and in Ziklag and in Mekhanai and its towns and in Ramon, in Zora and Jemuth,

Zenoah, Adalim and their villages, Lachish and its field, Azekah and its towns. So they camped from Beersheba as far as the valley of Hinnom. Beersheba was about 35 miles south of Jerusalem. Still is. Heres what theyre saying. None of that geography probably means anything to you unless you've been to Israel. But here's the thing. If I started naming cities on the front range, and I'm like, hey, you know what? They were living in highlands ranch and Parker and Lone tree, and they went as far as Castle Rock and Larkspur and Elizabeth and Franktown. And I start, oh, I know that, but there's people all living there. That's what they're saying. And in Judah, there were all sorts of people living in their towns. They didn't get mentioned. The names don't get mentioned. Why is it we live to get our name mentioned? I mean, before the onslaught of social media and television, all that, every saint in every generation was pretty much anonymous. Why is it that we want everybody to know who we are? Why is it that we want to be recognized by everybody? Is that God in us, or is that our flesh? It's our flesh. We just need to do the work of the Lord. And when you see somebody doing the work of the Lord, champion them. You know, we have a great production team here. We just do amenity of. You couldn't name two people on that team. But I promise you, if my microphone went out, you might learn the name of that person. Majority of you, when you come in and you use the bathrooms, you find that they're clean. There's toilet paper, there's paper towels, there's soap. There's all those things. Because you know that if you walked in and the toilets were overflowing and it was gross and disgusting and you had to walk out, it'd probably be your last time here. But you probably don't know the people that made that possible. But you'd want to find out who didn't do their

job if it wasn't. Do you see what I'm saying? There are so many anonymous things that are taking place that the Lord wants to champion. I mean, here are the cities of Benjamin in verse 31. The sons of Benjamin also lived from Gebbah onward, at Michmash and Agah, at Bethel and its towns at Anathoth, Nob, Ananiah, Hazor, Ramah, Gideyem, Hidein, Zeboim, Nabalit, Iad, Ono. The valley of craftsmen from the Levites. Some of the divisions in Judah belong to Benjamin. So, Benjamin, there's a bunch of cities who are the Benjamites? You know, King Saul and the apostle Paul. That's the only two I really know. Like, who do you know? I mean, we don't know any of these people. And here's what God's saying. I know them all. And I know the people in these cities, and I know the ones that were living for me. Now, some of you are saying, well, why is he reading all these names? It really doesn't do much for me. Here's why. Because you would sit there and you would listen if your name was going to be mentioned, if I told you Joseph was the father of Dennis, who was the father of Jeff, who was the father of T.J. I'm listening for that. That's all we're seeing here. We're seeing faithful people who have done it for a period of time. Let me give you an example. Some of you may know that the world has dubbed the month of June Pride Month. Have you heard that? It's an abomination. It goes completely against the culture of what God wants. So it's really cool for me that prior to dubbing it Pride month, we started something called high five here at brave. So, in a world where we can't even get gender right in the first two pages of our Bible, we're going to spend the week honoring the Lord and investing the gospel in children that can make a difference in the next generation. Amen. Now, when we started, we started with a Vbs, and we had

about 200 people in our church. I think we had about 75 people that came that first year, and that included kids and adults. And we were overwhelmed. We rented out a cafeteria over at Cherry Creek Middle school, and we thought we were just doing it. 50 kids in orange shirts and 25 adult leaders for 2 hours a night. And now it's evolved into five full days from, I don't know, nine to five, nine to three. I don't know what the times are, but all day long. And I have in my hand just a list. This is just a list of all the names. There's 24 pages here of names. Do you know how many people, like kids and adults, are serving this week at high five that already signed up? Like, take a guess. 1659. And I'd like to read you all their names. But do these names matter? Yeah, you bet they do. Inglewood, 389 volunteers. 735 campers. Westminster, 256 volunteers. There's 24 options to get involved with here in Inglewood. 17 options. In Westminster, 35 options over. I mean, we could go through this list. I could tell you about every single person and where they're serving and what they're doing. 24 pages worth. What's the point? God knows everybody's name on this page, and he cares about every single one. This week was first Tuesday week. Every time we have first Tuesday. We have what we call Taft, which is Thursday after first Tuesday. And as a staff we get together and pray. We have about 70 some people that were there praying and we invited all the kids volunteers in this week and got to pray over them. And I had four women in my group I got to pray over individually and one's working with the team that's doing doctor dissection this week and one's working in the kitchen and one's working with babies and one person's a utility player that's being a substitute so that when other people need to go eat, they can take over for them. You don't know

their names. You don't need to know their names. God knows their names and God sees what they do. And I promise you this, somebody that brings their baby in so they can serve and that person's not there, they're going to feel it. Somebody comes in and signs their kid up for doctor dissection and brings their kid in, there's no place to drop it off. They're going to feel it. Somebody needs to eat lunch, but they can't eat lunch because they got to keep working. Is going to be so grateful that that person that's a substitute comes in and says, I got you, go eat. And somebody's been working in the kitchen, which in the summer, to work in the kitchen is not the most pleasant place in the world, but doing it with joy so that our kids and our adults can eat. Super important anonymous saints should be championed it's okay to be an unknown. You should be an unknown because God knows every unknown. Some of the greatest saints you're ever going to meet in the kingdom are people that were unknown here, people that the world was not worthy of, people that faithfully prayed that nobody knew about, people that were martyred that nobody knew about, people that were living in complete hardship because they loved the Lord that nobody knew about. It's not about how famous you can get here for Jesus, it's about how famous you can make Jesus name while you're here. Amen. That's what it's about. Now, the ministry I do is a little more public now, but I was doing the same thing in Joliet, Illinois, 30 some years ago when I was in a church of 90 people with four kids. I was doing the same thing when I was at a church in Dallas where we had twelve kids that we started from. I was doing the same thing when we started our itinerant ministry and nobody called me to come preach and I just prayed to God and told him, if you want me to preach, just open

doors. Otherwise, I got nothing to say to anybody. And God did. When we moved and started this church, I knew one family that was in Denver before we ever moved here, and that was enough. And they weren't believers. I mean, doing the same thing. You don't have to make yourself known. Just do it. Just invest in people. Just give them your best. And here's the best group to invest in those in your immediate sphere of influence. Because if you're doing ministry to the world, but your spouse and your kids and your family and those who know you and your friends think what a charlatan you failed. Failed. The people that are closest to you should see your genuine walk with the Lord Jesus Christ. You don't have to go looking for masses, but if you open your eyes, I promise you there's one or two people in your life that you could invite in that you could make a difference, and then you could cheer them on as they anonymously serve the Lord. Amen. Aren't you glad for all the people you don't know that make this church great? Amen. Love it. Now let me give you a final truth. If you're going to be a difference maker and difference makers do this, they pause to remember God's people who laid your spiritual foundation. Difference makers will take time to pause to remember God's people who went before you and laid your spiritual foundation. And this is what we have in chapter twelve. Because 100 years before, 130 years before Nehemiah got to town, a guy by the name of Zerubbabel heard the voice of the Lord and started to go back and started to build the remnant. And these are some of the people that went along with him. It's one thing to join where God's at work. When you see God at work, like, I love this church as big. It's great. It says they preach the word, they worship. It's another thing to join where God's at work when there's

absolutely nothing going on, when there's no building and there's no chairs and there's no nothing. And here's the point. The book of Nehemiah, again, it's not about building the wall. The wall provided protection so the people could move back in and God could be glorified. There's nothing wrong with church buildings. It's okay to have church buildings. Did you know that? Here's why. Because most people in December and Denver won't come to church if it's outside. It's okay to have buildings, but the building is not what drives things. The people inside are what make the building great. It's the church of God. And let me tell you one other thing before we leave this point, because I just gotta feel like I gotta share it when we're talking about this. We're talking about advancing God's kingdom into the world. We're talking about reaching more people for Jesus. And why does that matter? Because. Here's why. Because numbers matter. Did you hear it in the text today? I mean, just in chapter eleven alone. I mean, I see these numbers all over the place. I see 928. I see 468 able men. Not 467. Not 469, 468. I see 822 that performed the work of the temple. I see 242 that were heads of the Father's household. I see 128 valiant warriors. I see 284 of the Levites that were in the holy city. Do numbers matter? Yeah, they matter. When Peter preached the first sermon, God made sure that we knew that upon his preaching, 3000 repented and believed and were baptized. And then God wanted us to know that he continued to add to their number daily those that were being saved. I don't like the megachurch. Well, then you hate Christ because he started with a mega church. He started with 3000. Well, you're just about the numbers. Every number represents a person that Jesus Christ created. Numbers matter. God even wrote a whole book called numbers. It's the

fourth book in your Bible. You can read it. Numbers matter. But here's what we're talking about. Now, remember the numbers that went before you. Remember the people that went before you. Because while they may be numbers to somebody else, they personally impacted your life. Hear the word of the Lord in verse twelve. Now, these are the priests and the Levites. Who came up was Zerubbabel, the son of Shealtiel and Jeshua. Zeriah, Jeremiah, Ezra, Amariah, Maluk, Hattush, Shekinah, Rehum, Meromuth, genethoi. Rather Abijah, Midjemim, Mahdiyah, Balga, Shemaiah and Joairib. Jediah, Salu, Ammuch, Hilkiah and Jediah. These were the heads of the priests and their kinsmen in the days of Jeshua. Then you have the Levites. The Levites were Jeshua, Benui, Kadmiel, Sherebiah, Judah and Mataniah, who was in charge of the songs of thanksgiving. He and his brothers also back. Baciah and Uni. Their brothers stood opposite them in their service divisions. Joshua came from the father of Joachim, and Joachim from the father of Elishib, and Elishib became the father of Joyoda, and Joyoda became the father of Jonathan, and Jonathan became the father of Jadu. Now, in the days of Joachim, the priests, the head of the fathers households were of Sariah, Mariah of Jeremiah, Hananiah of Ezra, Meshulam and Amariah, Johanan and Malachi, Jonathan and Cherubim, Joseph of Haram. I'm almost done. Ada of Meriloth, Hekai of Zechariah, of Ginathon, Meshullam of Abidjan, Zikri, Miniman and Modiah, Piltai, Bilba, Shamuah and Shimei, Jehoathan and Jorarib, Matiah and Jediah, Uzi, Salih, Kali and Amak, Eber, Hilkiah, Hashabiah and Jedidiah Nathanael. Amen. Keep going. Just real quick. As for the Levites, the head of the father's households were registered in the days of Elisha, Joadiah, Jonah, and Jadua.

So were the priests in the reign of Darius the Persian, the sons of Levi. The heads of the fathers households were registered in the book of the Chronicles up to the days of Jonan, the son of Eliashib. By the way, this is so exciting that you can go in one chronicles and read all the names again. Isn't that cool? The heads of the Levites were Hashabiah, Sherebiah and Jeshua, the sons of Kadmiel, with their brothers opposite them to praise and give thanks, as prescribed by David, the man of God. Division corresponding to division. You know, David, Mataniah, Bakbekiah, Obadiah, Meshullam, Telman, and Akub were gatekeepers, keeping watch of the storehouses of the gates they served in the days of Joachim, the son of Jeshua, the son of Jehozadik, and in the days of Nehemiah the governor and of Ezra the priest. Why list all these people? Because these are people that followed God before God, moved mightily. These were people that, 130 years before them, had done the work that God wanted them to do. Have you ever stopped long enough to pause and think, not only why am I in Denver, but why am I in church? And why is it I know Christ? And who was it that invested in me so that I would know him? Have you ever thought about that for a second? Because most of the time, if we think about it, it's just this little sphere around us. But let me take you back further. You're only here today because of the apostles. And the prophets. You're only here today because of faithful men and women through the history of the church, that sacrifice so that Jesus Christ could be made known in their generation. And it works its way all the way to you. But have you ever thought about who was it that invested in you? I can tell you about Gordy Smith. Gordy Smith came to my high school. When I was a freshman in high school. I would see this guy

standing there in our lobby. I mean, the guy was ancient. He was old. He. He's like 28. And I remember thinking, doesn't this guy have any friends? Why is he hanging out with us? Is he trying to be? I didn't like him. I thought he was nerdy. I didn't want anything to do with him. Blew him off for four years until his perseverance got to me. And it wasn't really his perseverance. It was the prayers of God, where he invited me to a young life camp and tricked me into going, and I went. And that's where I heard the gospel of Jesus Christ. Amen. But if you were to unwind the story in his life and who led him, and unwind the story in their life and who led them, it's gonna take you back a long time. And here's the truth. When you live for God in this generation, it's gonna impact future generations in ways that you'll never know until you get to heaven. Have you ever thanked God for the people that were praying for you long before you came to know Christ? When I talked to Gordy Smith after coming to know Christ, he told me he had people praying for me for four years. I knew some of those people. I remember thinking I was a believer, and here they were praying for me to get saved, and I thought I was a really good guy. And all the time they were building a relationship with me, I thought they were building a relationship with me because they thought I was cool. They were building a relationship with me because I was lost. And when I came to Christ, they celebrated God's work in my life because they've been praying for me for so long. Have you ever taken the time to thank God for the people in your life? None of us are doing what we're doing because we're really good christians and we're really good. We're doing what we're doing because God used other people to build into our lives so that we have what we have so we can go forward. I mean, I thank

God as a pastor that there's been pastors for generations that have gone before me that have done things really, really well. Some I see in our generation, and some I read about faithful pastors. Like, I want to be like that. Because I didn't get to grow up in a church where the word was faithfully and accurately proclaimed. I didn't grow up in a church that would have ever even considered preaching Nehemiah, eleven and twelve. And I would have been bored out of my mind if they had. Have you ever taken the time to think about that? Because when you think about people, I can tell you about my schoolteachers and coaches and others that have invested in my life. But I can tell you their names. See, people with power have titles. People with influence have names. So I wouldn't just tell you about my baseball coach. I would tell you about Jerry Riebling, who was with me when I was a kid. I wouldn't just tell you about my mom and dad. I could tell you about Dennis and Pat and what they did. I could tell you about how my mom got me into a christian school when they couldn't really afford it. So I could start learning the Bible and catechism. So that by the time I got saved, all these things fell into my heart. That I had read and studied for like, nine or ten years. I'm like, man, I know so much because seeds had been planted. I'll tell you about my high school football coach, Rod Butler. I could tell you about my college football coach. I can list them all by name. And not only that, and the ones that help in leading me to the Lord. I can tell you the names of all the people who have been influential in my life since coming to the Lord. And have been an encouragement to me in doing what I'm doing now and continue to be, and different people in different seasons. But guess what? It wasn't them choosing me. It was God choosing them to bless me. So who am I

praising? Thank you, God, for what you did, because all of you have that in your life. Because God's goodness is so. It's not about who your mom and dad was. It's not about who your teachers were. There's somebody in your life that got brought at some time that was doing something for you because God is building into you. Have you ever taken time to thank him for that? And then most importantly, most importantly, we talk about remembering God's people. We can't go very far without remembering God's one and only son, can we? Jesus Christ, the God man who left heaven, who left all his riches to become poor so that you who were poor could experience the riches in Christ. The one who left everything to come to earth and take on the sin of the world. God made him who had no sin to be sin for us, so that in him we might become the righteousness of God. The one who was perfect and the one who came and fulfilled the law, and who was mocked and who was beaten, and who was pinned to a cross and was punished with the wrath of God, severely, to the point of death, so that we who were living in sin could be made alive through his resurrection. He rose from the dead three days later. Have you ever taken time to think about today, how thankful you are for the gospel of Jesus Christ? It's not about what's going on in the world. Cause what's going on in the world we can't control. It could get crazier and crazier. But here's what we know. Our hope is in Jesus Christ. And one day he will wipe every tear from our eye, and one day, he will reign on this world. Because he is the king of kings. He is the Lord of Lords. And so the way that we're ending today is we're reminded of all God wants us to do, to follow his directives and invite other people to join us and motivate people to use gifts and champion others who are anonymous saints. And

remember those who have gone before us. Remember the one who did it all for you, the Lord Jesus Christ. And as you hear this song sung over you today, prepare your heart in any way you want. If you've repented of your sins and trusted Jesus Christ as your Lord and savior, you can participate in this. And if you haven't, get right with God right now. And here's how you can do it, by just praying, saying, lord, I'm a sinner. Save me. Come into my life. I need you. And it's by the blood and the body of Jesus Christ alone. We're not a group of people that are good people getting better or bad people being made good. We're a group of people that was once dead, and we've been made alive by the life of Jesus Christ. Amen. So prepare your hearts any way you want for this. And then our campus pastors, myself, will come back up and we'll take the elements together. Father in heaven, we give you praise for your word. We give you praise for reminding us how we can be difference makers, how we can change the course and direction of history, not because of anything we have, but because of all you want to do in and through us, God, glorify your name, prepare our hearts, remind us of all you've done for us. As we behold you, the lamb of God that takes away the sin of the world. We give you all glory, all honor and all praise. In Jesus name, amen.