
Restored from Ruins:
“Treasured Possession”
Nehemiah 5: 1-19

Thoughts to Shape and Spark Discussion:

“The gospel miracle is that human beings like us from time to time evade the temptations of power and the brittleness of success and actually manage to vulnerably love another person who has all the potential of turning on us and rejecting us. Every time such love is ventured, another piece of the gospel is proclaimed, and the Kingdom of God is made credible.” Eugene H. Peterson, Leap Over A Wall

“Considering the full sweep of the Christian tradition, one would have to conclude that the most profane word we can utter is that word, mine.” - William Willimon

“Fear God!” is a call that puts us in our place and puts all other fears, hopes, and aspirations in their place.” - Derek Kidner

“The fear of God is that affectionate reverence, by which the child of God bends himself humbly and carefully to his Father’s law.” - Charles Bridges

Themes and Questions to Guide Reflection and Response:

- What from the Scripture passage or the sermon made an impression upon you? Are there lingering questions to be answered or rabbit trails to be followed for you?
- The fear of God shows up prominently in this passage and also chapter 6.
 - What is your understanding of this core concept from the Bible?
 - How is it distinct from terror or cowering?
 - How would explain the “fear of God” to folks outside of the faith?
 - How do Kidner and Bridges help fill out that definition?
- Willimon asserts that “mine” can be a profane word.
 - What does he mean? Is he taking it a little too seriously?
 - In light of this passage and the sermon, how do we lived open-handed with what we perceive is “our” stuff?
 - How does “mine!” on our lips yield to God’s declaration of “mine!”?
- Which of the pressures we face - external opposition from “haters” and internal friction from selfishness and entitlement - is more problematic for you? Which do you experience more acutely and fear more often?
- The scarcity of resources and the greed and selfishness that it spawned for God’s people in Nehemiah’s time created systems of injustice and brokenness.
 - Where in our city, our country, our web of relationships do you see selfishness and greed spawning injustice and abuse?
 - How as an individual, as a church can we respond to God’s generosity and kindness to face the injustice and brokenness?
- Take some time to name instances of God’s generosity, grace, and kindness in your life.