

DEEP SIX STUDY

October 4th, 2026

The Wall – “Capstone Celebration”

MESSAGE HIGHLIGHTS *(You can view the full message online at capecodchurch.com/watch)*

Opening: We’re wrapping up our series on Nehemiah this week, a series that has drawn out lessons from the story of Nehemiah rebuilding the Jerusalem wall after the exile to Babylon – lessons like how to build a legacy, how to respond to critics, and the importance of community. It turns out that the final lesson of Nehemiah consumes much of the last *half* of the book – a lesson that’s all about *celebration*.

1. Celebration is Holy (Nehemiah 8:8-11)

- Once the wall was done, Jerusalem’s former residents began returning to live in the city. After a few months, Nehemiah and Ezra (the High Priest) held a “town meeting” to remind the people of their heritage as Israelites and begin to read and explain to them “the Book of the Law of God.”
- In response, many of the people begin to weep; they’re repentant and sorrowful about how far their lives have strayed from the way God had called his people to live. It’s a collective “coming-back-to-God” moment for them – a moment that includes plenty of shame and guilt. But the leaders make it clear that it’s not time for weeping – it’s time to celebrate and be joyful because, “This day is holy to our LORD; do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”
- For some of us, that doesn’t make sense; isn’t church supposed to be somber and formal, with an overtone of guilt and remorse? But clearly Nehemiah and the other leaders saw it differently, knowing that *what God had done for them superseded whatever they had failed to do for him*.
- This concept of celebration of what God has done didn’t start with Nehemiah – it’s a thread the runs through the entire Hebrew Bible as God’s people were called to celebrate regularly – during festivals, feast days, Sabbaths and holidays – because celebration of what God has done is holy.

2. We Build a Culture of Celebration That Reflects Heaven (Deuteronomy 16:14; Esther 9:22; Isaiah 58:13)

- This idea of celebration of what God has done for us is a Core Commitment of Cape Cod Church – one of the things we commit to do and value as a church. And we don’t just celebrate to celebrate; we choose to *build a culture of celebration that reflects heaven* (i.e., what heaven celebrates).
- We believe that celebration is “heavenly,” because we believe that heaven is a place of celebration (mostly because Jesus told us so). We know that repentance and remorse are what lead us back to God, but once we receive his gift of grace the only response that makes sense is to celebrate!

3. Two Implications for Our Church

- a. On Sundays, We Celebrate! (Nehemiah 12:43) – The earliest Christians gathered on the first day of the week – Sunday – to remember and celebrate that he rose from the dead on a Sunday morning. So, at Cape Cod Church we do the same – we throw a party every Sunday to celebrate that he is ALIVE and has offered us the chance to “Live Fully.” And yes, the party includes food...
- b. We Measure Our Strength by Celebration (2 Corinthians 2:14) – Nehemiah reminds us that, “the joy of the LORD is [our] strength.” While our programs and facilities and music and preaching are great, what sets us apart as a church – and what draws other to the truth of Jesus – is our joy.

ADDITIONAL SCRIPTURE

These passages may provide additional insights related to the subject of this week's message. All verses are NLT unless otherwise noted.

Psalms 118:21-24; Luke 15:3-7; John 15:11 ^{NIV}; Romans 15:13; Philippians 4:4-5; 1 Peter 1:8

Video of the Week: [Chara/Joy](#) by Bible Project

QUESTIONS FOR REFLECTION AND DISCUSSION

1. Has your past church experience included churches that *didn't* seem to be joyful? What did you take from that experience?
2. Read Nehemiah 8:8-11 again. Do you think it was a natural response for the people to "mourn and weep" when they heard God's Law read and explained to them? Why or why not?
3. Repeatedly (verses 9, 10 and 11) the leaders tell the people not to grieve because, "this day is *holy*." What does it mean that the day was "holy," and why should that have kept them from grieving?
4. Many people who come to church on Sundays are dealing with (i.e., grieving) some serious stuff in their lives. In light of that, do you think it's still appropriate for Cape Cod Church to always maintain a celebratory and joyful atmosphere? Why or why not?
5. What would your response be to someone (a friend or neighbor, perhaps) who said to you that "Cape Cod Church can't be very serious about their faith because they're always laughing and joking and *eating*"?
6. Do your Sundays tend to set the tone for the rest of your week? How should you approach Sunday mornings if it's true that "what we do on the first day of the week frames the rest of our lives?"