

WHAT REALLY MATTERS?

INTRODUCTION

- A. A study of Ezra and Nehemiah reminds us of great things accomplished by the power of God.
 - 1. Under the leadership Ezra, the temple was rebuilt.
 - 2. Under the leadership of Nehemiah, the walls were rebuilt.
 - 3. The people had a mind to work.
- B. Mixed into the narrative of Ezra and Nehemiah are chapters we may rule as “unnecessary”.
 - 1. Note Ezra 2, 7, 8, 10.
 - 2. Also, Nehemiah 3, 7, 10, 11, 12.
 - 3. Tendency to “skip” these chapters and very understandable.
- C. But is there more?
 - 1. What impacts those around us?
 - 2. What is truly important in our world?
 - 3. What really matters?

I. PEOPLE MATTER.

- A. People are important.
 - 1. Why would Ezra and Nehemiah contain so many names?
 - a. Ezra 10:18-44 – offenders who pledged to do right (114!).
 - b. Neh. 3 – recognizing 41 people who built 42 sections of the wall.
 - c. Neh. 12 – names who served in the temple and celebrated the completion of the walls.
 - 2. Ordinary people, important enough to have their names recorded.
- B. People are important today.
 - 1. People we meet each day.
 - 2. Our task – the same as the Lord’s, Lk. 19:10.
 - a. Luke 10:2 – harvest is plentiful, laborers few...
 - b. 1 Cor. 3:7-9, we plant and water...

II. HISTORY MATTERS.

- A. Historical Records.
 - 1. The entire Old Testament is an historical record of God’s people.
 - 2. We read of the struggles of God’s people.
 - 3. We read of the guiding hand of God and His steadfast love.
 - a. Ezra sharing of history, Nehemiah 9.
 - b. Moses, Deut., ch. 32.
 - c. Psalm 78, history of God’s people (Asaph).
 - d. Stephen, his defense, Acts 7.
- B. History is important today.
 - 1. We cannot understand ourselves or others without understanding the historical background from which we [or they] emerged.
 - 2. The need to understand the history of the church.
 - a. Not only the Bible.

- b. The period between the testaments.
 - c. The history of the church through the ages.
 - i. The History of the Christian Church, Phillip Schaff (vol. 1-8).
 - ii. The Search for the Ancient Order, Earl West (vol. 1-4).
- 3. The history of the church here in Monticello.
 - a. Betty McGuire on cleaning out the files my first year.
 - b. A journal of the “important events” of Monticello church.
- 4. 1 Corinthians 10:6

III. FAMILY MATTERS.

- A. Genealogical Records.
 - 1. Ezra and Nehemiah emphasize genealogies.
 - a. Ezra 8:1-2
 - i. Gershom, descendant from Phinehas [Eleazar, Aaron].
 - ii. David, descendant from Ithamar[Aaron].
 - iii. Hattush, descendant of the royal line of David.
 - 2. The Israelites were tied together: Levites, Judahites, Benjamites.
 - 3. They all played an important role in the history of God’s people.
- B. Our personal genealogy.
 - 1. We recognize the importance of our personal heritage.
 - 2. So many have gotten into a search of their heritage.
- C. The Family of God.
 - 1. Born into Christ.
 - 2. Not only here in Monticello, throughout southeastern Ar., U.S., world.
 - 3. More important even than our physical families.
 - a. Heb. 10:25, not forsaking the assembly.
 - b. Mt. 6:33, seek first His kingdom.
 - c. Acts 2:42-47