

ONE FROM THE HEART

Legacy

Deconstruction

The last two years has seen a drastic increase in the amount of new or repurposed terminology that we've all been exposed to! One that has been of great concern to church leaders and communities has been 'deconstruction'.

I would have thought I was the last person to want to deconstruct things, but it happens all the time.

What it means is that we start to ask the hard 'why?' questions, but with no certainty of the outcome.

This happened to Israel. In the large sweep of the biblical narrative, their disobedience to the Lord led to externally triggered deconstruction. Their institution of worship was removed, their community was destroyed, their place and identity were shattered. It ends in exile – sounds lovely, right?

Reconstruction

But we know that deconstruction for Israel wasn't the end. For them, there was a 'return', a reconstruction.

Israel find themselves heading back to home, to normal. It is the 'same' people coming back to the 'same' place, but everything is different – experiences, perspectives, culture, even the place.

Are you still the 'same' person? Or are we in some way changed in the process, so that when we come through, we can't ever go back to who we were – we are irrevocably changed?

Ezra-Nehemiah tell us this story, and will help us wrestle with this.

Another Exodus

Ezra 1:2-4

Ezra 2 - a long list of all the families and clans that returned.

Ezra 3 - the people rebuild the altar, the place of sacrifice and then they rebuild the temple.

Ezra 3:10-13

Has that been your experience?

Friendship and Fellowship

Scot McKnight, New Testament scholar and theologian, writes about reconstruction, that it seems that people are looking to reconnect in a reconstruction place in friendship.

Nehemiah 2:17-20

The derision, the mockery and ridicule was taking a toll.

Take stock in your life - what level of cynicism do you carry about this current time?

Nehemiah 3 - a record of the names of the families that rebuilt sections of the wall.

Nehemiah 4 - the opposition becomes violent, and people need to arm themselves in the reconstruction effort.

Reconstruction Isn't Enough

We see from the Ezra-Nehemiah records - it's not enough.

They rebuild the wall, the temple, and the nation, but the spiritual heart is removed, the presence of God is not dwelling there as it used to.

The Prophets of the Old Testament give us the other side of the coin

Jeremiah 12:2

Jeremiah 31:33

Malachi 3:1

Malachi 4:5-6

I believe there's an invitation for us right now:

Are we going to allow the negative perspectives to influence our process, or will we seek to build relationships that strengthen us? Will we labour alone or together to see what is on the other side of this moment?

God is inviting us to see this moment, this time that is in His timing, as an invitation to build a legacy: the hearts of parents restored to children and children reconciled to parents.

What's our Legacy?

In the midst of our rebuilding, our deconstruction and reconstruction, maybe our sorrow, our excitement, our cynicism, our determination, what are we going to leave behind?

If we seek our own self-aggrandisement, what do we miss?

Are we investing in a legacy that may mean our names disappear, but future generations are established in the goodness of God for His glory?

God's Response

Jeremiah 6:16a

1 John 3:16

In the midst of our moment of testing, in the spotlight of history, what is your legacy going to be?

Discussion/Reflection Questions

1. Have you experienced a season of deconstruction/reflection that has caused you to question some aspects of your life? What was that, and how did it happen?
2. Where are you on that journey?
3. How have these seasons of change impacted your heart and outlook on life?
4. In taking stock of your life: what level of cynicism do you carry about this current time? Has there been any lasting impact from the times of chaos and change?
5. What does rebuilding look like in your life? What factors need to be present for it to happen well?
6. What does your legacy look like in this time of reconstruction?
7. What level of awareness of Jesus' way of life is reflected in your own? What is He inviting you to address to continue to walk in the 'ancient ways'?
8. Spend some time in personal reflection and prayer, asking the Lord to reveal His heart to you concerning your legacy.