



## Sunday Teaching Discussion Guide: AT THE MOVIES 09.09.2018

### Recap:

- The events of Nehemiah happened during a time in the life of the Jewish people when things couldn't have looked worse. The Israelites had been conquered and were in exile. The Israelites, as a people, and Jerusalem, as a city, were in disrepair.
- Nehemiah decides he needs to do something about the situation in Jerusalem, so he goes to the king who allows him to go home and rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which is a symbol for the well-being of the community and its ability to sustain life in the surrounding area. In essence, Nehemiah is asking to go back and rediscover the life that was central to the Jewish people.
- After Nehemiah gets the walls rebuilt, the exiles return to the city. He gathers all of the people into the central square, and they bring out the scriptures. The people mourned and realized how far they had gone from God's desire for them. Nehemiah says they should celebrate their strength in joy and relationship they have with God.
- Like those in Nehemiah's time, we are going to experience fear, pain, sadness, hopelessness, and disappointment. The scriptures are full people of faith who lean into what makes us human. Jesus's promise is that the experience of joy found in God can outweigh everything else.

### Discuss:

- Have you seen Captain Underpants? What do you make of the film? What connections (besides those Ryan mentioned in the sermon) can you find between the film and Scriptures?
- READ Nehemiah 1:1-4.
- Those who returned from exile had been gone for a long time. What do you think was going through their minds?
- Can you think of a time in your life in which you saw something (a relationship or a place) that needed to be repaired or mended? How did you go about repairing or mending it?
- READ Nehemiah 8:9-10.
- The verse says, "The joy of the Lord is your strength." What are some of God's joys?
- READ John 15:5-11.
- What do you make of the image of the vine and the branches? What do you think is the relationship between commandments and love?
- It's easy to say that while going through hardship we should remain strong since we have the joy of the Lord, but implementing this is difficult. What are ways you try to do so?

Pray: Invite members of your group to share prayer requests. Give a short prayer thanking God for your group discussion and asking God to be with the requests that have been shared.

### Read at Home: Additional Readings about Vines and Fruit

- Isaiah 5:1-7
- Psalm 1
- Matthew 3:1-10