

Maple Springs Baptist Church

Series: Re:Solution

Week 1: The Better Question

New Years is a season of **SELF-IMPROVEMENT**. “**What should I do about me?** How do I make me a better version of me?” But there is A Better Question.

Jewish exile about 605 BC—Babylonians invaded Judah. For 70 years Israel kind of shut down. Temple worship shut down. Persians conquer the Babylonians. Cyrus the Great decided ... go home. But things aren't good—economy stalled & others are in Judah. About 90 years later is where we meet Nehemiah working for King Artaxerxes of Persia. And he begins to journal his story. **NEHEMIAH 1:1-11**

What breaks your heart? When you look around your ... what is it that captures your attention, your emotion? What breaks your heart?

Instead of going into this year asking, “What can I do about me?” What if we asked the question **what needs to be done around me?**

Truth is, **if you really want to become a better person this year, then do something this year that makes the world a better place.**

What inspires you are the people who've made the world a better place or who have made someone's world a better place.

But **people who blame things, don't change things. Blame is a is not a strategy for changing anything. Blame is how we avoid changing things.** What if you took all the time and energy you spend blaming and actually focused it on helping to bring about change in an area that breaks your heart?

People who actively follow Jesus make things better. You can't actively follow Jesus and not make somebody's life better.

Jesus taught that **devotion to God is measured in terms of devotion to others.**

Jesus came along and said ... **If you want God's attention, then pay attention to how you treat other people. Devotion to God is measured in terms of your devotion to other people. Love for God is equated to love for others.** Jesus didn't just feel compassion, He acted compassionately.

Jesus taught that **people have inherent value, not ascribed value.**

This is why when something breaks your heart about the needs of humanity, about human rights, about families & children, it is God stirring your heart. And what you feel may be a reflection of what God feels and has placed in you to break your heart.

Nehemiah's broken heart was by divine design. About 70 years before Nehemiah—Zerubbabel rebuild temple. About 14 years before Nehemiah—Ezra to go & teach the people. Then He stirred Nehemiah's heart. They had no idea that all of that was in preparation for what would happen 444 years later when Jesus walked into that very city, and declared He was the Messiah. **God sent his Son into this world to do for us what we could not do for ourselves because our sin broke his heart.**

You have no idea what hangs in the balance of your decision to embrace the burden God has put in your heart.

So, what breaks your heart?

If you really want to become a better person, do something to make the world, or do something to make someone's world a better place.

NEHEMIAH 1:11 ends ... "*I was cupbearer to the king*". In other words, this was the opportunity I had. This is who I was. And so consequently, I took who I was, and I did with who I was and what I had, what I could to address the thing that broke my heart.