

## Nehemiah--Rebuilding the Walls

For hundreds of years, the city of Jerusalem had existed as the capital of Israel, the home of the temple and their faith, and a symbol of strength to every Jew. In 1000 BC., David reigned as king over Israel, the most powerful nation in all the land. It was a glorious time to live in Jerusalem.

### **Please read. 2 Chron. 36:15-21**

- As time passed, the Jews drifted from their God. Civil war broke out, sin overtook both the leaders and their people.

We must be careful to not become complacent in our faith and devotion to God. Like the Jews, it would be easy for us to think of ourselves as chosen by God and therefore immune to God's judgment and wrath. If we let our faith decline and don't heed the warnings in scripture to keep from drifting away (see Hebrews 2), we too could become a people no longer in God's grace.

### **please read. 2 Chron. 36:22-23;**

- Seventy years passed. The Babylonians were overthrown by the Persians in 539 BC.
- Cyrus came to power as the emperor of much of the Middle East. God put it on his heart to begin to rebuild God's temple and Jerusalem:

### **1. Nehemiah--A man of conviction. Please read. Neh. 1:1-2:3**

What moves our hearts?

What stirs us to do something?

Do we see the spiritual condition of the lives of our friends and neighbors?

Do we see the need in the church to step up and do something great for God?

- Today's church is desperate for men and women to develop their own convictions and do something great for God.
- Will you be the Nehemiah for your Family Group, sector, region, neighborhood, for your workplace, school, family...?

**Challenge:** Decide today to have conviction and start rebuilding the spiritual wall.

### **2. Nehemiah--A man of prayer.**

- One of the consistencies of Nehemiah's life was his prayer life.

#### **Let's look at all the places that Nehemiah prayed:**

- a. After hearing about the wall, he prayed for God to move. **1:5-11**
- b. When he was before the king, he prayed for God to move the king's heart. **2:4**
- c. After the threats by his enemies, he prayed for God's protection and strength **4:9, 5:9, 14**
- d. Asks God to remember his devotion **5:19, 13:14, 22, 29, 31**

How often do we seek after God?

Have our prayer lives become more ritual than relationship?

Do we seek God's blessing and help throughout the day, or just in the morning?

**Challenge:** become people who are praying and seeking God throughout the day.

Pray for God to help you overcome the obstacles and to move the hearts of others.

Pray to God to give your family Group with one fruit this month

### **2. Nehemiah--A man with a plan.**

After Nehemiah saw the need (the month of December), he took time to come up with a plan, then he approached the king (in April of the next year). He asked the king for what he knew he needed, and it was given to him. (2:4-9)

When he got to Jerusalem, he looked around and assessed the situation. Then he instituted his plan for the rebuilding.

**Please read. Neh. 2:11-18;** In these two month pray and plan so that we might build our part of the wall.

**E.g.** Family Group leaders make prayerful plans (all night prayer or Scripture reading, evangelism, chain pray, 2 Baptism for Nov & Dec ..... ) strengthening, discipling, to rebuild our part of the wall.

**Please read. Neh. 6:15-16** So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. [16] When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

**Conclusion:** I believe that God will give us our goal. But we must be men and women of conviction and prayer, and we must give ourselves to the plan. Let us join together to rebuild the spiritual walls in our city.

## Nehemiah—Giving by Faith

1. **It takes Faith to Give Malachi 3:8-11**
  - A. God wants us to test him in our giving (v.10) All we need is the faith.
  - B. God is waiting to pour out blessings when we trust him. It is easy to say, “I’ll give when God blesses me” God says, “Give and I will bless you”
2. **God’s promises Malachi 3:10-11, Mark 10:29-31, 2 Corinthians 9:10-11**
  - A. We will not have enough room for God’s blessings.
  - B. We can never out give God
  - C. God always gives back 100 times as much to us
  - D. God will continue to give to us so we in turn can give to others and meet their needs.
  - E. Ultimate blessing: Treasure in heaven
3. **Depend on God Philippians 4:14-19**
  - A. Our giving is a sacrifice pleasing to God
  - B. When we give, God will meet all our needs

### Questions

1. Do I hold back on my contribution because I am worried about the future?
2. Does my giving cause me to rely on God?
3. What amount of money should I be giving (Special Contribution) that is both responsible and still requires faith?
4. When I have relied on the promise of God in my giving? What did God do in response?

## Sacrificial Giving

Leviticus 27:30

Malachi 1:13-14; 3:8-11

Mark 12:41-44

Acts 4:36-37

2 Corinthians 8:1-3

2 Samuel 24: 21-25

### **I. Old Testament Precedent Leviticus 27:30; Malachi 1:13-14**

- A. The Israelites were commanded to give a tenth (tithe) of all their income to the Lord.
- B. The Israelites had many other kinds of sacrifices (e.g., burnt, sin, grain, fellowship offerings) in addition to the tithe. The Israelites actually gave up 33% of their income to God.
- C. The sacrifices were to be the best available. God will not accept a second rate sacrifice.

### **II. New Testament Examples**

- A. The Widow Mark 12:41-44
- B. Barnabas Acts 4:36-37 – He sold his property and gave all the proceeds from the sale to meet the needs of the church.
- C. The Macedonians 2 Corinthians 8:1-3
- D. They gave beyond their ability even though they were extremely poor.

### **III. True Sacrifice Costs Something 2 Samuel 24:21-25**

- A. David refused to sacrifice to God something that cost him nothing

### Questions

1. Am I giving my best to God in my weekly giving?
2. Do I give to God first out of my pay or out of what is left over?
3. What percentage of my income am I giving in my weekly contribution?
4. What am I willing to sell or sacrifice for special contribution?
5. Am I hold back on my contribution because I am worried about the future?

## Nehemiah - Building the Wall of Unity

Unity among God's people is an inspiring theme throughout the book of Nehemiah!

### I. DEEP CONVICTIONS ABOUT UNITY

- 1.) **Unity is primary in God's vision and purpose for his people.**
  - a. Marriage-Oneness. Genesis 2:24; Please read.
  - b. God's people-Oneness. John 17:22-23; Please read.
  - c. Jesus and the Church-Oneness. Ephesians 4:3-6, Ephesians 5:31-32; Please read.
- 2.) **Unity is a primary attack-point of Satan.**
  - a. Satan wants to divide us. Disunity characterizes the world. Titus 3:3
  - b. War, terrorism, hatred, prejudice, divorce, abuse, neglect...etc.
- 3.) **Unity produces great things.**
  - a. We see from the book of Nehemiah that when God's people are righteously united, great things happen! For example:
    - 1.) God is glorified, Neh. 5:13
    - 2.) Enemy is thwarted, Neh. 6:16
    - 3.) Renewed sense of strength, Neh 8:10
    - 4.) Celebration and joy, Neh 12:43
    - 5.) God's presence felt, Neh. 4:20-21
    - 6.) Great projects accomplished, Neh 6:15
  - b. Unity is not a "one time" thing; it must be built and cultivated over time. Ephesians 4:1-3
  - c. We must all humbly be part of build unity in our homes, Bible Talks and churches!

### II. BUILDING BLOCKS OF UNITY ("How can I be an active part of building unity?")

- 1.) **Share Responsibility.** Please read. **Nehemiah 1:4-7**
  - a. Often we turn to blaming each other when things go wrong. Nehemiah did not turn on his people but rather joined in responsibility for the spiritual and physical condition of God's people. Sharing the responsibility enables us to share the passion.
- 2.) **Consistently and Earnestly Turn to God.** Nehemiah 1:4, 13:30
  - a. God is the focus of unity. God's ways and vision are what call us to come together. God's nature and strength inspire us in our diversity to love each other and work together.
- 3.) **Share the Vision.** Nehemiah 2:17-18
  - a. Nehemiah inspired their vision. They all agreed it was "*good work*" and they saw it through to the end.
  - b. How to resolve conflict and work together: Jas. 3:13-18, Eph. 4:25, Matt. 18:15-17
- 4.) **Share Your Victories.** Nehemiah 2:7-9
  - a. Nehemiah used what he had been blessed with for the benefit of God's people.
- 5.) **Do Your Part of the Work.** Nehemiah 3:8,
  - a. We all have a significant part in the building of God's people. (Ephesians 4:16) God was calling his people to rebuild the wall, yes, but even more than that he was calling them to come together as the healthy, holy, strong, fully functioning people of God who would bless the entire world. This requires everyone pitching in!
- 6.) **Have a Clear Understanding of Who the Enemy Is.** Nehemiah 4:1-6
  - a. Satan will try to get us to turn on each other when he is in fact the real enemy.
- 7.) **Pray and then Pray Some More.** Nehemiah 6:16
  - a. Prayer is the underlying theme of unity and strength in the book of Nehemiah. Unity and its fruits only come with "*the help of our God*". We must be unified with God and each other in prayer. Prayer brings God and people together.
- 8.) **Consistently and Earnestly Turn to the Truth.** Nehemiah 1:8-9,
  - a. The truth of God, the Bible, must be our continual source of what's true. This takes hard work and perseverance. The truth of God will lead us to victory!

**CHARGE: CHOSE YOUR PERSONAL BRICK AND BUILD!**

## Nehemiah: Rebuilding the Walls of Commitment

Nehemiah is viewed as one of the great Old Testament heroes largely because of his commitment to God and His people. We Christians must restore the fiber of commitment in our family group & Church! The wall of commitment must be rebuilt in our communities, our marriages, our families, our friendships and most of all in our relationship with God!

### 1. Whole-hearted in the Beginning

- Neh. 2:18 God's grace motivated the commitment in the beginning
- Neh. 3:1 The leaders set the course of commitment
- Neh. 3:18 Baruch's zealous commitment in the beginning was inspirational

Jesus demanded whole-hearted commitment from the very beginning. There is no room for reluctance. Luke 14  
**Please read. Nehemiah 4:6;** *We rebuilt the wall to half its height because the people worked with all their heart!*  
**Challenge: Are you whole-heartedly committed to God today?**

### 2. Deepens with Time

**Please read. Nehemiah 4:13-23**

The people agreed to be **workers for the Lord** (ditch diggers, masons, carpenters, etc.) Nehemiah 2:18b, Nehemiah 3. The opposition to the Lord's work later demanded the serve as **Soldiers** also!

**Please read. James 1:2-4;** Consider it pure joy.....This opposition will serve to strengthen and mature the disciple of Jesus!

#### A. Satan tempts us to give-up.

Neh 4:1 Ridicule/ Mockery -- "Do you really believe in God?, Do you really think you can change after all these years?, etc.

Neh 4:8 Conspiracy -- Persecution, Opposition, Threats Every true Christian will face satanic opposition repeatedly through his life.

Neh 4:10 Fatigue/ Lack of progress -- This leads to discouragement. "I can't keep this up." "I haven't grown nearly as much as I should have by now." "No one is open. Why share my faith?"

Neh 4:12 Negative/ Fearful Thinking -- Fear of failure, rejection, financial ruin, etc.

**ANSWER:** Perseverance as James 1 teaches. **Share a story:** of someone dealing with one or more of the issues above and the victory God provided.

#### B. If Satan can't get us to give-up he tries to distract us.

Nehemiah 5 -- **Internal problems (sin).**

**Solution** -- deal with it quickly and thoroughly, i.e. repent

Nehemiah 6:1-8 **Outside distractions.**

- Time with God distracted by: late-night TV, housework, telephone, computer, etc
- Quality Family Time distracted by: Work, career, hobbies, children overly committed to extra-curricular activities, TV, etc.
- Studying the Bible distracted by: Family issues, work, romantic ties, health, money problems, etc.

**Solution:** please read. **Nehemiah 6:3-4** Godly Prioritization! Each time I gave the same answer, "I am doing a great work and cannot go down!" Remember Matthew 6:33 "Seek first the Kingdom of God ....."

**share someone who is a great example:** *Seek first the kingdom of God.....*

### 3. Re-commit Again

Evidently things went well for several years in Jerusalem after the walls were rebuilt. The people repented of their sin and committed themselves to God. But in Nehemiah 13 we see Nehemiah forcefully calling them back to God again!

**Share from your own life:** an example that illustrates how you had to re-commit, repent, regain, and deepen your relationship with God. (The more recent and specific the better)

**Conclusion:** The wall of commitment must be restored in our lives! Nehemiah was confident as he closes the book with the brief prayer, "Remember me with favor, O my God!"

### Commitment

*I'm part of the fellowship of the unashamed. I have Holy Spirit power. The die has been cast. I have stepped over the line. The decision has been made. I'm a disciple of His. I won't look back, let up, slow down, back away or be still. My past is redeemed, my present makes sense, my future is secure. I'm finished and done with low living, sight walking, small planning, smooth knees, colorless dreams, tamed visions, worldly talking, cheap giving and dwarfed goals. I no longer need pre-eminence, prosperity, position, promotions, or popularity. I don't have to be right, first, tops, recognized, praised, regarded or rewarded.*

*I now live by faith, lean on His presence, walk by patience, am uplifted by prayer and labor by power. My face is set, my gait is fast, my goal is heaven, my road is narrow, my way rough, my companions few, my guide reliable, my mission clear. I cannot be bought, compromised, detoured, lured away, turned back, deluded or delayed. I will not flinch in the face of sacrifice, hesitate in the presence of the adversary, negotiated at the table of the enemy, ponder at the pool of popularity, or meander in the maze of mediocrity.*

*I won't give up, let up, until I have stayed up, stored up, prayed up, paid up, and preached up for the cause of Christ. I am a disciple of Jesus. I must go until He comes, give until I drop, preach until all know, and work until He stops me -- when He comes for His own He will have no problem recognizing me -- My banner will be clear!!!-----Author Unknown.*