

Re-Building The Walls:

Nehemiah ch. 3 Working well with others

By Rev. P. Michael Williamson September 27th 2009

The Story so far

Ch 1 Nehemiah's Prayer heartbroken by the state of Jerusalem Nehemiah prays for success when he approached the King

Ch 2 Nehemiah's Request to Cyrus the King when he asks for leave to go to Jerusalem and then asks for letters of introduction for safe passage and wood from the king's forest as well as other materials. Nehemiah inspects the walls and then challenges the people to start re-building the walls.

Introduction: It may seem that ch 3 is like a list of names but there is more to it than that.

Nehemiah faced an immense challenge and yet he had great faith in an amazing God but on his own he would not have been able to accomplish this enormous task before him.

That is why this sermon is entitled: "Working well with others."

1. The purpose of the work

The people loved Jerusalem and they felt it was a special place where God made himself known to his people.

Ps 48:2 It (Jerusalem) is beautiful in its loftiness, the joy of the whole earth. Like the utmost heights of Zaphon is Mount Zion, the city of the Great King.

Ps 87:2 the LORD loves the gates of Zion more than all the dwellings of Jacob.

The Jews had been mocked by their neighbours because their capital city was in ruins so they suffered shame and disgrace.

Now Nehemiah comes along and inspires them to tackle the huge re-building project.

Nehemiah 2:17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace."

Nehemiah only had one concern and one purpose and that was to Glorify God in the restoration of the walls of Jerusalem. He saw that he was on mission that had been commissioned by God himself.

2. The pattern of the work

There are 38 individuals named and 42 different groups identified each was assigned a place to work on the wall. Often the people were assigned to re-build right in front of their own home. Nehemiah inspired the people then he engaged them where they would do their best work. We all want to protect our own family and the Jews were no different than we are today.

Built or re-built the people used the ancient stones that had been knocked down. The word repair means: to make strong and firm. This was not a quick fix just to make the wall look good; this was a solid reconstruction of the ancient walls to their former strength and glory. The stones were ready and available but they needed to be fitted back into the walls.

One commentator used the analogy of uses the old stones as they were tried and true like the ancient truths of scripture. We don't need new ideas about God we need to re-discover the ancient truths that God has revealed to former generations and integrate them into our lives.

The people finished this difficult work because they obeyed the same leader, kept their eyes on the same goal and worked together for the glory of God.

3. The people doing the work

I. God uses all kinds of people.

People mentioned in this chapter are priests, rulers, men and women, professional craftsmen, people from outside the city, goldsmiths and perfume makers. There was a job for everyone

II. Leaders must set an example.

Eliashib the high priest and other priests joined the work of manual labour to show that they

saw the re-building as a work of the Lord. They led by example.

What's your part in the wall?

III. Some people do more work than others.

Some people worked and finished their assignments and then asked for more work. Some people will not work. The people of Tekoa a town about 11 miles from Jerusalem worked on 2 parts of the wall v.5 and v.27. But their nobles refused to do any of the work they must have thought that such work was beneath them.

Some people work harder than others, for example Baruch it is said he worked zealously. He was obviously not a slacker but a hard working man.

4. Application

The story of Nehemiah and the builders I believe helps us see the importance of balancing spirituality with practical action. We must certainly have times of worship, praise, prayer and fasting, but there also need to be times when we need to roll up our sleeves and get our hands dirty.

The application for us as a church is that we all have our part to play. We can accomplish a great deal more when we work together focused on the mission the Lord has given us than we can if we work on our own. When we work well together God is glorified. As part of the Body of Christ, there is some engagement and action required from each of us.

Today we celebrate God's activity in and through St Paul's over the past year through our Semi-Annual Meeting. This is not so we can become proud of our accomplishments but so we can see what God has accomplished through us. We can look back at the parts of the wall we have completed but it also allows us to look at parts of the wall that now need our attention. Yes it is time to give thanks but it is equally an opportunity to assess; what next Lord?

Remember we are building God's kingdom for God's glory as we work together we will see God establishing his kingdom in our midst's.

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Introduction and background:



1. The purpose of the work

Nehemiah 2:17

2. The pattern of the work

Each person or group was assigned a place to work on the wall. Often in front of their own home.

Repair: to make strong and firm

3. The people doing the work

- I. God uses all kinds of people.

- II. Leaders must set an example.

- III. Some people do more work than others.

Some people will not work.

Some people work harder than others.

4. Application

Celebration of God's activity

Reflection on the past

Assess the future needs for ministry

Remember we are sowing the seeds of God's love in the world through service to others.



Nehemiah's determined rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem shows us how to be better disciplinarians.