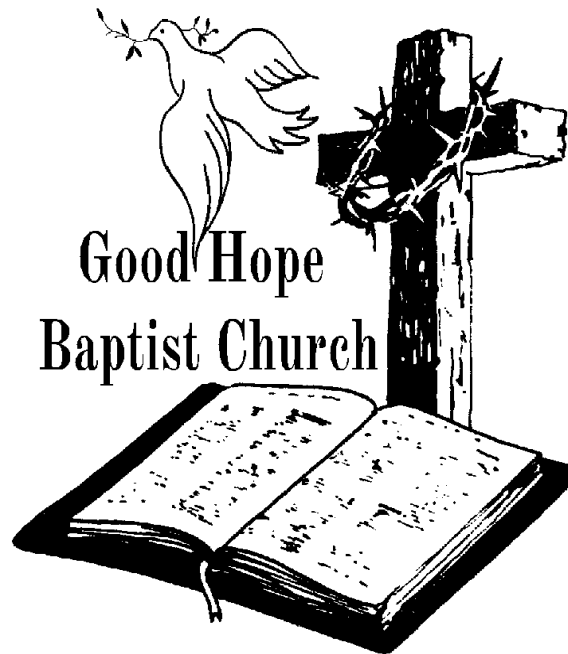


The Hand Of Our God Will Be Upon Us

Nehemiah 2:18

Rebuilding the Walls - 2



Living Together In The Love Of God

4038 Graham Sherron Rd
Wake Forest, NC 27587

Pastor David Buffaloe
919-600-4925
online at bibleteacher.org

FOCAL Read Together Nehemiah 2:18 ^(KJV) Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

How you look at God ultimately determines how you approach life. Too many of us look at God as if He is just a Man, or our Servant, or just Someone we call on in an emergency. Some people regard God to be no more than some impersonal Force. God is not a Force, He is a Person like I am a Person and You are a Person. But God is not a Big Man in Heaven. He is a Person but not a man. Someone once asked me the question, "Can God do anything?" When I replied, "Yes, God can do anything", that person asked me "Then can God Who is all powerful make a rock that is so big that even He can't lift it?" My reply was, "Absolutely not. God can do anything but be stupid. God is all wise, and all powerful." God knows everything. God is holy, without sin, and though a Person He is an uncreated person without limitations. God said of Himself ..

Isaiah 55:9 ^(HCSB) For as heaven is higher than earth, so My ways are higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.

God created us with free will - and yet God still controls the outcome of all things. In the end of everything God will win, but God in love calls us to walk with Him. The Bible says "God is love" (1 John 4:8), and He is perfect Love. It was not God's desire that His nation Israel be overthrown by unbelievers. It is not God's desire that

America be overthrown by unbelievers. It was not God's desire that Jerusalem, that beautiful city of David, be destroyed, and its walls torn down. It is not God's desire that the walls of America be destroyed.

God did not send the Old Testament believer into Canaan or the New Testament believer into America so that unrighteousness could triumph. God wants us to walk with Him and work with Him to rebuild the walls that have fallen. He calls people to Him not just to sit and do nothing, but to rise up and build.

Listen Beloved, God loves you and has a plan for your life. The things that have happened in your life to this point have not been accidents or coincidence. God has been working in you so He can work through you. Think about the great people of the Bible. Both **Moses and David were Shepherds for many years before God called them to Shepherd His Israel**. The young man **Joseph (who had a coat of many colors) was betrayed so that he would eventually end up in Egypt, the right hand man of the King**. Many of the **Apostles were fishermen, people who fought the wind and the waves while they patiently cast their nets for fish**. God shapes people to walk with Him.

Consider Nehemiah. The Bible says **he was the cup bearer to the King (Nehemiah 1:11)**. Seventy years before Nehemiah was cupbearer Israel was carried off into captivity. God's people made bad decisions and stopped walking in love with their Lord. Because of that God removed His protection from the nation. Israel fell, and the unbelievers took over the land. Nehemiah's

parents were carried off into captivity, and in time Nehemiah was born. He was born a captive, a man exiled from his land, but God was still at work. God engineered events until Nehemiah ended up as the **cup bearer to the King**.

The cup bearer to the King is like a Secret Service Agent to the President, or a Body Guard to a celebrity.

Anyone in these jobs - if they are going to last - learn to be watchful. They keep their eyes and ears open. They calculate, and plan ahead. Their job shapes them, or else their job will kill them. Nehemiah was in the job he was in and the place he was in because the Lord Who loved him wanted to use him for His glory. God wants to use you for His glory. He wants you - like Nehemiah - to seize the moment for Him and rebuild the walls that have fallen. God is inviting you to walk with Him as people of purpose, wallbuilders for the glory of Christ!

1 **If I am to be used of God I must focus on Him and watch for the open doors.** I am not where I am by accident, and neither are you. Neither was Nehemiah. When Nehemiah heard that the walls of the nation he loved were destroyed, he repented and focused on God. Faith must be focused on God! The Bible says

Hebrews 11:6 But without faith it is impossible to please {God}: for he that cometh to God must believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of them that diligently seek him.

Nehemiah believed in the God of the Bible, and **believed that God IS**. He knew God was with him. Though Nehemiah didn't understand *why* things were as they were, he understood that **God is able, God is there, and God will reward those who keep on seeking Him**. Nehemiah started praying the promises of God to God. We read:

Context Nehemiah 1:10-11 ^(KJV) **Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.**

Nehemiah didn't pray to God as if God were the Servant, he prayed to God and said "**Lord, I am Your Servant. What do You want me and Your other servants to do?**" His prayer wasn't just a moan about the state of affairs, but a plea. He said, "**Lord, open the door, give us an opportunity to be a blessing to You**".

a **Nehemiah prayed until a door opened.** Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed in the Jewish month **Chisleu**, which would be our **November**. As we come to chapter two we are now in the Jewish month **Nisan**, which would be our **April**. Before Nehemiah did anything he bathed the problem in prayer. For **over 4 months** Nehemiah asked the Lord "**what do YOU want ME to do**"? If we want to make a difference

and to rebuild the walls of America we need to - each and every one of us - seek the Lord in prayer. We need to ask Him "**What do YOU want ME to do? Lord, what have YOU shaped ME to be?**"

b **Nehemiah practiced his faith until a door opened.** In the Book of Revelation Jesus told the Church of Philadelphia:

Revelation 3:7-8 ^(KJV) These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth; 8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: **for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.**

Our God is the Keeper of the Keys. He **opens doors no man can shut, and shuts doors no man can open**. If the walls are to be rebuilt, they will only be rebuilt as God in His power works through us. The Lord Jesus told Philadelphia "**I have set before you an open door, and no man can shut it**". Why did God do this for Philadelphia? Look at the last line. Jesus said:

Thou hast a little strength

Philadelphia was relying on the Lord Jesus. They weren't trying to build the walls in their own power, but were trusting the power of God. The Scripture says "**I can do all things through Christ Jesus Who strengthens me**" (Philippians 4:13). It is **God Who is working in us to will and to do His own good pleasure** (Philippians

2:13). The wall builders do not rely on his own power but on the power of Almighty God working through us. He also said:

You have kept My Word

The Wallbuilder must stay true to the Word of God. Philadelphia was a Bible believing Church, and Nehemiah was a Bible believing man. You must love and cherish God's Word, else God will not use you. Finally the Lord said:

You have not denied My Name

We who will be wallbuilders must love the Lord and honor Him in all we say and do. Nehemiah put the Lord first, and followed Him no matter where He led.

C Nehemiah stepped through the opened door, trusting the promises of God. The King saw Nehemiah and, seeing the sadness on his face, asked him what was wrong. Nehemiah said "**I was sore afraid**" (2:2). He had a good job as the King's cup bearer. Nehemiah didn't hesitate, but he spoke his heart. He said:

Context Nehemiah 2:3 ^(KJV) Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchers, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

Without even a pause the King said:

Context Nehemiah 2:4 ^(KJV) For what dost thou

make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

This is the open door! The King of Persia asks him "**So what can I do?**" I want you to notice before Nehemiah answers he "**prayed to the God of Heaven**". The door is open, and the opportunity is here. He wanted to ask what God wanted him to ask. The Bible tells us

James 1:5-6 If any of you lack wisdom, let him ask of God, that giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not; and it shall be given him. {6} But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering. ...

Nehemiah asked the King for permission to rebuild the walls. Not only this, but he asked for the *supplies necessary* to do this. The Bible says:

Context Nehemiah 2:8 ^(KJV) And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

He didn't attribute what happened to *coincidence* or *good luck*, but gave God the glory. The Lord's hand was on him!

2 If I'm going to be used of God as a wall builder, then like Nehemiah I need to find the facts. He didn't bury his head in the sand, or rely on others, but researched the problem asking himself "**What will we need to do?**". Many great plans fail because the facts were not fully explored beforehand.

Context Nehemiah 2:12-15 ^(KJV) And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I

[any] man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem: neither [was there any] beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. 13 And I went out by night by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. 14 Then I went on to the gate of the fountain, and to the king's pool: but [there was] no place for the beast [that was] under me to pass. 15 Then went I up in the night by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and [so] returned.

Nehemiah examined the walls of Jerusalem **at night**, and **kept God's plans in his heart** as he made his initial surveys. This is wisdom, to seek God and seek the facts. Jesus told His disciples:

Matthew 10:16-20 Behold, I send you forth as sheep in the midst of wolves: be ye therefore **wise as serpents, and harmless as doves.**

3 If we're going to rebuild the walls that have fallen then we believers must work together. Nehemiah enlisted other believers into this fellowship of wallbuilders. We read:

Context Nehemiah 2:17 ^(KJV) Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that **we** are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let **us** build up the wall of Jerusalem, that **we** be no more a reproach.

Illustrate There is strength in unity. God has proven this in nature. Look at the lowly ant, a tiny thing, but working with other ants it builds huge hills. Do you know that **fire ant hills** actually go over five feet deep into the ground? Burn the mound and you've done nothing - you need a backhoe to get them out! When **geese fly south the do so together in a "V" shaped formation**. The geese share the burden of being on point, for when the lead goose tires he falls back and another moves forward. Scientists have studied this, and found out that geese flying in formation can *travel 72% further than one goose can travel by himself*. **One bee does not make honey, but it takes a hive. Two million flowers must be pollinated to make one pound of honey**. The hive must travel over 55,000 miles to make that pound, and in its lifetime each bee only makes about 1/12th of a teaspoon of honey.

God is love, and requires that we work together in love with Him and with one another to rebuild the walls. We together are God's building and God's garden, with each person doing his or her part (**1 Corinthians 3:9**). If we're going to make a difference, we're going to have to work together!

Illustrate Will one person say "Together we build"? Now, will another person join his or her voice with the first person? Let's add another voice, and another voice. Do you notice how it becomes more noticeable as we work together. "Together we build". That is the only way we will ever make a difference for the Lord.

2 Corinthians 13:11 ^(KJV) Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you.

Philippians 2:2 ^(KJV) Fulfill ye my joy, that ye be like minded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind.

No man liveth unto himself (Rom 14:7)

4 If we are going to rebuild the walls that have fallen, we must encourage the discouraged and face the foes of faith. We read:

Context **Nehemiah 2:18** ^(KJV) Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for [this] good [work].

a Nehemiah encouraged himself and his fellow believers by sharing how God had blessed them thus far. He shared his testimony with them, how God had worked through the King of Persia to get them where they were right now. The Bible tells us in the Book of Hebrews:

Hebrews 3:12-13 ^(HCSB) Watch out, brothers, so that there won't be in any of you an evil, unbelieving heart that departs from the living God. 13 But encourage each other daily, while it is still called today, so that none of you is hardened by sin's deception.

This passage is actually looking backwards to the *first generation of Israel*. Why did they die in the desert, wandering for forty years? They died because they **departed from the living God**. God told them "**go over the Jordan and take the land, for I have given it to you**" (see **Numbers 13**). The people refused to enter the land, so God had them wander until the first generation died off. **What caused the people to depart from God in unbelief?** Ten of the spies who went into Canaan came back and discouraged the people, telling them that they couldn't defeat the unbelievers in the land.

Discouragement, disillusionment, and defeat always go hand in hand. This is why we are to **encourage one another daily**. This is why your leaders should "**encourage and rebuke with all authority**" (**Titus 2:15**), **holding fast to the promises of God (Titus 1:9)**. Nehemiah encouraged his brothers in the Lord, reminding them that they could not have gotten that far without God's blessings. Brothers and sisters, we can do it. We can work together to rebuild the broken walls of our families, our Church, our Community, and our Nation. God has blessed us richly, and brought us together for His purpose. This nation was once "One Nation under God, Indivisible, with Liberty and Justice for all". It can be that again if we will stand together and do what God has called us to do.

b We must face the foe as Nehemiah faced the foe.

The devil does not want the Christian to stand up and follow the Lord. He doesn't mind if we sit in this Church building and shout about abortion, homosexuality,

immorality, broken families, and our broken nation. If we stay in this gilded cage he doesn't care how we sing, or how much! But when God's people say "**rise up and build**" those who are faithless will say "**sit still and do nothing**". When the Lord Jesus said "**I must go to the Cross for the sins of this world**" Peter said, "**Not so, Lord! This shall not happen to you!**" (Matthew 16:22). Where do such thoughts come from? Jesus told Peter "**Get thee behind Me, Satan, you are an offense to Me. You do not put God first but put man first**" (Matthew 16:23). The heart that will not glorify God and rebuild the walls is not of God, but comes from underneath, from Satan, the accuser of the brethren. Right after Nehemiah encouraged his brothers the Bible says:

Context Nehemiah 2:19 ^(KJV) **Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard [it], they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What [is] this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?**

Listen Beloved: Opposition ought not to discourage us, but to encourage us, for no one kicks a dead dog, and Satan will not kick a dead Church.

Satan's world is not threatened by a Christian couch potato, nor by apathy. God opens doors, but as soon as He opens a door Satan and his followers will do all they can to close the door. Adversity and open doors go together. The Apostle Paul said:

1 Corinthians 16:9 ^(KJV) For a great door and effectual

is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.

There will always be adversaries to the work of God. God gave us a Great Commission to:

Matthew 28:19-20 ^(HCSB) Go, therefore, and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe everything I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age."

We are to **go outside our comfort zone**, just as Nehemiah did, and tell others about the Lord Jesus. We are to **make disciples** everywhere we go. We are in the disciple making business, teaching them **to observe all that the Lord Jesus has commanded**. Listen to me: You're going to be criticized no matter what you do. Jesus promised us that the world and the worldly would stand against us. I can testify to you that no matter where or how I preach His Gospel I'm criticized. If I preach hellfire some will say "He's too harsh". If I preach too loud they say "He's shouting, and making himself the center of attention and not the Lord". If I tone the message down and lower my voice they say "He'll put you to sleep". I heard a man once complain about his Pastor because he walked across the stage as he preached, and another complain because he stood too long behind the pulpit - and *both were talking about the same man!* You will not avoid criticism.

Say nothing, do nothing, and be nothing, and you will still be criticized. Face your foe with faith, and do

what God has told you to do. God will smite the smiter and dismay the discourager. Just keep on doing God's will and Word in your life.

Nehemiah told his enemies:

Context Nehemiah 2:20 (KJV) **The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.**

God is on our side, and we will trust Him and Him alone!

5 Nehemiah kept on fulfilling his purpose, while encouraging others to fulfill theirs. The walls would be rebuilt in Jerusalem because each person tended to his or her calling. No person can do everything, but everybody can do something. The Bible tells us that within His Church we all have different gifts but

1 Corinthians 12:18 (KJV) ... God set the members every one of them in the body, as it hath pleased him.

It is not up to you to determine what your neighbor's calling is, but what YOUR calling is. Every gift and every person matters when it comes to rebuilding the walls.

Illustration Do what God has called you to do with all your heart! In 1915 a young man from Russia attended a Sunday School class in Chicago at the invitation of a friend. When he got to the class the teacher had not

arrived, and never came, nor was a replacement found. This young man walked away from the Church and never returned. Two years later the young man, **Leon Trotsky**, was instrumental in the Russian Revolution and the establishment of Communism in that land. **Joseph Stalin** was responsible for killing 30 million people. Before he became the murderous dictator that he was he attended the Russian Church and studied to be a priest. Corruption in the Church caused him to turn away from God forever. Two young boys, both residents of Dallas, Texas, were very rowdy. One Christian reached out to one of the boys mentoring him weekly until he surrendered his life to Christ. That young boy grew up to be a Florida Baptist Secretary of Evangelism. The other young man, just as troubled, went to Church but no one reached out to him. He grew up, got a gun, and **Lee Harvey Oswald killed President John F. Kennedy.**

It is so easy to fall prey to discouragement or apathy. Keep on doing what God has called you to do. Trust Him with all your heart, and love Him and His Word with all your mind. We can rebuild the walls ...

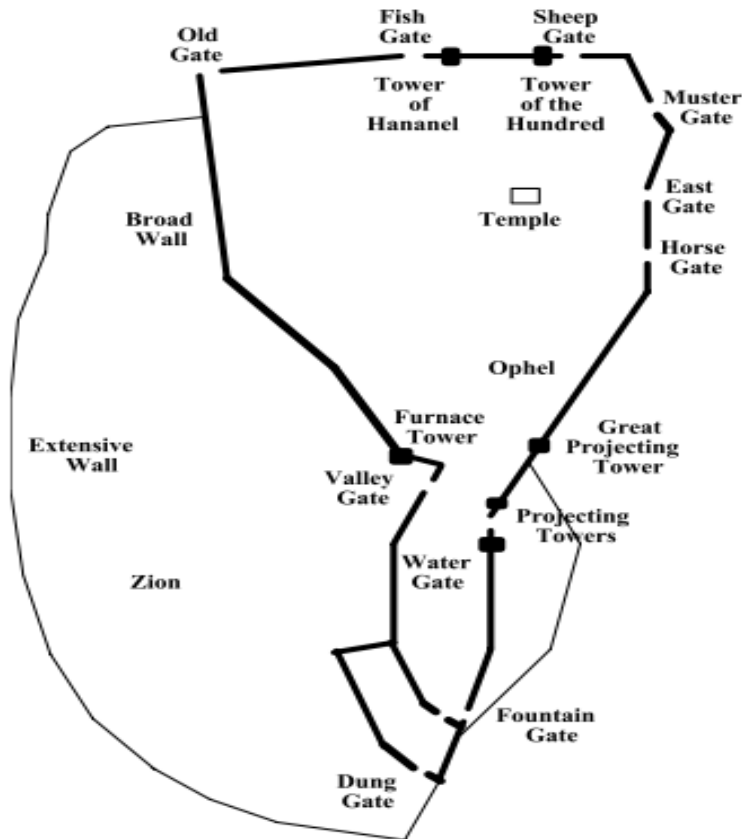
... If we are HIS!

Do you know the Lord Jesus Christ as Savior? The Bible says that **Jesus died on that Cross for you and for me.** On the day that He died **the Veil of the Temple - that curtain that kept the people from the holiest part of the Temple - was torn from top to bottom (Matthew 27:51).** Why did God tear that veil? Because **the Blood of Jesus Christ - shed for us - unites us with God.** We who were once lost and separate from God are now

found. Jesus Christ brings all who believe in Him into the Family of God (Ephesians 2:11ff).

Do you know Jesus? Is He your Lord and Savior? If not, today - this very day - tear down the wall that separates you from God by trusting in Him. **God so loved the world that He gave His Only Begotten Son for you and for me. Trust Him - call on Him - be saved and then rise and help us build the walls!**

May God touch your hearts with His Word.



FOCAL Read Together Nehemiah 2:18 ^(KJV) Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

Isaiah 55:9; 1 John 4:8

1 If I am to be used of God I must _____
_____ and watch for the open doors.
Hebrews 11:6; Nehemiah 1:10-11

a Nehemiah _____ until a door opened.

b Nehemiah _____ his faith until a door opened. Revelation 3:7-8; Philippians 4:13; Philippians 2:13

c Nehemiah _____,
trusting the promises of God. Nehemiah 2:3;
Nehemiah 2:4; James 1:5-6; Nehemiah 2:8

2 If I'm going to be used of God as a wall builder,
then like Nehemiah I need to _____

Nehemiah 2:12-15; Matthew 10:16-20

3 If we're going to rebuild the walls that have fallen
then we believers must work together. Nehemiah
enlisted other believers into this _____

Nehemiah 2:17; 1 Corinthians 3:9; 2 Corinthians

13:11; Philippians 2:2; Romans 14:7

4 If we are going to rebuild the walls that have fallen, we must encourage the _____ and face the _____ of faith.

Nehemiah 2:18

a Nehemiah encouraged himself and his fellow believers by _____

Hebrews 3:12-13; Numbers 13; Titus 2:15; Titus 1:9

b We must _____ the foe as Nehemiah faced the foe. Matthew 16:22; Matthew 16:23; Nehemiah 2:19; 1 Corinthians 16:9; Matthew 28:19-20; Nehemiah 2:20

5 Nehemiah kept on fulfilling his purpose, while encouraging others _____
1 Corinthians 12:18; Matthew 27:51; Ephesians 2:11

