

BUILDING 4 GENERATIONS TO COME

What Only the King Can Give

Nehemiah 2:7-10

INTRODUCTION: Last Sunday night I felt like Nehemiah must have felt after the king granted his request to go to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. After the Church Conference, which by the way, if you were not here, you missed a real blessing. Such a sweet spirit pervaded this place. The church overwhelmingly endorsed the report and the goal of becoming intentional in our efforts as a 4 Generation Church to reach and disciple the younger generations. After the meeting, people just lingered and visited, and you could just sense the Holy Spirit in the hearts, lives, and conversations of His people.

And as I saw that, I just let out a big breath of air, and a pleasant tiredness just settled over my body. When I got home and sat down in my easy chair, I told Karen, "I don't think I'm going to last long before my eyes close and I just pass out," and I didn't!

I suspect Nehemiah slept well also the night after the king said he could go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. Nehemiah said in essence, **I will do whatever the Lord enables me to do by His grace and power**. God, in moving the heart of the king to say yes to Nehemiah's request, gave Nehemiah his first glimpse of what all the Lord would be willing to do to empower His willing servant.

Sunday night, St. Andrew Baptist Church joined me and the staff in saying to the Lord, "**We will do whatever the Lord enables us to do by His grace and power to reach and disciple these younger generations.**" And while I hope you will not drop off to sleep during this message this morning, I sense in our whole church family that we are resting in the Lord, knowing the joy of the Holy Spirit's confirmation in our hearts that we are committed to do His will.

But as overjoyed as Nehemiah was for the king to say, "You can go," Nehemiah knew that to be able to do the job, he would need much more than just the king's blessing. And so do we!

So, Nehemiah spoke again to the king because he needed things that only the king could give. Let's read about Nehemiah's requests in Nehemiah 2:7-10.

Nehemiah 2:7–10 7 Furthermore I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors of *the region* beyond the River, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, 8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which *pertains* to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy." And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me. 9 Then I went to the governors *in the region* beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10 When Sanballat the

Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.

Folks, not only in matters such as our church is facing in our challenge of reaching Generation Z and Millennials and making disciples from those generations, but in many of the things we are involved in and many of our undertakings day by day. **A lot of the really important things we need** to get the job done, to be successful in what we are doing, **only God, the One True and Everlasting King, can grant.**

For instance, Nehemiah needed permission to pass through the provinces of the Persian Empire so that he could come to Jerusalem in the province of Judah. Without a letter of authorization from the king, Nehemiah could have been stopped in his tracks at any one of the borders and sent back home.

And there are many barriers that can impede or utterly block our way to destinations where we want to go, need to go, even where God wants us to go, and ...

I. ONLY KING JESUS CAN GRANT PERMISSION.

After the resurrection, Jesus is giving His marching orders to His followers. Notice how He begins what He tells them.

Matthew 28:18–20 18 And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, “All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. 19 Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, 20 teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age.” Amen.

Sometimes people question how a Christian can willfully smuggle Bibles into a country closed to the gospel or tell a person about Jesus Christ when evangelism is against the law. Isn't a Christian supposed to obey the law since all authority is established by God?

Yes, the Christian is to obey the law, but like the apostles and other believers of old, they are to obey the highest law. A believer should obey the laws of his country as long as obeying those laws do not cause him to disobey the higher laws of God.

But the one who is the ultimate authority, the King of Kings and Lord of Lords, has been give all authority in heaven and on earth. And His first command is “**Go, and make disciples!**”

Then, lest there be any misunderstanding, Jesus also clarified where we are to make disciples:

Acts 1:8 But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.”

I am thrilled to pastor a church where the people say, “**The most important thing in our church, the most important thing in our lives, is to be a witness of the Lord Jesus and make disciples that follow Him!**”

When we do that, we are acting in accord with the highest authority in the universe!

And the King of the Universe not only puts all of His authority behind us, but ...

II. ONLY KING JESUS CAN SUPPLY ALL OUR NEEDS.

- Nehemiah knew he did not begin to have all the resources he needed to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.
- He knew he did not have the power to gather them from others.
- But Nehemiah knew who had all the resources that were needed readily available.

He knew the king could supply all his needs. First, he asked the king to supply the resources

A. For ministry

Nehemiah asked for the king to give him timber for the beams and gates.

Some of you noted in our discussions that some of the changes we voted to do require changes to our physical plant, and that will require money. You are correct.

And here is another place I can identify with Nehemiah.

- I know I do not have all the resources we need to make all the necessary changes to our facilities.
- I do not have the power to gather them from others.
- But I do know Who has all the resources that we need readily available to do everything He wants done.
- I know the King Who can supply all our needs.

And let us remember that He has done it before for us.

In 2008, God led us to make plans to build a Student Center and a Kid Zone Building for preschoolers and children. The week before we kicked off the campaign to raise the funds for the building the stock market crashed and the economy bottomed across the nation.

But God supplied every need. We built the building, paid for it in full, and reduced our debt, all at the same time, because King Jesus can supply all our needs.

We finished that project, and God showed us it was time to get our Jerusalem ministries out of the tiny little houses that were holding them before the walls caved in. He gave us property across the street, but we had to totally rebuild it all.

God supplied all our needs! We built the buildings, finished the project, and again reduced our debt. A few years later, our debt was totally paid off. King Jesus supplied all our needs.

B. This works Personally as well.

Nehemiah also asked for timber for his own house. That was not selfish. He had to have a place to live to do the work. He was not building a castle for himself. This was a need, and the king supplied it.

Jesus Himself taught us to rely upon the Lord to supply our needs. He reminded us that God feeds the birds, and each of us is of much greater value to God than the birds.

Friend I am not talking about getting rich. I am talking about getting what you need to live and do the work God has called you to do. If you are lacking in what you need to live, for your family to live, to be able to do what God has made you and called you to do in His kingdom, ask the King!

ONLY KING JESUS CAN SUPPLY ALL OUR NEEDS!

And often times in His goodness and mercy, King Jesus gives far more than just our needs.

What is happening in Hurricane Harvey reminds me of what all God did in Hurricane Katrina which my family witnessed so up close and personal. And I have told you some of the miracle stories of God's provision for the needs of our church in Slidell, LA and of the people we were trying to serve. God supplied a circus-sized tent for us to use to distribute clothes and cleaning supplies. God supplied food and cooks for meals for people flooded out and rebuilding, every day for months. God supplied water. God gave us a tractor to clear the debris from our flooded church. God sent Danny Pate to us with a load of sheet rock and later he came back and personally rewired all of our outlets in the entire campus that flooded!

But God sent blessings far beyond just the needs. Late in the fall, while we were all still very much in the middle of recovery, the Lord sent Christmas gifts all the way from a church in Ohio. They brought 700 big boxes, beautifully wrapped, each box filled with nice toys and an outfit of clothing. The contents of each box was worth more than \$100! We advertised in the community for families to come to a big party, jointly hosted by us and the Ohio church. We had so many families come that we had to run out and put together ten more boxes.

But God was not finished. He kept sending gifts for the children by the van and truck load. A toy store in California was closing and they shipped us their entire inventory. We set up a room in which flood victims could come and shop for free for Christmas presents for their children. We had so much we had trouble giving all the gifts away. We really worked at getting rid of all the toys and stuff because we were getting to a place that we needed to restore the room to its original function. Finally, we emptied it and we rejoiced.

Karen and the ladies had literally just breathed a sigh of relief that all the toys were gone when a man walked in with his 16 month old son. He said, "Hi! I'm from Wisconsin. My church gathered up toys for the kids at Christmas. My little boy and I loaded them all up in my semi and we drove down to bring them. I didn't know where to take them so I stopped at a rest stop on the interstate and asked where I could bring them. A lady there said this church was helping all the people who flooded, so I brought them to you. Of course we received the abundant bounty God had sent, and sure enough, still in the next week or two, more people came, and there were toys for all the children at Christmas.

ONLY KING JESUS CAN SUPPLY ALL OUR NEEDS!

III. ONLY KING JESUS CAN PROVIDE PROTECTION AND ENFORCEMENT.

A. On the journey

Nehemiah said that the king sent captains of the army and horsemen with him. Why?

- To protect him from bandits and those who would do him harm.
- To enforce the king's decisions.
- Just in case a governor of a province did not want Nehemiah to pass through.
- Just in case somebody at the king's lumberyard did not want to release prime timber for those Jews in Jerusalem.

God is able to protect His children.

God is able to enforce His decrees.

Just because sometimes God's children are sometimes harmed or even killed, and although sometimes God's decrees are ignored, seemingly with impunity, do not be deceived. God is able. God is in control.

Some things are more important than just living a little longer in this life.

Sometimes the kingdom is benefitted by a delay in the enforcing of a decree.

But it is never because God is lacking in power to protect His own or to act with justice and righteousness.

B. For the future

Verse 10 seems almost out of place. Why is it there?

Nehemiah 2:10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.

Because God was assuring Nehemiah that His protection and enforcement of His will would be sufficient for the opposition that was now gathering in dark corners but would one day step out to fight against the purpose of God openly.