

BUILDING 4 GENERATIONS TO COME

Courage to Face the Challenge

Nehemiah 2:11-18

INTRODUCTION: Please allow me to quickly remind you where we are in the story of Nehemiah.

- Nehemiah started in the comfortable position of being the cupbearer to the king of Persia.
- God sends him word through a friend that the walls of Jerusalem remain in ruins.
- Nehemiah commits to the Lord that he will be God's servant to do whatever the Lord would enable him to do rebuild the walls.
- Nehemiah requests permission from the king to go do the work of the Lord. He also asks for the king's authority for safe passage and timber for the gates.
- The king sends Nehemiah on his way with a compliment of soldiers on horseback both to protect him and to enforce his proclamations.
- When the text we will examine today opens, Nehemiah has journeyed between two and three months to travel from Shushan to Jerusalem.

Let's pick up the story now in

Nehemiah 2:11–18 11 So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. 12 Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode. 13 And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. 14 Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but *there was* no room for the animal under me to pass. 15 So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. 16 And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work. 17 Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we *are* in, how Jerusalem *lies* waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach." 18 And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to *this good work*.

God allows us see a lot of the detail in the way Nehemiah faced the problem. When God gives us details in the Scripture, it is always for a reason. From the way the Lord led Nehemiah, we can see ...

I. SEEING THE PROBLEM, WE MUST COMMIT TO BE PART OF THE SOLUTION.

A. Nehemiah had done this while in Shushan.

- He committed himself to do whatever God would enable him to do.
- He counted the cost the best he could, and he was willing to pay!
- But there was a lot he did not know.
- When he learned more, he remained firm in his commitment.

B. We have done this with the challenge God has given St. Andrew Baptist Church.

- God has shown us the necessity of our reaching and discipling more of the younger generations: Millennials and Generation Z
- Our church has overwhelmingly said YES! WE WILL DO WHATEVER THE LORD ENABLES US TO DO BY HIS GRACE AND POWER TO REACH AND DISCIPLE THESE GENERATIONS.
- And today we arrive at the place to begin looking at the details of the job that is before us.
- When the service is over, the staff has a five page report for you with all the recommendations of what we believe God wants us to do here at St. Andrew.

The next thing we see in the text is this:

II. DISCOVERING THE DEPTH OF THE DIFFICULTY, WE MUST FACE THE CHALLENGE WITH COURAGE.

A. Nehemiah went out at night to inspect the ruined condition of the walls.

- Why at night? Probably to avoid the notice of the opposition.
- But even at night, Nehemiah saw more than all the local Jews had seen for years in the daylight because he was looking at the problem through eyes prepared by God.
- It was God who wanted the walls repaired, and so He called Nehemiah.
- This was not just an adventure. This was God's work. And God prepared Nehemiah's heart, eyes, and hands!
- And because Nehemiah was on mission to do the will of God, the depth of the destruction did not cause him to waver.
- He went to every section of the wall, to every gate burned with fire.
- But he did not back down. He did not walk away. He did not say, "This is worse than I thought."
- He gathered all the people together and with courage ringing in his voice, he said, "**Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem!**"

B. Folks, I want us to see, this is the same point we are at today.

- At lunch or this afternoon, you get to inspect the walls.
- You get to look at the details of the recommendations.
- Everything flows from the goals we adopted as a church saying we want to be a 4 Generation Church that leaves no generation behind.
- We want to reach; we want to disciple the younger generations.
- But the recommendations we give you today tell you all the details we know about what we believe the Lord would have us do to accomplish His purpose.
- My friend, listen to me. When you read the recommendations
 - Some of you are going to find some things you do not like.
 - If you do, first remember, these recommendations are not given to try to make us happy.
 - These recommendations are written to help us reach Millennials and Generation Z.
 - So instead of asking yourself, do I like that, ask do I understand how this could help reach and disciple these young generations?
 - And if you do not understand, then when we have our meetings about the recommendations this week, ask. That's why we are having the meetings, so we can all understand.
- But after we read and understand, then like Nehemiah, we must respond with courage and fortitude.
- We cannot be frightened away by the challenge before us. Let each of our voices ring out, **"Come, let us build 4 Generations to Come!"**

And finally we see in our text ...

III. WE MUST DO THE WORK WHILE DEPENDING ON THE POWER OF GOD.

- A. Nehemiah encouraged the people by telling them God was already involved. They were joining God in His work!

Nehemiah 2:18 And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to *this good work*.

- B. The work God has called us to is God's own work.

- Jesus came to seek and to save those who are lost!
- Jesus went to the cross to pay the penalty for all of our sins.
- The Holy Spirit says "Whoever will may come."
- Our Savior sends us out saying, "Go make disciples."

Everything we do to reach a person of any age,

Everything we do to disciple a person of any age,

We are doing the work of God.

It is God's work.

We are joining Him in it.

And we must do it relying upon God's power, for Jesus said,

John 15:5 "I am the vine, you *are* the branches. He who abides in Me, and I in him, bears much fruit; for without Me you can do nothing.

But if we do abide in Christ and His words, listen to this:

John 15:7 If you abide in Me, and My words abide in you, you will ask what you desire, and it shall be done for you.

PRAYER – We are committed.

Grant us courage. Make us stalwart. Keep us faithful!

Let us purpose to work, Building 4 Generations to Come, and to work for the night is coming when no man can work.

But help us Lord to depend on Your power – to abide in You, Lord, for apart from You, we can do nothing. But with You, all things are possible!