

BUILDING 4 GENERATIONS TO COME

How Does God Build?

Nehemiah 3

INTRODUCTION: Are you content to just be one of more than seven billion people alive on this globe today whose life consists only of

- finding a way to have the things you need and want,
- doing the work necessary to get those things,
- sprinkled with some wonderful and joyous relationships,
- enthralled with times of happiness and fun,
- but enduring also multiple times of pain and sorrow,
- and other relationships that are not so wonderful and certainly not joyous?

Are you content for that to be a summary of your life; and when you are coming to the end of it, realizing that your life did not really matter much at all? It did not really matter to hardly anybody?

Folks, the sad truth is that most of the seven billion people in this world today are living their life just like that.

But that is not what God wants for you. That is not what God wants for me.

God has created us in His image so that we might know Him and join Him in the glorious work He is doing among mankind, a work that culminates with life in eternity. Being a part of God's work and God's plan throughout our lives begins by making a relationship with His Son, the Lord Jesus Christ, to be the central relationship of our lives. And after we have trusted Jesus as the Lord of our lives, then we can join Him in that work, and our lives can count, not just for some thing but for things that will last for eternity.

I want my life to be like that. But if we truly want to be a part of God's Kingdom work, then we need to know something about how God works. How does God build His Kingdom?

That is why we are studying Nehemiah, chapter 3 right now. Admittedly, studying through this chapter is somewhat like panning for gold in a river. It is hard work. You can work a long time before you find anything of value, but patience and diligence can produce a big reward. Chapter 3 of Nehemiah is like that. Thirty two verses naming

individuals, families, or groups that devoted themselves to rebuilding the fallen walls of Jerusalem.

Here is a map of the layout. Do not be distressed if you cannot read the fine print. Each of the colored sections is a section of the wall. The all caps words label the names of the gates. The smaller words name the person, family, or group working on the section of the wall.

As we swish each verse around in our pan, looking for golden nuggets of truth, valuable insights about how God builds come to light. If we know Christ, and have trusted Christ, and we want to spend our lives joining God in His work, we need to know how He works. And we see that in Nehemiah. We've been at this a couple of weeks, and first we saw that

I. GOD BUILDS BY CALLING MANY TO JOIN THE WORK.

This was no mere construction crew everybody was watching getting the walls rebuilt and new gates hung to protect the ancient city. God sent out His call throughout the citizenry of Jerusalem, and raised, as we noted last week, even people in the jewelry and perfume business to become masons and carpenters for a season to do the work of the Kingdom of God.

And so God continues to do today in that enterprise which is at the core of the work and ministry of the Kingdom of God, the church.

- That body of which Christ is the Head and each of us different members of the body, working together, obeying the Head, that His plans might be accomplished and His work might be done.
- And as the body has many members, each necessary to make their contribution to the work, so God calls many members of the church to get His work, His building done.

Secondly we saw

II. GOD USES OUR WORK TO STRENGTHEN HIS CHURCH.

Although God, being God, could accomplish His building of lives, building of the church itself, building of His Kingdom, any way He chose, it pleased the Lord to choose to strengthen His work through the work of His people.

God uses our work, but we are not independent contractors.

John 15:5–8 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. 6 If anyone does not abide in Me, he is cast out as a branch and is withered; and they gather them and throw *them* into the fire, and they are burned. 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. 8 By this My Father is glorified, that you bear much fruit; so you will be My disciples.

For God to work through us we must abide in Christ and abide in His Word, otherwise our busyness accomplishes nothing.

This morning we see the third description about the way God works.

III. EVERY PART OF THE WORK IS IMPORTANT TO GOD.

I think that is one of the key reasons the Holy Spirit when He inspired the writing of this book listed the names of all the people whom God called and worked through to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. And the Holy Spirit had Nehemiah record which section of the wall each one worked on and each gate the various workers rebuilt. Thirty-nine sections of the wall! Ten different gates!

It would not surprise me when the Spirit of God told Nehemiah to write this book if Nehemiah himself might not have said, "God, do we really need to name everybody? Couldn't we just write down the names of the key people in the project?" And I think God would have responded, "That's what we're doing. **Everybody is a key part of this work of Mine!**"

And is that not correct?

Which section of the wall is not important? Which repair didn't matter.

What if the Tekoites didn't get this wall rebuilt?

What if the Zaccur didn't get his section rebuilt?

What if the Shallum didn't get his wall and gate rebuilt?

Then the wolves could ravage flocks and children.

Then the thieves could loot the temple.

Then the city could be invaded and conquered all over again!

EVERY PART OF THE WORK IS IMPORTANT!

It's that way in the church also.

Senior adults need children for vitality, life, fun!

Children need teens and adults as examples, teachers, helpers.

Teens need median adults to support, teach and guide.

Adults need Senior Adults as mentors and leaders.

We all need each other, and that is why it is important to be a 4 Generation Church.

And that is why it is important not to neglect any part of God's work.

And this week, while I was preparing this message and preparing to teach from Acts 4 on Wednesday night about the control of the Holy Spirit that God convicted me.

- You see, the time of conviction for you may be when your teacher in Lifechange group is explaining the Word of God, and the Lord squeezes your heart.
- Or God may use something He has given me to say in a message that touches and convicts your soul.
- But for me, it most often happens in my time of preparation. While I am studying and praying, and seeking to know what God wants me to say to you, God first speaks to me. And He did powerfully this week.

GOD SAID, "YOU'VE GOT WALLS TO REBUILD IN YOUR OWN CHURCH."

YOUR FINANCIAL WALLS HAVE HOLES IN THEM.

I knew it was true. Rick and I talk about it weekly. We talk with the staff about it. We pray about it. We have tried to work around the broken parts of the walls to keep things running the best we can.

And friend, it was like God said, "Pastor, you are preaching about rebuilding walls; why don't you rebuild those broken walls in your church? Pastor, why don't you lead your people to rebuild the financial walls of your church?"

And I thought, "Well, one reason is that a lot of people don't want to hear that."

And God asked, "Are you going to be controlled by them or by Me?" By You, Lord. By You!

And in the providence of God, I was teaching Acts 4 on Wednesday night on the control of the Holy Spirit. And **do you know what the book of Acts shows us always happens when a person is controlled by the Holy Spirit?**

They always speak the Word of God with boldness.

- **Not with harshness or brashly**
- **But with clarity**
- **Without ambiguity**
- **Without hesitation**

- **Without reluctance**

And folks, on Wednesday afternoon, I understood what I needed to do.

- I needed to start rebuilding the financial walls of our church.
- I needed to start leading you as the members to start rebuilding the financial walls of our church.
- I must do it with boldness, clarity, without ambiguity.
- So that is what I am going to do.

First, here are the facts as clearly and simply as I know how to say them.

OUR GIVING THROUGH LAST SUNDAY

We are behind in the Ministry Budget of our church by \$227,604.

- That does not mean we are overspent by that amount. But our budget is a statement of what we need to do the ministries we as a church have decided God wants us to do. We have cut back on things we voted as a church to do by \$227,000.

We are behind on our Missions Budget by over \$92,000.

- Again, we haven't, we don't spend money we don't have. But there is work in missions we as a church said we believe God wants us to do, and we have left \$92,000 of it undone.

Together, that is nearly \$320,000 that we are behind.

We need to rebuild the wall.

I thought, "You know, this is a lot like the people of Jerusalem who need to rebuild the walls. They needed to put the stones back in place."

If you value the stones a \$1000 a piece, we need 228 to shore up the ministry walls and another 92 to repair our mission walls.

And we can't take stones from other walls and move them or we just move the broken parts from one place to another. To repair our financial walls, we must do this beyond our regular giving weekly.

We have 11 weeks to do this before our year ends, counting today. That's 29 stones or \$29,000 a week above our budgets to repair our walls.

- Now I told you, the Lord told me the first thing I needed to do was to start repairing the wall myself. So Thursday morning, as we were getting ready, I told Karen what I've told you. We decided together what we would do.
- During the day Thursday, before I finished this message to you, we bought the first stone. I went online and gave an extra gift of a thousand dollars.
- I put 70% in the Ministry budget and 30% in the Missions budget because that's the division that will help us repair both walls.
- Then I went to the place we have our regular gifts set up to come to the church every time we get paid. I increased our giving by 25% and divided the increase also 70/30, because we intend to buy more stones between now and the end of this year. We want to be a part of repairing the walls.

Folks, I'm just praying that God will convict your heart about this as much as He has mine.

- God is doing too many wonderful things among us here at St. Andrew Baptist Church, for us to let the financial walls go unrepaired.
- God has been too good to many of us for us not to respond to this need with generosity out of what God has given and is giving to us.
- To those who at this moment have very little, then just give a very little.
- To those to whom God has given much, give until it makes you happy. That's what cheerful giving is, giving until it makes you happy.

PRAYER – God, the best I could, I have said it clearly and simply.

But God, I cannot persuade people to give.

Only You can do that. I trust You to do it. Set our hearts of rebuild our own broken walls. Amen.