

When Personal Walls are Broken

OBEY

Nehemiah 9 and 10

TEXT: Nehemiah 9:32–10:29

INTRODUCTION: This morning we complete our study of Nehemiah with one final look at what we are to do when we discover that walls in our personal lives are broken.

Moral Walls

Relational Walls

Financial Walls

Health Walls

Although the Book of Nehemiah opens with a consideration of the broken walls of the city, the last half of the book deals more with personal broken walls such as things in the life of Nehemiah and things in the lives of the individual citizens of Jerusalem.

The Book of Nehemiah offers us three steps toward the rebuilding of broken walls in our lives.

1. The beginning place is always prayer.

- The first thing Nehemiah did when discovering broken walls was to pray.
- It is the first thing I always do when I find things to be under attack or crumbling.
- And in considering what the Bible teaches us concerning prayer we discovered that there are things God is willing to do, good things for He is always a good God, that God is willing to do – if we will pray.
- **We saw that prayer is a partnership with God, like a check requiring a double signature.**
 - **He signs it when it is according to His will.**
 - **We sign it when we pray.**
 - **When both lines are signed, Jesus says it will happen!**
- If, however, we pray selfishly, not according to the will of God, nothing happens.
- If it is according to God's will, but no one prays, nothing happens.

- **But when we pray according to the will of the Father, Jesus said, “It will be done!”**

Therefore, when the personal walls are broken, the first thing to do is PRAY!

But prayer is not all we are to do. Sometimes we need instruction on how to repair the walls.

The second thing we saw in Nehemiah was that the people of Jerusalem, who were dealing with broken wall in their own personal lives were to

2. Seek the Word of the Lord.

Jesus repeated this principle in His earthly ministry and coupled it with a promise.

He said, **“Seek, and you will find!”**

As we explored this admonition and promise we saw that when we need to know how to rebuild the walls, **we are to seek God’s perfect treasure of wisdom and truth from the Holy Scriptures.**

This requires systematic reading of the Word,

Very regular study of the Scriptures in a small group, and

Consistent worship of the Lord coupled with the preaching of the Word of God.

This morning we come to the final step of what to do when our personal walls are broken.

After we pray, after we seek the Word of the Lord, what do we do? We see an example among the citizens of Jerusalem.

As they did when Ezra stood to read the Holy Scriptures, let us stand and give attention to the Word of the Lord.

Nehemiah 9:32–10:29 “Now therefore, our God, The great, the mighty, and awesome God, Who keeps covenant and mercy: Do not let all the trouble seem small before You That has come upon us, ... 33 However You are just in all that has befallen us; For You have dealt faithfully, But we have done wickedly. ... And we are in great distress. 38 “And because of all this, We make a sure covenant and write it; ...29 these joined with their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God’s Law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes:

Now let me add some context to this passage. The walls have been rebuilt and, and the gates that were destroyed by fire have been rehung. Jerusalem as a city is looking whole again.

But the rebuilding of the city walls has been an object lesson before the eyes of the people of Jerusalem and they have become aware of the broken things in their own lives and families. Especially they have been convicted that they have begun to commit the very sins that led God to send both Israel and Judah into captivity. They have started mixing with the other people who live around them who do not believe or follow the Lord their God. They have started adopting some of their customs and adapting to the things of their pagan world.

When Ezra reads the Law of the Lord to them they respond with mourning over their sin and disobedience. They fast and pray. They cloth themselves in sackcloth and pour ashes on their heads to give an open testimony of their repentance.

Then they sought the Word of the Lord, spending large segments of time learning the truths and wisdom of God they had neglected for so long. That they truly sought the Word of the Lord is verified in chapter nine where they recite the history of God's working with them as a people with mighty acts of power and with great faithfulness. Yet their account is honest to remember the sin and rebellion of the nation against the mercy and purpose of God.

What we read is the end of their long recitation of the testimony of their nation, confessing their great sins. **They wanted to rebuild the fallen walls of their personal lives.**

So, they prayed.

They sought the Word of the Lord.

Now we see them taking the final step that leads to lasting success.

They obey. They do what the Word of God says.

They committed themselves

to walk in God's Law, ... and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and His ordinances and His statutes:

As with the other two steps, the Bible repeats this same theme often.

I. WE REBUILD OUR LIVES THROUGH THE SUFFICIENCY OF THE WORD OF GOD.

John 17:17,19b **"Sanctify them by Your truth. Your word is truth.... that they also may be sanctified by the truth."**

A. Not only is the Bible the inerrant Word of God, it is also the sufficient Word of God for all matters pertaining to the spirit and soul.

Sufficiency means that it is enough. If the Bible is sufficient for all matters pertaining to the spirit and the soul, then we do not have to add other methodologies or philosophies to its instructions to live full and complete lives in harmony with God's purposes for us. Look at what the Scripture says to the source of our help.

1. **How can we have our life cleansed of destructive patterns? Psalm 119:9 How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed **according to Your word.****
2. **Where can we receive trustworthy counsel that we know will be right? Psalm 119:24 **Your testimonies** also are my delight And my counselors.**
3. **How can we grow wise in dealing with life's problems and issues? Psalm 119:98-100 98 You, **through Your commandments**, make me wiser than my enemies; For they are ever with me. 99 I have more understanding than all my teachers, For **Your****

testimonies are my meditation. 100 I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts.

4. **How can we penetrate the surface of a problem and get to the heart of the issues we face?** Hebrews 4:12 For **the word of God** is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.
5. **How can I receive complete counsel to grow to be all God wants me to be?**
2 Timothy 3:16-17 16 **All Scripture** is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work.

The answer to every question is "**The Word of God.**" That is because the Bible is sufficient!

- B. The addition of other philosophies, practices, or wisdom beyond Scripture are not only unnecessary, but often counterproductive.**

1 Corinthians 3:19 For the wisdom of this world is foolishness with God. For it is written, "He catches the wise in their own craftiness";

Why would we try to feed from the so-called wise men of the world in place of the wisdom that comes from God? Everything we need to know for living our lives is in the Bible.

- C. Resources beyond the Scriptures are helpful only insofar as they can be used of the Holy Spirit to illumine the Scriptures to the mind of the believer.**

1. This is true in my sermons as well!

- a. My preaching is only helpful to the extent that I encourage you to believe, act upon, and put in practice what God says in His Word. I have nothing of benefit to add. If I go beyond it or in the slightest way contradict it, my word does harm and not good.

We preachers and teachers should use auxiliary material only to illustrate God's truth or to help our people better understand or better apply God's truth. Far too much preaching and teaching today takes the writings and sayings of men and substitutes them for the Word of God. Brothers and sisters, that is a poor substitution. When we do it, we are at best starving our people to death and at worst feeding them poison.

2. This is true of every teacher.

3. This is true of every counselor, professional, or lay.

THE SUFFICIENT, EXHAUSTIVE, CONCLUSIVE, FINAL, COMPLETE TREASURY OF TRUTH AND WISDOM CONCERNING THE SPIRIT AND SOUL IS THE WORD OF GOD.

But hear this next part to see the walls being rebuilt in your own life.

II. WALLS ARE REBUILT BY OBEDIENCE TO THE WORD!

Although we are instructed through the sufficiency of God's Word,

Just knowing what the Bible says on a matter is not enough.

We must obey the truths of the Scripture to our lives.

Let me revisit the same questions and the same answers in the Scripture we just examined to see another dimension. Notice what we must do with the inerrant, all sufficient Word of God.

1. **How can we have our life cleansed of destructive patterns?** Psalm 119:9 **How can a young man cleanse his way? By taking heed according to Your word.**

In other words, we must do what God's Word tells us to do. James says for us to be doers of the Word and not just hearers of the Word. A man cannot cleanse his way of life without the instruction of the Word of God, but just hearing the instruction is not enough. He must hear and do. He must heed the Word!

2. **Where can we receive trustworthy counsel that we know will be right?** Psalm 119:24 **Your testimonies also are my delight And my counselors.**

Sadly, in America, for many years we gave up the field of counseling to the psychotherapists who spout the ever-changing wisdom of the world to people in need. While this is still largely true, there is a resurgence of biblical counseling, because the other has proved either useless or destructive. I thank God we have biblical counselors available to help people in our church and community. But it will only help them as they delight in the counsel of God's Word and do it.

3. **How can we grow wise in dealing with life's problems and issues?** Psalm 119:98-100 **You, through Your commandments, make me wiser than my enemies; For **they are ever with me**. I have more understanding than all my teachers, For Your testimonies are my meditation. I understand more than the ancients, Because I keep Your precepts.**
4. **How can we penetrate the surface and get to the heart of the problems and issues we face in life?** Hebrews 4:12 **For the **word of God** is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and **is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart**.**

To get to the heart of the problem we take the truth to heart and obey the instruction of the Lord.

5. **How can I receive complete counsel to grow to be all God wants me to be?** 2 Timothy 3:16-17 **16 All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, 17 that the man of God may be **complete, thoroughly equipped for every good work**.**

Go up to the verses preceding this one to 2 Timothy 3:14 **But you must continue in the things which you have learned and been assured of, knowing from whom you have learned them,**

Systematically read and study the Bible – continually! Then do it! Obey it!

There have been three big broken walls in my own life across the years.

1. The first was when out of pride, I yielded to the intellectuals so-called, and I began to subscribe to liberalism.
 - Questioning or outright denying the truthfulness of Scripture.
 - Consequently neglecting to preach from certain passages out of disbelief.
 - Being a hypocrite by continuing to be a preacher of a Bible I did not completely believe.
2. The second was my failure in the early years of legalized abortion in our nation to proclaim God's Word on the sanctity of human life.
 - I was never pro-abortion.
 - But I was silent both personally and from the pulpit.
 - I had come to a confidence in the Word of God, but I neglected to apply the Word to what was without question the most pressing moral issue for our nation both then and now.
 - This broken wall continued for several years in my life as I refused to deal with it and address it.
3. The third was that as a Christian for more than forty years and a pastor for more than twenty I was not obedient to the Great Commission or to Acts 1:8 as a witness of my Lord.
 - I was a witness in my Jerusalem, and I made disciples there.
 - I did very little in my Judea.
 - I did less in my Samaria.
 - I did nothing for those at the end of the earth.

Each of these was a broken wall in my life and my ministry. Each creating its own field of rubble for me and for many others in my sphere of influence.

One by one, God helped me see each broken wall as He saw it. Like Nehemiah, my first response was tears followed quickly with prayers of repentance and cries to God to help me rebuild the broken wall. In every case, the three steps illustrated in Nehemiah and taught in the rest of Scripture proved to be the path of victory in my life.

I prayed.

I searched the Scriptures to learn the whole truth and gain the wisdom of God concerning what I needed to do.

Then I did it. In two of the three cases, obeying the Scriptures caused me to stand on a Sunday morning before my church and confess the sin that had caused the wall to crumble in my life and explain what I was doing in obedience to the Lord to rebuild it.

God was gracious as He always is to forgive me. My churches were also gracious to forgive me and by and large to support the biblical correction in my life.

But friend I can tell you. What I have shared with you about the rebuilding of broken walls is not just theory. I have lived it, and it works.

God's way works when we work it.

CONCLUSION:

How long have certain walls been broken in your own personal life?

- It hinders your spiritual well-being and happiness.
- It reminds you of a defeat by the enemy.
- It prevents you from prospering in your Christian life and walk.
- It is a starting point for other destructive things in your life.

It's time to rebuild the walls.

It is time to pray. Call out to God.

It is time to commit yourself to seek the Word of the Lord

- Through systematic reading of the Bible.
- Faithful participation in small group Bible study.
- Regularly worshiping the Lord where the Bible is preached and taught.

It is time to say, what the Scripture says to do, I will do.

The rubble can be cleared away. Broken walls can be rebuilt.