

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - September 22, 2022

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Ten Steps to Spiritual Renewal

Lesson X - Step 10

Title: "Becoming Separate Unto The Lord"

In this lesson we will survey the life and leadership of Nehemiah.

Outline

Being used by God, Nehemiah was allowed to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, and in doing so, it revealed the life and leadership traits for which he is known.

Here is our Outline for this study session.

- I. Three Important Things About Nehemiah
 - A. Nehemiah's Ordination
 - B. Nehemiah's Organization
 - C. Nehemiah's Opposition

- II. Five Important Things About Leadership
 - A. Nehemiah Was a Man of Prayer
 - B. Nehemiah Was a Man of Purpose
 - C. Nehemiah Was a Man of Persuasion
 - D. Nehemiah Was a Man of Perspective
 - E. Nehemiah Was a Man of Persistence

As we conclude our study on Ten Steps to Spiritual Renewal, let's summarize what we have seen in the man Nehemiah and what we can learn from him. First:

Three Important Things About Nehemiah

Leadership always involves three dynamics: ordination, organization, and opposition.

I. Nehemiah's Ordination

A. Before going to Jerusalem, Nehemiah was a cupbearer to the king of Persia in Susa. His own brother, Hanani, came from Jerusalem to Susa and reported to Nehemiah on the state of affairs in Jerusalem.

B. The people were in great distress, the wall around Jerusalem had been knocked down, and the gates had been burned (Nehemiah 1:1-3).

C. Upon hearing the news, Nehemiah "sat down and wept, and mourned certain (many) days." (v 4)

D. He prayed a brokenhearted prayer to God, confessing the sins of his people and asking for favor with the king of Persia (vv 5-11).

E. The king noticed some time later that Nehemiah was downcast (i.e., sad), and inquired why? Nehemiah was actually risking his life in this situation since it was a capital offense to be downcast in the presence of the king. But Nehemiah explained to the king what he had learned about the fate of his city and the Jewish people.

F. God answered Nehemiah's prayer for favor and the king said, "For what dost thou make request?" (Neh. 2:4)

G. By God's grace, Nehemiah was given everything he needed to return to Jerusalem and try to save the city.

H. He was given letters with the king's seal that gave him safe passage to Jerusalem and the right to collect the materials needed to rebuild the wall.

Comment: Prayer is one of the reasons the wall was rebuilt in fifty-two days (Neh. 6:15). Nehemiah's prayer, plea, and plan resulted in the king's permission to go.

II. Nehemiah's Organization

- A. One of the first things Nehemiah did upon arriving in Jerusalem, before revealing his plan to rebuild the walls, was to inspect the destroyed city and gain a perspective on what it would take to accomplish the task (Neh. 2:11-16).
- B. Nehemiah was not impulsive. He was a planner who took things a step at a time. He knew he needed to give God time to help him understand the need and how to meet it.
- C. There is a great danger in arriving in a new situation and beginning to arrange the future before taking time to understand the past and the present. Nehemiah didn't make that mistake.
- D. It would have been easy for Nehemiah to be overwhelmed by what he saw on his tour of the city, to bring back a doom-and-gloom report like the spies that returned to Kadish Barnea from their reconnaissance tour of Canaan. (Num. 13-14)
- E. But his words were simple and purposeful: "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" (Neh. 2:17).
- F. "Then I told them of the hand of 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." (Neh. 2:18)

III. Nehemiah's Opposition

A. Opposition from Without

1. The opposition from outside the Israelite community (4:1-9) came from Tobiah, an Ammonite, and Sanballat, a Samaritan. Both had become influential in the region in the absence of the Israelites and did not welcome Nehemiah's efforts to rebuild the city.
2. They used all kinds of derision and sarcasm among the people to try to make Nehemiah look foolish. Nehemiah prayed that God would deal with them (4:4-5) and he kept on building.
3. When derision didn't work, Sanballat and Tobiah tried to delay the work; they recruited Arabs, Ammonites, and men from Ashdod to help them stir up trouble against Jerusalem (4:7-9)

Comment: Troublemakers against God will always find allies.

4. Nehemiah did the only two things he could do (4:9)
 - a. First, he prayed to God.
 - b. Second, He "set a watch against [the enemies] day and night."
5. When derision and delay didn't work, Nehemiah's enemies turned to deceit (6:14).

Comment: Satan will use every scheme (Eph. 6:11) imaginable to underline our efforts to obey and serve God.

B. Opposition from Within

Point: Some of the strongest opposition to the work of God will often come from the people of God.

1. Nothing is more discouraging to a leader than to have opposition arise from within the ranks of those he is leading, those who should be on board with what God wants to do.
2. Opposition from the world is expected but when God's own people begin to slow down the work, it is heartbreaking to the leader.

A question for your contemplation: Have you ever noticed that it is rarely the people who are working the hardest who voice opposition or dissatisfaction?

It is usually those doing the least amount of work who find reason to complain.

IV. Five Important Things About Leadership

A. Nehemiah Was a Man of Prayer

1. Godly leadership does not exist without prayer.
2. Throughout biblical history as well as church history, God has always used those who were committed to prayer.
3. It is impossible to sustain the vision and weather the vicissitudes of leadership, apart from the strength and guidance received through prayer.
4. Prayer is the common denominator of leadership because godly leadership is **NOT** based on human strength or initiative.
5. Godly leaders are accomplishing God-sized tasks - supernatural and supra-human tasks - and this is possible only in the strength of Almighty God!

6. Throughout the book that bears his name, we find Nehemiah praying - sometimes short prayers, sometimes long prayers, but always praying.

B. Nehemiah was a Man of Purpose

1. Nehemiah knew what he was supposed to do. He was not confused about his mission: rebuild the wall and the gates of Jerusalem to give the people of Israel a sense of security and hope for the future.

C. Nehemiah Was a Man of Persuasion

1. Most leaders are persuasive people - when they look over their shoulders in life, they discover that there are people following them.

Comment: Persuasive doesn't mean salesman. It means helping people clarify a godly purpose, helping them paint a picture of the future, helping them see that it is possible to accomplish something they want to do but didn't think that they could.

2. Nehemiah was that kind of leader. He was able to motivate a group of discouraged people to pick up their tools and weapons and rebuild a city wall under the threat of attacks from within and without.

D. Nehemiah Was a Man of Perspective

1. When Nehemiah heard from his brother how Jerusalem was in ruins, he began to think and deliberate.
2. Three days after arriving in Jerusalem, he went around the city at night, inspecting the broken-down walls, before

announcing his intentions.

3. In both cases he was gaining perspective. He seems to have been the kind of leader who was able to envision how something could be done.
4. The **opposite of perspective is impulsiveness** - Coming upon a need and jumping to a conclusion about what should be done **before** taking the time gain perspective.

Point: A godly Perspective is gained through prayer!

E. Nehemiah Was a Man of Persistence

1. As far as we can determine from the book of Nehemiah, this man was unstoppable.
2. He was single-minded when it came to rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem, and through God's help and guidance, the wall was completed in an amazing 52 days!

Points:

- 1) The key to persistence is the belief that "Faithful is he that calleth you, who also will do it." (1 Thess. 5:24)
- 2) Until **God says** "quit," our task is to continue until the project is completed.

Comments: I truly pray that you have been encouraged from this series of lessons from the book of Nehemiah. I also pray that you have been renewed within your spirit to persevere as you faithfully serve the Lord.

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the biblical passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. All Scriptures have been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"And I sent _____ unto them, saying, I am doing a _____ work, so that I _____ come _____: why should the work _____, whilst I _____ it, and come down to you?"

[Nehemiah 6:3]

"The Lord is on _____; I will not _____: what can _____ do unto me? The Lord taketh my _____ with them that _____ me: therefore shall I see my _____ upon them that _____ me. It is better to _____ in the Lord than to put _____ in man."

[Psalm 118: 6-8]

"Thy _____ is _____ from the beginning: and every one of thy _____ for ever."

[Psalm 119:160]

"EXCEPT the _____ build the _____, they labor in vain that build it; except the Lord keep the city, the watchman _____ but in vain."

[Psalm 127:1]

"The Lord hath done _____ things for us; whereof we are _____. Turn again our _____, O Lord, as the streams in the south. They that _____ in _____ shall _____ in _____."

[Psalm 126:3-5]

"The Lord is _____ from the _____: but he _____ the _____ of the _____."

[Proverbs 15:29]

"Now unto him that is able to do _____ above all that we _____ or _____, according to the _____ that _____ in us, Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus _____ all ages, _____ without _____. Amen"

[Ephesians 3:20-21]

Once again, my prayer is that you have been blessed and I encourage you to remain faithful to the Lord.

Jude 3

Pastor Austin