

Sunday School

Today's leader: Bro. Wil Carmon II

Church School Superintendent: Paul T. Bennett

This Quarter:

Prophets faithful to God's covenants

Today:

Nehemiah: The Captive Cupbearer Rebuilds a Nation (Nehemiah 2:11-20)

Build God's kingdom despite opposition

Recap

- The Leaders that rebuilt Jerusalem after the Babylonians destroyed it
 - Zerubbabel: The Temple
 - Ezra: The Community
 - Nehemiah: **The Walls**
- About 400 years before Jesus's birth

Background & Context

- Nehemiah

- Jewish leader in exile (barred from his native country)
- Cupbearer: High-ranking official to Persian King
- Nehemiah learned that the walls of Jerusalem were in ruin
 - Walls were important to avoid invasion & being conquered (Provides security, peace, ...)
 - This issue stirred his heart
- He prayed, then started planning for rebuilding (Nehemiah 1:4)
- Asked King for permission & resources to rebuild (Nehemiah 2:2)



Lesson Text: Nehemiah 2:11-20 (NIV)

Wall Inspection

11. I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days

12. I set out during the night with a few others.

I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem.

There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

Lesson Text: Nehemiah 2:11-20 (NIV) - *continued*

13. By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire.

14. Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through;

15. so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall.

Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate.

16. The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

Lesson Text: Nehemiah 2:11-20 (NIV) - *continued*

17. Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.”

18. I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

Lesson Text: Nehemiah 2:11-20 (NIV) - *continued*

19. But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. “What is this you are doing?” they asked. “Are you rebelling against the king?”

20. I answered them by saying, “The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it.”

Commentary: 2 Main Points

1. **Be you!**
2. **Keep building despite adversity**

Be you: Build what He puts on your heart

- We all have gifts
- Different things will stir your soul (News, disturbing situations, ...)
- For Nehemiah, restoring the wall was on his heart (Nehemiah 2:12)
- covid: many things are broken
 - Many opportunities to rebuild things, differently
- Modern examples of kingdom building:
 - Standing up for those with no voice (Proverbs 31:8-9)
 - Feeding the hungry (Matthew 25:35)
 - Being patient with others (Ephesians 4:2, Galatians 5:22-23)
 - Spending time with people who need you (1 Thessalonians 5:11, Hebrews 10:25)

Be you: Building might look different for you

- All 3 Prophets we studied built up the kingdom in different ways
 - Zerubbabel: Temple, Ezra: Community, Nehemiah: Walls
- Different people have different skills
 - In Nehemiah 3 & 4, we see a range of roles that helped build the wall, all important
 - Some even served as building security (Nehemiah 4:13)

Be you: Start building wherever you are

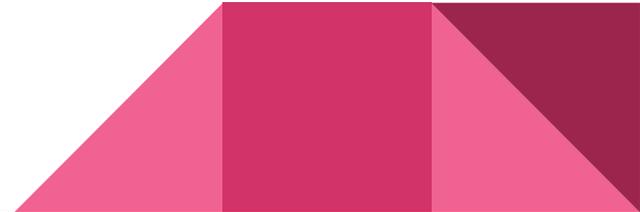
- You are *where you are* for a reason
- Nehemiah started building *where he was* (in exile), diligently building a good life
- Nehemiah spent years building his reputation & relationships long before he built the wall
 - Being Cupbearer requires years of preparation & study
 - Developing the trust of the king takes time
 - Cupbearer is a dangerous job, if done poorly
 - You can be poisoned, Oversee the food pipeline
 - Trained in etiquette & dealing with royalty
- God will open the right doors for you to build in the right places (Revelation 3:8)
 - Pray, God will make your next step clear

Keep building despite adversity

- Nehemiah dealt with 3 racists (Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem) (Nehemiah 2:10, 2:18-20)
- Don't let your haters (naysayers) stop you (John 16:33, Romans 8:28)
 - Opposition increases thru Nehemiah 4
 - They even try to kill Nehemiah a few times
 - We too have enemies too
- Even Jesus faced a lot of opposition
 - The Pharisees, Sadducees, Judas, death on the cross, ...
 - We should expect opposition
- Don't fear large problems
 - All problems look smaller when your focus is on God (Colossians 3:2)
 - Ask boldly for whatever you need to do God's work (James 1:5-8, Matthew 6:33)
 - God answered Nehemiah's requests for resources & travel papers from the King (2:7-9)

Recap: Life application questions

- Be You:
 - What's on your heart to build/rebuild?
 - What gifts have you noticed in yourself?
- Press thru Adversity:
 - How do you react to opposition?



Parts I wrestled with

- Nehemiah's story ends similar to Ezra's
 - He made progress, but the people strayed from the Scriptures
- Nehemiah goes on a *rampage* in 13:23-28
 - Beating people, pulling out their hair, ...
 - I think both were frustrated because they couldn't repair the **heart**
 - We need the Holy Spirit to upgrade our hearts

Church School Creed & Benediction

Creed:

Our Church School must grow & grow

And we must help to make it so

Every member a Christian

Every Christian a worker

Every worker trained

A worker that will not be ashamed

This we ask in Jesus' name

Amen

Benediction:

We have come

We have studied

We have learned

So until our next coming together

To study God's word

May His rich blessings reside with you

And may His Grace be eternally yours

Amen