

**Building For the Lord**  
*Nehemiah 2:17-20*

**I. Take a moment to refresh your memory on Nehemiah:**

- A. Nehemiah was of that generation of Jews who had been born into the Persian empire. While many made the journey back to Israel, there were many who stayed: Nehemiah would have been the son of one of these:
- B. He held a position of some importance, being the cupbearer to the King Artaxerxes, (1:11), and we being his story some 13 years after this same King gave permission for Ezra to return to the land of the Jews:
- C. In the opening verses of the book, Nehemiah is visited by one of his brothers, as well as some men who've come from Judah, presenting Nehemiah with the opportunity to inquire about his fellow Jews back in the homeland: (1:1-3)
- D. What he is told is a very troubling picture! **(1:3)**
- E. And so, in the remainder of the 1st chapter, Nehemiah prays that God will be with him as he petitions the King to return and rebuild the city of Jerusalem (2:5)
- F. When He gets there the situation is perhaps more than he had imagined: **(2:17)**

**II. The beloved city of his fathers is still in ruins!**

- A. The city that he had grown up hearing stories about lay mostly in ruins.
- B. Almost an entire century had passed since the initial return from captivity: to say that there were motivational issues hardly begins to cover it!
- C. And so, Nehemiah rallies the people to rise up, and rebuild the wall of the city **(2:18)**
- D. In spite of many problems, they will even finish ahead of schedule! **(2:19)**

**III. Often, the most associated subject of Nehemiah is good leadership**

- A. Certainly Nehemiah was a great leader! But there is much more to learn that a pattern of good leadership
- B. In addition to seeing his skills, what we have left in the book is an example of an entire group of God's people working together through adversity and trials to accomplish the greater good!
- C. What an incredible asset this is for God's people today as we seek to work together to build the Church!

D. What were the traits that were instrumental in the building and rebuilding they did for the Lord?

### **I. The People Were Willing to Work**

a. **Again, the fact** that Nehemiah was a great leader is readily apparent in the text:

i. While God's hand was certainly at work in favor of His servant, Nehemiah was able to persuade the King to let him go and rebuild:

1. Not an easy task: the Jew's had a certain reputation: But Nehemiah not only was able to go and build, but he was provided with an escort and given the resources of the King's forest:

ii. He would demonstrate stability and fearlessness throughout his time in Judah, never wavering in his devotion to the people or the cause:

iii. Most importantly, he was faithful to God, constantly turning to Him in prayer:

1. BUT, all of these skills would have been wasted if he had no one to lead!

a. But that wasn't the case: the text tells us that this people ***had a mind to work***: **2:18, 4:6**

b. ***There isn't much*** that even good leaders can do if people aren't willing to work! (*Illus. of Rotting Crops in Fields*)

i. This principle applies to any organization:

1. Local companies, schools, government, etc.

2. No matter how big/small, or their influence:

ii. But this is especially true of the Church, God's people:

1. Recall what Paul said must happen for the Church to Grow as God intended:

**Eph. 4:4-16**

2. Throughout the New Testament, there are references to the work getting done, *because everyone made up their minds to do it*

a. The relief of the Saints in Jerusalem was accomplished through this sort of mentality: **Acts 11:27-29**

b. The spread of the Gospel in the face of persecution: *Acts 8:3-4*

c. Accomplishments are not accidental or without effort! Getting the work done is a group effort!

**c. *Having a mind*** set for work means having a mind that doesn't have room for other attitudes:

- i. A mind set on work is too mentally involved in the task at hand to engage in petty strife or criticism of other workers
- ii. Is too absorbed in getting things done to grow discouraged when others fail in the above
- iii. Is too involved in helping others accomplish work to fall into selfishness
- iv. Having a mind set to work excludes anything that would hinder the work!

## **2. The balanced their approach to the work:**

a. ***Their situation*** called for them to mix their weapons with their work: **4:9-17**

- i. Think about what would have happened in their situation if they had excluded either one of these:
  1. All attention placed on weapons and no work would have left the wall in ruins
  2. All attention placed on the work and none on weapons would have made the work impossible:

**b. *Can we see*** the application for God's people today? Churches are not built up by either weapons or work alone:

- i. For a church to grow, it takes a lot of planting, watering, teaching, exhorting: What we could call the work!
  1. *preach the word; be ready in season and out of season; reprove, rebuke, exhort, with great patience and instruction. For the time will come when they will not endure sound doctrine; but wanting to have their ears tickled, they will accumulate for themselves teachers in accordance to their own desires, and will turn away their ears from the truth and will turn aside to myths.* 2 Tim. 4:2-4
  2. *I planted, Apollos watered, but God was causing the growth.* 1 Cor. 3:6
- ii. But for a church to grow, it also takes a lot of contending for the faith!
  1. *Jude 3: Contend Earnestly for the faith! -- No Half-hearted efforts*
  2. *Gal 2:4-5: Not willing to yield even for a moment, to preserve the precious Gospel: No room for compromises in truth*
  3. An example later on in v 11-14 w/Cephas

- c. While it may seem that these passages fall only on those in positions of teaching and preaching, these are exhortations to every Christian: Each one of us has a responsibility to both build and defend the church: hand in hand!

### **3. They were not distracted by hindrances:**

- a. They faced ridicule and mockery from their enemies: many people didn't want this to happen! **Neh. 4:1-3**
  - i. Christians have always faced ridicule: from the world, and sometimes from other Christians!
- b. Unhindered by open threats of attack! (4:7-8) But they fortified themselves and kept working
  - i. The church will always be under attack, both from physical forces (maybe laws) and by spiritual (false doctrines)
- c. Their were those who sought to undermine them with gossip and slander 6:1-9, and it was discouraging **v9**
- d. But throughout, the were unhindered because they believed in the work that they were doing: **6:3**
  - i. Do you believe in the work that you are doing?

### **4. They took their responsibility seriously:**

- a. The text describes the people as each standing in their place: **8:7-8** The trumpeter of Ch. 4, the people in ch. 8 who stood in place for the reading of the law, or those who stayed in their place while building:
- b. Churches will be built up by every member standing in their place:
  - i. Leaders will be aware of their responsibilities and stand in them
  - ii. Those being led will find and stand in theirs
  - iii. When this is done, the whole body will be build up

### **Conclusion:**

- We have been given the greatest work we could ever be involved in: Building God's house
- Lets each follow the example of those who rebuild the walls of Jerusalem!