The Rebuilt Life
Studies in Nehemiah

Session 3 – Rebuilding the Wall | Nehemiah Chapter 3–4

Rebuilding the wall, after years of neglect, was no small feat. There was debris to clear. Decisions to make on what could be salvaged and repurposed. Teams to organize and work together. Heavy lifting. Long hours. Short tempers. Just to name a few of the hurdles that Nehemiah and his crew needed to clear in their own camp. All this while being harassed and threatened by their enemies.

Goals for this Session:

- Discover what Nehemiah can teach us about building and battling.
- Consider the ripple effect that one person's faith and obedience can have.
- Pray honest prayers that spark faith, harness hope, and inspire a call to action.

Ice Breaker

When the credits roll at the end of a movie, do you usually head for the exit right away or do you stay and read them? What might motivate someone to sit through reading a long list of names?

Working Together

Nehemiah 3:1–32
Nehemiah records names of builders and where they worked on the wall. No one went unnoticed or overlooked.

1. Skim this chapter and circle the phrase, *"next to them"* or "*after him"* every time you read it. The words in your Bible translation may vary, but you get the idea. What does this indicate about . . .

   a. The value of each person's participation in the work?

   b. What motivated them to work on the wall?

   c. Did everyone participate? Why or why not?

2. From the descriptions of the workers, notice the variety of backgrounds and skill sets. These weren't professional builders. They weren't all locals either. Volunteers came from all around to build the wall. In what way is serving the Lord more about *availability* than ability? Share your thoughts.

3. The Hebrew word for *repair* is used 35 times in this chapter. It conveys the idea of building, strengthening, and supporting. How does this apply to the work that we, as the church, are called to do? Consider what the following verses say and answer in your own words.

   Romans 12:4–5

   Ephesians 4:15–16

   Philippians 2:3–4

   Colossians 3:16

   Hebrews 10:23–25

4. More than fifty-thousand people lived in and around Jerusalem when Nehemiah arrived. He came with a God-inspired vision and a plan, but the work was bigger than one man. It took many to make it happen.

   God used Nehemiah, a man of conviction and faith, as a catalyst to start the work, but there was a part for every person who was willing to participate.

   a. Are you currently engaged in doing something for the Lord that requires teamwork? In what way?

   b. Who and/or what inspired you to pitch in and help?

   c. What do you find most rewarding? Most challenging?

Awaken
By Lawrence Tribble

One man awake, awakens another.
The second one wakes his
next-door brother.
Three awake can rouse a town
by turning the whole place
upside-down.
Many awake can cause such a fuss
it finally awakes the rest of us.
One man awakes
with dawn in his eyes,
Surely then it multiplies.

Written in the 1740s, inspired by the preaching of George Whitfield and the spiritual movement known as The Great Awakening.

Memory Verse
As you memorize this verse, make it part of your prayers every day. Ask the Holy Spirit to work it into your heart and mind.

"Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged,
for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."
Joshua 1:9 NIV

Think About It . . .

The greater the project, the more chance there is for frustrations. Any number of things can slow or divert progress. Equipment breaks down, supplies run short, miscommunications happen, and steps need to be repeated. Critics will complain and disgruntled neighbors may threaten to shut you down. By God's grace, we are all works in progress. Where are you most in need of strength and courage today?

Overcoming Obstacles

Nehemiah 4:1–23
Rebuilding the wall was a good work, and it was hard work. While Nehemiah and his team made progress, the opposition increased.

1. In each section, explain what sort of opposition they faced and how Nehemiah dealt with it.

   Verses 1–9
   The opposition:

   Nehemiah's response:

   Verses 10–14
   The opposition:

   Nehemiah's response:

   Verses 15–23
   The opposition:

   Nehemiah's response:

2. How would you describe the tone of Nehemiah's prayer in vss. 4–5?

   a. The enemy's attempts to circumvent the work and demoralize the workers were appalling to Nehemiah. In some ways, his prayer echoes the lament of Psalm 79:4, 6, and 12 (written after Babylon destroyed Jerusalem). These were not benign neighbors, simply being difficult to get along with. By opposing the work, Sanballat and his cronies were showing themselves to be enemies of God. Was Nehemiah's prayer appropriate, given the situation? In what way? Consider the following verses in your answer.

      Psalm 4:3–5

      Deuteronomy 32:35

      Romans 12:17–19

Good to Know

Nehemiah contended with three specific enemies: Sanballat, governor of Samaria to the north; Tobiah, who controlled Ammonite territory to the east; and Geshem the Arab (Nehemiah 2:19) who ruled to the south. These powerful men deeply resented the Jews. Generations earlier, their ancestors were displaced when God gave the Promised Land to Israel (see Deuteronomy 7:1–6).

Ashdod's territory was due west, along the Mediterranean Sea. When they joined forces with Sanballat and his allies, Jerusalem was surrounded by enemies on all sides.

3. Nehemiah's response to opposition was just what the people needed to see in their leader. It's no secret that our adversary, the devil, tries to obstruct and sabotage the work God wants to do in and through us. Nehemiah's example gives us a pattern to follow. Give some thought to each point and briefly explain why it is essential for overcoming obstacles.

   a. **Pray**. Nehemiah prayed first, and he prayed frequently.

   b. **Stay focused**. Eyes up! Our courage and strength comes in knowing who fights our battles.

   c. **Resolved and ready**. Have a plan and follow through. Pay attention and be ready to adapt.

4. Nehemiah led by example. He didn't ask anyone to do what he was unwilling to do himself. Do you know someone who has been a Nehemiah for you? In what way?

   How might you be a Nehemiah for someone, in your family, your church, your workplace?

Gospel at a Glance: Retribution for Sin | While Nehemiah's prayer seems harsh, it reminds us that God is angry toward wickedness every day (Psalm 7:11) and will not let sin go unpunished. In Romans 2:5–9, Paul warns that those who refuse to turn from sin are storing up wrath for themselves when God's righteous judgment will be revealed (see 2 Thessalonians 1:7–9). Retribution for sin is part of the gospel that we dare not leave out. The wages of sin is death (the bad news) but God sent His Son, Jesus Christ, to save us from the punishment we deserve. Every person who believes in Jesus, who loved us, and washed us from our sins in His own precious blood, receives forgiveness now, and the free gift of life forever with Him.

Adoration **C**onfession **T**hankfulness **S**upplication

"Pray in the Spirit on all occasions with all kinds of prayers and requests. With this in mind, be alert and always keep on praying for all the Lord's people." Ephesians 6:18 NIV

God sparked Nehemiah to pray and take action. Others joined in and the work began. With God's blessing, power, and protection, the wall was rebuilt. In each session, we will take time to pray—for others and for ourselves, for our church, our communities, and our nation.

As a focus for prayer, you can use the memory verse, another scripture, or simply what the Lord has impressed on you from the chapter. No need to be profound or elaborate, just authentic.

Record your simple prayer, including each element here.

A _____

C _____

T _____

S _____

Group Prayer Requests

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