

Title: Implementing God's Vision for the People

Passage: Nehemiah 2:9-3:32

Key Truths:

- God uses ordinary people to do miraculous things. God uses your ordinary job done with the right motives to do extraordinary things for His kingdom.
- Everything and anything good in our lives is from God. God is good and gracious.
- While God is in the business of building up, Satan is in the business of tearing down and continuing the enslavement of sinful people.
- God's calling for us is to expand and build His kingdom by making disciples to the lost world. Let's rise up, come together, and build's God's kingdom.
- There is nothing about us. If it is, we are doomed and all work is futile. The only way forward is to point how great is our God (not how great we are)
- God cares about ordinary people who do ordinary jobs for His glory. God knows when you're serving and what you're doing. If other people don't know, God knows and cares. God will reward you for your faithfulness. Any good done for the glory of God is sacred.
- What makes life meaningful is not just what we are doing but for Whom we are doing it for. We serve the Lord Jesus Christ and follow His example.
- Don't only bring your bib to be fed but also bring your apron to serve.

Possible Discussion Questions:

- What point(s) in the sermon did the Lord most impress upon you?
 - What next steps will you take in response to the sermon?
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EXPOSITION

Context of Passage

Book of Nehemiah

- written about 450BC (2,500 years ago)

Nehemiah

- A Jew who was born in exile in the country of Persia
- Previously, Israelites were taken in captivity by Babylonians.

- He rose to the position as cupbearer to the king (one who checks all food given to the king)
- On hearing about the discouraging news of the state of Jerusalem, he goes to God in prayer and in fasting for 3 months. He develops a plan for Jerusalem.
- On a certain day, he appears sad before the king's presence, which was very risky as could have been killed for it.
- God granted a miracle such that the king was compassionate in his response.
- Nehemiah asks boldly for leave from service (took 5 years), armed guards, and blank check of supplies.
 - Incredulous as Nehemiah was merely a servant (not of the king's family or royalty)
 - God uses ordinary people to do miraculous things.

Luke 18:27

But he said, "What is impossible with man is possible with God."

James 1:17a

Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, coming down from the Father of lights,

- everything and anything good in our lives is from God. God is good and gracious.

Nehemiah 2:8b

And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Nehemiah 2:9-10

Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel.

- Where God acts, Satan reacts.
 - Opposition arises

Sanballat the Horonite

- Sanballot = to moon god gives life
 - Parents worshiped the moon as a god.

Tobiah the Ammonite servant

- Tobias = Yahweh is good
 - Likely a Jew but who grew up to be a servant to the regional leader

- He turned his allegiance away from God though his name reflected a history with God.
- He threw away his heritage with God and instead threw themselves into the world.

Meaning

- While God is in the business of building up, Satan is in the business of tearing down and continuing the enslavement of sinful people.

Application:

- We must be diligent to eliminate gossip and diversion and dissension but rather build unity in Christ.
- Someone asked: Do you have any enemies? When answer was “yes”, the reply was: “Good, that means you are standing up for something.”
 - What are you standing up for?

Nehemiah 2:11-16

So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with me but the one on which I rode. I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass. Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work.

Leadership Lessons:

- Pray and fast.
- Get informed.
 - Collect all the relevant data.
 - Always check your sources.
 - Take your time to gather.
 - Don't react but be thoughtful.
- Conceptualize a plan.
 - With wise counsel.

- Implement the plan.
 - Trace God's leading towards action.

Nehemiah 2:17-18a

Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me.

- Nehemiah gathered all the Israelites and shared testimony of what God has done and showed favor on his efforts thus way.
- It is good to remember what God has done already. He is good and gracious.
- Nothing of us does good happen but it is only God working through and around His people.

Nehemiah 18b

And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work.

- The people's response.
- God's calling for us is to expand and build His kingdom by making disciples to the lost world.
- Let's rise up, come together, and build's God's kingdom.
- Good work = doing work for God's glory.
 - God uses your ordinary job done with the right motives to do extraordinary things for His kingdom.

Nehemiah 2:19

But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?"

- Opposition and ridicule will arise contrary to God's work.

Nehemiah 2:20

Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem."

- There is nothing about us. If it is, we are doomed and all work is futile. The only way forward is to point how great is our God (not how great we are)

Nehemiah 3:1-12...

Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel. And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them Meremoth the son of Uriah, son of Hakkoz repaired. And next to them Meshullam the son of Berechiah, son of Meshezabel repaired. And next to them Zadok the son of Baana repaired. And next to them the Tekoites repaired, but their nobles would not stoop to serve their Lord.

Joiada the son of Paseah and Meshullam the son of Besodeiah repaired the Gate of Yeshanah. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, the seat of the governor of the province Beyond the River. Next to them Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, goldsmiths, repaired. Next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, repaired, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. Next to them Rephaiah the son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired. Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph repaired opposite his house. And next to him Hattush the son of Hashabneiah repaired. Malchijah the son of Harim and Hasshub the son of Pahath-moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. Next to him Shallum the son of Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired, he and his daughters.

- Description of various people who arose to help rebuild the gates of Jerusalem.

2 Timothy 3:16

All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness,

Why Nehemiah 3? 40 names of different people of unknown background.

- God cares about ordinary people who do ordinary jobs for His glory. God knows when you're serving and what you're doing. If other people don't know, God knows and cares.

- God cares and is with you wherever you are even as you do the same mundane things day to day. If doing it for the right reasons for the right motives, God cares.
- God will reward you for your faithfulness. Any good done for the glory of God is sacred.
- Note: Jesus spent much of his early life in the home of a carpenter. He spent a long time doing an "ordinary" life.
- Note: The story of Acts. Miracles happened but they didn't happen every day or even every year or all at the same place.
- What makes life meaningful is not just what we are doing but for Whom we are doing it for. We serve the Lord Jesus Christ and follow His example.

Why Nehemiah 3? Many had different jobs and roles.

- We need each other.
- We each have different talents and abilities and all are important to build God's kingdom.

Romans 12:4-6a

For as in one body we have many members, and the members do not all have the same function, so we, though many, are one body in Christ, and individually members one of another. Having gifts that differ according to the grace given to us, let us use them

- Don't only bring your bib to be fed but also bring your apron to serve.

Note: Nehemiah is not mentioned.

- It is not about any individual but is about Christ.

Applications

Nehemiah environment:

the local/regional government was in decline and the culture was a disaster.

- But there was a remnant that still loved God. Ordinary people. God blessed their devotion and effort.
 - Later great revival occurred among the people.
- God will reward you for every good work done for His glory. Don't ever lose heart or hope. God knows what you are going through.
- God knows and He cares.

1 Corinthians 3:12-14

Now if anyone builds on the foundation with gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay, straw— each one's work will become manifest, for the Day will disclose it, because it will be revealed by fire, and the fire will test what sort of work each one has done. If the work that anyone has built on the foundation survives, he will receive a reward.

Revelation 20:11-12

Then I saw a great white throne and Him who was seated on it. From His presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them. And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the Book of Life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.