

Nehemiah

Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.

Date: 24 October 2021

[0:00] If you go to the book of Nehemiah, two books before Psalms, the book of Nehemiah, looking at God's builder Nehemiah. Now, so we're going to take some snapshots, if you like, through Nehemiah and have a look at Nehemiah's photo album, if you like.

Some different snapshots because there's just so much there, but we're just going to pick out some of the highlights of Nehemiah's life and what we can learn from that. So Nehemiah, his name means God has comforted. God has comforted.

Now, firstly, we go to scene number one, if you like, in the photo album of Nehemiah is found in the royal palace. And here we have Nehemiah chapter one and verse three.

It tells here how Nehemiah is in this royal position. He's in the royal palace. He's got a cushy job, if you like, a life of luxury, but he suddenly receives this alarming report about the condition of Jerusalem.

His beloved city, Jerusalem, is ruined and troubled. And we go to Nehemiah chapter one, verse three, where it reads, And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach.

[1:15] The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down and the gates thereof are burnt with fire. So it was a mess. It was a reproach. It was a disgrace. And Nehemiah heard how his beloved city was in ruins.

He'd heard, hear how the walls were broken down and it shook him up. And what did he do? He wept. The walls of the holy city were broken down.

Its gates, which meant its protection, lay burnt by fire. And friends, we think of our world. It's in a mess, isn't it? Our world needs God, our nation.

It's desperate. It's a disgrace. It's a reproach. Nehemiah hears about Jerusalem. It was 1,000 miles away. And it had been some numbers of years that they could have started rebuilding, but they hadn't.

It was a reproach. No one was motivated to do anything about it. And Nehemiah could have said, well, who's going to fix this? Who's going to do something? And he started to realise that God was putting it on his heart.

[2:24] Nehemiah had an open heart to others' needs. He had compassion. When he heard about Jerusalem's disgrace and reproach, he wept. He was moved. He was touched.

He grieved about the danger and trouble that they faced there in Jerusalem. With the walls broken down, which meant their protection, and the gates, it was open to enemy attack.

Because having a wall meant a couple of, well, three things you could say. It meant protection. The wall surrounded the city and kept it safe from its enemies. So it meant protection. Secondly, the walls brought peace.

There was peace there, as there was security. And thirdly, it was a post. A post for the watchmen. In Isaiah 62, verse 6, it reads, I have set watchmen upon thy walls, O Jerusalem.

So it was protection, peace, and a post for the watchmen. So this city, this fair city, was in big trouble. This great reproach was upon Jerusalem.

[3:24] And we could think of our fair city, of Adelaide, of north and south, the whole lot, the whole state, the whole country, really. It's a disgrace, isn't it? It's in a mess. There's a reproach.

People are concerned about many things. There's a lack of hope. And our society's protection is under threat too. Our peace, as we hear, I've heard talks of possible invasions.

You know, it's conceivable that anything could happen. But mostly, spiritually, we could consider that our city is in a reproach.

There's distress. There's affliction. And great affliction. And we think there's few watchmen too to guard over it. There's few that like churches to this godly church and other churches. We're few in number. Really, there should be multiplied more such churches in Adelaide. But there's few watchmen to guard over this city, if you like, this city of Adelaide. What was the city of churches?

[4:23] And we see lives are broken. People are distressed. Families are crumbling all around us. Even within churches, there's turmoil and trouble. And it's affecting all of us.

And so Nehemiah was touched when he heard. He heard the report and he got a burden. He got a concern. How can we learn from that? Maybe we could consider what action ought we to take in our city.

And what burden, what concern ought we to have. And what action should that lead to for us? So what did Nehemiah do? Note firstly here, Nehemiah prayed.

He prayed. And he fasted. Nehemiah 1 verse 4 at the news. His response was, it says, And it came to pass when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept and mourned certain days and fasted and prayed.

He wept, mourned, fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Nehemiah fasted and prayed. You know, fasting isn't something we often do.

[5:28] We like our lunches when we're allowed to have them. But we don't always have too much fasting, do we? Let's be honest. But we ought to. We ought to be moved like Nehemiah was. When he heard of the problems, he faced the danger in prayer.

And what's more, he actually faced the danger of asking the king to let him go. Here he was, the king's cup bearer. He had this cushy role, this privileged position, this trusted role.

And now he was faced with the situation as God moved on him to take some action and to see if he could go there and do something. Because his question was, who's got to go and do something?

And he realised it was the man in his shoes that had to take some action. So here he was. Verse 10, we see that he gave God the glory. He gave God the glory as he prayed.

Thy servants, thy people, thou hast redeemed. Thy great power, thy strong hand. So his prayer was very much focused on God's moving, on God's doing, on God's work.

[6:32] And that's what he was called to be a part of. And then it reads verse 11 as we're kind of skipping through a few verses. But feel free to read in between as we touch through. But Nehemiah chapter 1 verse 11, as he prayed, he says this.

O Lord, I beseech thee. Let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name and prosper.

I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man, for I was the king's cup bearer. So here he was as he's praying, as he's giving God the glory.

It says he wept, he mourned, he fasted, and he prayed. And as he prayed, Nehemiah was stirred up to take action. Notice it was prayerful action. Now sometimes we can take action, but we miss the prayer part.

It's good to have the prayer, then the action. Amen. And Nehemiah took prayerful action. And he was willing to sacrifice comfort. When God moves on us, sometimes we've got to move out of the comfort zone and move into a danger zone.

[7:43] Take a risk. It meant a death penalty for Nehemiah to approach the king with a sad countenance. Nehemiah risked his life when he did this.

So ask the king for help. But the king did. Give him favour. Praise God. The king sent Nehemiah on to Jerusalem with his blessing. So we've seen the first page, if you like, of Nehemiah's photo album was in the royal palace.

Now we're going to a second scene. In the rubble, from the royal palace to the rubble. And God's builder here, Nehemiah, he went to the very ruins of Jerusalem, to that ruins site, that ruined city that would become a construction zone.

And he went by night and surveyed the city and he took stock of the situation to get a feel for what was going on to assess the need.

And Nehemiah chapter 2 verse 12, it says of Nehemiah, We're in Nehemiah chapter 2, and that's verse 12.

[8:58] So Nehemiah, he went, a few men with him, and he didn't tell anyone what God had put on his heart to do. Now that's another significant, noteworthy point there, what God had put on his heart to do.

We can have things that ourself can put on our heart to do, but we need to know what God puts on our heart to do. So God burdened his heart, and the Lord gave Nehemiah direction and vision. God put on his heart what to do. God put on his heart to go and take a look. God put on his heart to assess the damage. And God put on his heart to urge the people to action. Next we see God's people got busy.

Nehemiah chapter 2 verse 17. Chapter 2 verse 17.

Strengthened their hands for this good work. Nehemiah pointed out the distress, the waste, the burnt city.

[10:22] He urged them, come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more reproach. And they said, let us rise up and build. He kind of sparked that reaction in them.

He said, let us rise up and build. And they said, yes, we will. Let us rise up and build. And so they strengthened their hands for this good work. Notice God's hand was on him. It says verse 18.

The hand of my God was good upon me. God's hand was upon him. God put something in his heart to do. And God's hand was upon him. And so he shared the burden.

He encouraged the others. He rallied the people. And to get active and to get involved. And they did. What a blessing to be stirred up to action.

That, you know, sometimes you have the pastor, the preacher to exhort and encourage. And then he just lights the spark really, doesn't he?

[11:20] And then the whole congregation says, yes, we will. Yes, we will. It's not. I was reflecting, especially lately, about the book of Nehemiah.

It's actually not just Nehemiah. It's the people. We see that through the book. That Nehemiah just sparked the start of it. He was the motivator.

The initiator under God. And then the whole people started to get set on fire with that same vision, that same zeal. And so it says, they said, let us rise up and build.

So everyone started to get that same vision of the man of God. Everyone pitched in to get the work done. And we read there, even the ruler of half of Jerusalem got his hands dirty, if you like.

Chapter 3, verse 9. You imagine the mayor of the city, as it were, someone who's a bit noteworthy, would actually get in there with the shovel and the mortarboard and everything and start building.

[12:21] Imagine the mayor of the city building, picking up the shovel and helping out the road gang. Everyone got activated from the highest to the lowest and in between.

And in Chapter 3, we see that there was 41 teams here. And 41 teams of people, and they all had different assignments on the wall. They all had different assignments to work on, on the wall.

And it says there in Chapter 3, you note the phrase, and next to them, and next to them. It's mentioned 25 times in Chapter 3.

So when God moves us as a congregation, as an assembly of his people, when we see there's a need and we get touched and we get burdened and we take heed of the word of God, we can be motivated to get together, to work together.

The Holy Spirit joins us together. That's why church is important, isn't it? That's why the assembly of God's people were a united effort, were a team under God, working together under God's Spirit.

[13:31] And so they worked next to them, next to them, next to them. It was a huge devoted effort of a multiplied number of people. And Chapter 4, verse 13, it says, Notice they worked together in families.

Now God's interested in families. God blesses families, the family unit. And it says that they worked after their families. And they had swords, spears and bows there, Chapter 4, verse 13.

So notice every one of them played their part. This was a joint effort. That's what church is meant to be, isn't it? That's what we ought to be. That's what we need to be, scripturally. That, you know, God's blessed this church with a pastor and a devoted pastor.

But it's not all about the Nehemiah. The Nehemiah is the one who's getting you to get on with it, to get involved with it, to be a part of that joint effort. You know, he's the one who takes the lead and maybe lights the spark.

But you're the ones that have to get behind the man of God. And that's what the church is meant to be, constructive and a united effort. So we see they worked in families. God blesses families.

[14:43] You know, godly families. Praise God for that. It's good to see a godly family. Different godly families here represent it. That God can work through the families. It's a blessed thing to see. And that's what the church is meant for.

The building site became also a battlefield. These were testing times. These were fighters, armed men, working with the sword and trowel.

You know, they were working there in constant, under constant attack. And over 52 days, this was a relentless campaign. It was a construction site, a building site, but also a battlefield.

So here they were under constant attack. They had to keep watch, keep alert. And they had to always be armed as well. It says there that each took his weapon.

Every one of us needs to be part of that spiritual battle, that spiritual warfare. But we notice that some did not share equally in the effort. Nehemiah chapter 3 verse 5.

[15:44] And it says, And next unto them the Tekalites repaired, but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord. Let us not be like them. The nobles of the Tekalites, they put not their necks to the work of their Lord.

What a shame. What a reproach. You know, there's a great number of families, of individuals listed there. And God blessed that united effort. But there were some that just didn't cut it.

They just didn't put that, they didn't put their necks into it. They just kind of just a bit slack, a little sloppy. Let's not be like them. Imagine if it was a wall and there was a brick missing.

It would be a lacking thing, wouldn't it? And that's the same in the church where, you know, people are putting the effort in, but some just maybe just are like the nobles of the Tekalites.

They're just not putting their necks to the work of the Lord. You know, it's a shame to be such. Let's not be such. Amen. So it would have been a fundamental weakness to have a wall with a brick missing or maybe just not put in as strongly as it ought to have been.

[16:52] And it wasn't easy down in the rubble. Some did not work as hard as they could. But we do notice that they did work.

And it was a work that was shared. It was a work that was a combined effort. And it says men and women there. It speaks of women amongst those working. So it's the whole effort of the church, men and women, young and old, noble and not so noble, short and tall.

Everyone had a part to play. It's almost like I kind of think of it how there's a part of the wall with your name on it. You know, you see when they make something these days. I saw lately a pathway and it had someone's name stamped on the pavers.

Because it's almost like that in this wall of Jerusalem that, hey, that's Jeremy's part of the wall.

That's Talitha's part of the wall. You know, that's Sarah's part of the wall.

There's different parts of the wall. And they built the part of the wall that was their part, if you like.

And it's like that in the church, isn't it? We've all got a part to play. We've got an instrument to play, a role to play.

[18:03] There's lots of people getting involved in the service, which is a blessing to see this morning. But we've all got a part to play in the church, in the building of the work of God. So let's not be as those that didn't work as hard as they could.

They didn't put the full effort in. But thank God that God's people got involved. And God's people braved opposition. We see that in chapter 4, verses 1 through 3.

But it came to pass that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria and said, What do these feeble Jews?

Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burnt? Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him.

And he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. They were just having a real laugh at the people of God here, mocking them feeble.

[19:03] Are they going to do this? Are they going to do that? Are they going to make stones out of this heap of rubbish that's burnt? As God's people, we're going to face some hostility. They're going to mock and scorn.

People are going to laugh and deride. They're going to say, You're useless. You can't do it. There's all these reasons why you can't serve God. This, that and the other.

We can face opposition. We can face that. We will face that. Expect that when you step out for God. People are going to mock and hate as these ones did, as Sambalat and such and Tobiah.

They mocked. They hated. They insulted. They accused even of rebellion. They tried every which way they could to pull down the workers of God.

What did Nehemiah do? Specifically, in response to that, he prayed. He prayed. Prayer is the response. Prayer, work and zeal.

[20:01] Not to be dissuaded. Not to be discouraged. And God's people were determined, we read in chapter 4, verse 6. They were determined. Chapter 4, verse 6. It says, So built we the wall, and all the wall was joined together.

For the people had a mind to work. They had commitment. They had that mind to work. They had that mindset. They were determined to keep on building. No matter the opposition, the criticism, the mocking.

They built the wall because they had a mind to work. They had that will, that mind to work. Walls are built one brick at a time. It wasn't built, you know, in a real short amount of time.

It took numbers of days. It took 52 odd days. It took a period of time. It took solid commitment over time. And they worked there, it says, with all their heart.

With stickability. How about you and me? When we have a job to do for God. A ministry. A service we can render. To him and to his people.

[21:06] To the church of God that we're part of here. It's one brick at a time. One day at a time. Work at it. Put your neck to it. Put your mind to it. Work together too.

It says the wall was joined together. They built together. And the wall was joined together. All of those different parts. Offensively it became a whole wall. And it was hard work.

Long hours. They worked from dawn to dusk. Nehemiah. He had left the security, the comfort of that royal palace.

To go to the ruins. To go to this ruined city. To go to the rubble. He'd left all that comfort behind him. He was now 1600 kilometres away from home.

And he took the trouble to go the distance. To put himself out. And here he is in the rubble. We see that here in the rubble.

[22:04] God's people overcame the negative talk. Nehemiah 4 verse 10. And Judah said. The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. And there is much rubbish.

So that we are not able to build the wall. Here was this gainsayer. They were saying. The Judah was saying. You know. You're weak.

There's too much rubbish. You're not able. We're not going to make it. They looked at themselves. And they looked at their own weakness. And they said.

Just. We're not up to it. We can't do it. Part of the battle. Was overcoming. The attacks on their morale. And it was from within.

Even from within. And we can all. Sometimes. We can talk honestly. And feel like. Oh this is really hard work. At times. You know. You know. There's times when we can feel flagging.

[22:59] We can feel. Like it's. It's tough. But part of that battle. Of building that wall. Is just to. Keep on. Beyond that. That negative talk. The negative self-talk even.

That despair. That natural sense of. Even. Disunity. That came. At times. In their ranks. There was. There was some. Disunity. There was despair. And there was also.

Discouragement. As well. Ten times. It says. In chapter 4. Verse 12. That the. Ten times. That says. The people said. They're going to attack us. They're going to come against us. You know. We're done for. You know. They said this ten times. Over and over and over again. This. This negative talk. What was Nehemiah's response? Faith and prayer.

Faith and prayer. Nehemiah 2. Verse 20. He says. He said unto them. The God of heaven. He will prosper us. And therefore. We his servants.

[23:53] Will arise and build. This is God's work. This is. Under God's commission. This is. Under God's hand. This is for God's glory. And he will help us.

He is with us. What can we learn from this? You know. Sometimes in life. When the going gets tough. The tough get praying. That's what we should do. Isn't it?

The book begins. And it ends with prayer. Prayer is right through it. It's like it's. It's soaked right through it. Isn't it? It's just full of prayer. If you squeeze the book of Nehemiah.

Just prayer. Just oozes out of it. It begins and it ends with prayer. Prayer is right through it. And so. Nehemiah. He relied on God's strength. And he refused to compromise. Even despite this negative talk.

Even amongst themselves. This. This feeling of despair. We can't make it. We're going to fail. Let our response be prayer. Let's man the battle stations of prayer.

[24:51] Amen. That's what we need to do. And pray and believe in faith. That God will fight for you. As it says in Nehemiah chapter 4 verse 20.

In part it reads. Our God shall fight for us. Isn't that good news? Our God shall fight for us. You know. If we know him as our God. We know that he will fight our battles.

The battle is the Lord's. And they came to see that their confidence was in that. Their trust in God. God will give us success. He will fight our battles. And Nehemiah gave good wise governance. And he was benevolent. And he was doing a good work.

But some wanted to interrupt him. There was some who came. And sought to hinder the work. And we see that in chapter 6 verse 3. Nehemiah sent messengers unto them.

[25:52] To say I am doing a great work. So that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease? While I leave it. And come down to you. So these are some who just wanted to.

Really they were trying to hinder. They wanted to distract him. To deter him. By taking up time. To have some conversation. Some conference.

To put fear into him. But Nehemiah had character. He wouldn't be dissuaded. He wouldn't be swayed. He knew that that was just their plot. To try to distract him.

He said no. I'm doing a great work. I'm doing God's work. And I don't have time to come down. And to cease that work. To come down to you. Because he knew that God's work had the priority.

And he was faithful to that. To God's call. And he had the courage. He trusted God. He was firm. And he kept going. Kept going. Going. Going. Despite the adversity. Kept on keeping on.

[26:48] And his was an important task. Friends it's the same for you and me. As God's people. That the church. The church of God. This ministry here. It's a great work.

It's God's work. It's an important work. And we must persevere. We see in chapter 6 verse 16. That this work is wrought of our God.

That's what counts. Isn't it? If it is God's work. If it is to his glory. Then it is wrought of our God. It's God's doing. It's God's work. So we have.

Likewise. We have here. In this ministry. This church fellowship. We have a great work. Right here. The work of God. It's a great work. Not because we're doing it. But because it's wrought. Of our God.

Chapter 6 verse 16. And we know that the God of heaven is with us. And we are doing a great work. Because it is his work. It is for his glory. That's why it's a great work. So we have a great work to do.

[27:45] So we've seen the scene. There. We've seen the scene of the royal palace. As we flip through the. The photo album of Nehemiah. Started there in that royal palace. When he heard the call.

He heard the cry. And he was moved by God. Then we see. He's down there in the rubble. The rubble that became a construction zone. And thirdly. We see. Another snapshot here. In Nehemiah's photo album. Are in scene 3 here now. It's in the revival. He went from the royal palace. To the rubble. And now revival. Sparks here.

Nehemiah's faithfulness. And the people of God's faithfulness. Led God's people to revival. The wall was built. We see. In chapter 8. The results were here.

That the wall was built. The wall of the city of Jerusalem. And we see three things. That were the result. Of Nehemiah's work. And of the people of God's faithfulness. We see. Oneness.

[28:38] Holiness. And closeness to God. Oneness. Holiness. And closeness to God. We see in Nehemiah chapter 8 verse 1. Oneness. There was a oneness there. It says. And all the people gathered themselves together. As one man. Into the street. That was before the water gate. And they spake unto Ezra the scribe. To bring the book of the law of Moses. Which the Lord had commanded to Israel.

They said. Bring the book. Bring the book. They told Ezra the preacher. Bring the book. And so they worked together. It says. They worshipped together. And now here they were. In that unity of the spirit.

That oneness here. They were as one man. As one man. There was that closeness. That oneness of fellowship. As they had that biblical unity. And notice it was a biblical unity. Not some ecumenical unity. That some kind of unity. That's kind of a mishmash. Of a jungle mess. Of all kinds of ideas.

[29:38] But it was a unity that was unto the book. It was a unity as one man. In the street. As the preacher unfolded the book. And the people cry out for the book. The people cry out for God's word.

They call out. Bring the book. Bring the book. That's what they wanted. It wasn't bring some pep talk. Bring some. You know. Motivational talk. It says. Bring the book. Bring God's holy book. That's what we need. And that's what we need to cry out for. That's what the people cried out for. That's what they called out for. Bring the book. And so the word was read aloud. It says.

Verse 3. From daybreak till noon. And all the people listened. You know. They didn't mind. It was a long sermon. A long message. They wanted it.

They were hungry for it. And they listened. And they honoured his word. It says. They stood as they listened. Verse 5. So. Here they were. Standing. From daybreak till noon.

[30:32] Honouring the word of God. Hearing the word of God. Receptive to the word of God. And receiving the word of God. And God's word. Inspired worship. Not only had they the word.

And they honoured his word. But the word inspired worship. Verse 6. Says the people bowed down. And worshipped the Lord. With their faces to the ground. And they responded in faith. And joy. And obedience. To God's will. Now when the word gets opened. Then. We'll. We'll. Be. Revived. There'll be. A blessing. There'll be. A reception.

There'll be. An anointing. There'll be. A response. Of worship. And the word of God. Inspired their worship. The people worshipped. And bowed down. And they rejoiced.

And we see. In chapter 8. It tells. How they wept. They wept. When the word was given. They were. They were moved. With conviction. They were moved. With. With that. Touch.

[31:26] That sensitivity. To God. God spoke. Directly to them. And they wept. Their. Their. Heart. Was broken up. And verse 17. It says. There was very great gladness.

Very great gladness. The word of God. Brings gladness. To the soul. Doesn't it? And verse 18. It says. That they read it. Day. By day. Day. By day. Now.

Not. Then. Just wait till. Sunday. To open their Bibles. But they read the word. Day. By day. By day. Right through. Monday. Through Sunday.

Right through. Now. Their word was important. And they. Rejoiced in it. Chapter 9. Verse 1. We see also. Fasting. And repentance. Was there. Fasting and repentance.

Again. It's a sense of. You know. Just. Sacrificial. That. That sense of. Of breaking up. The fallow ground. And. As one. Revivalist of old. Says. That revival.

[32:21] Is nothing more. Or less. Than a. New beginning. Of obedience. To the word of God. You know. That obedience. To the word of God. Is that. That. I want to obey. God's word.

I want to trust him. And I want to honor him. By. Following. What his word. Says for me. So there was a. Oneness there. In godly unity. And secondly. There was a holiness there. In Nehemiah. Chapter 9. Verse 2. It says. There was a holiness. That came out. Of this work. You know. This physical work. Of building a wall. That was. Maybe just the catalyst. For. For God. Building his people. That was the main thing. That. That really got built. In the book of Nehemiah. The people of God. Got built up. And in. Nehemiah. 9. Verse 2. We see holiness there. It says. The seed of Israel. Separated themselves. From all strangers. And stood and confessed. Their sins. And the iniquities. Of their fathers. So there was a dividing here. [33:14] That went on. Between the strangers. And the people of God. They separated themselves. They said. We're going to be a holy people. God. God is separating us. From the unholy.

And there was a separation. That happened. A confession of sin. A repentance. And a dedication. Unto God. Revival.

There was a oneness. There was a holiness. And thirdly. There was a closeness. There was a closeness. To God. Nehemiah. Chapter 9. Verse 3. As they. Received the word. It says. They stood up. In their place. And they read. In the book of the law. Of the Lord. Their God. One fourth part. Of the day. And another fourth part. They confessed. And worshipped. The Lord. Their God. They read.

And they worshipped. Praise God. There was a closeness there. And verse 4. It says. They cried. With a loud voice. You know. They were. They wanted to. There was.

[34:08] An enthusiasm there. There was. There was a. A deep heart. Cry there. They cried out. With a loud voice. There was true worship. There was dedication. There was devotion to God.

And chapter 12. Verse 27. Talks about a gladness. About a thanksgiving. And about a singing. You know. This was a. Worshipful. Response. This was a worship.

That God evoked. In them. The gladness. You know. It says. In Acts. We know. It says. They received the word. Gladly. There's a gladness in Christ. There's a gladness in the gospel. We've got a glad hope. A blessed hope. A gladdening. Of the heart and soul. And there's a gladness in Christ. There's a thanksgiving. We can know. That we. Such as we. Can thank him. For his tender mercies. That we. Such as we. Can thank him. For his salvation. And there's a singing. That happens. A singing. A melody in our heart. Unto him.

[35:04] So let us observe. The challenge of the book. And think of it. How do we apply this. In our day. How do we apply. The message of Nehemiah. Of the book of Nehemiah.

Of the man of Nehemiah. Of the people of God. In Nehemiah's day. How can we translate that. Into the 21st century. Into this spot right here. Into this city.

This place. Of this fellowship. This godly. Community. Let's observe. The challenge of the book. And think how we can. Make it. Real for us. In our day.

So Nehemiah. Chapter 2. Verse 17. Just to go back to. There again. Then said I. Unto them. You see the distress. That we are in. How Jerusalem.

Wath waste. And the gates thereof. Are burnt with fire. Come. And let us build. Up the wall. Of Jerusalem. So that we be.

[35:57] No more. A reproach. And verse 18. In part. And they said. Let us rise up. And build. So they strengthened their hands. For this good work.

So Nehemiah. He said. You see the distress. You see. Jerusalem. It's a waste. It's a dump. It's trashed. It's burnt. It's a hopeless.

Disgrace. Let's rise up. Let's rise up. And build. Let's rise up. And build. And they said. Let us. Rise up.

And build. So they strengthened their hands. For this good work. Notice God's people got mobilized. It's. Again. As I say. It wasn't all about Nehemiah.

He was just a. Tiny. Little fraction. Of the work. Really. Wasn't he? Important. But. Nehemiah was. It wasn't. The focus wasn't just on Nehemiah.

[36:56] It was on the whole people of God. The whole people of God. The whole church of God. It was about the whole people of God. Starting to. To get excited. To. Starting to get enthused. And. Wanting to.

To partake. That every one of us. As I say. Every one of us. Has a part. Of that wall. That we're responsible for. Think of it. In. How can you.

Translate that. Into. Your life. Into. Into what. What has God put in your hand to do? What has God called you to do?

What. What part of the wall? What part of the. The ministry of the church? What part. Of the. Work of God. Do you have. A role to play.

To be a part of. A responsibility. And if you like. In the kind of analogy of a wall. A role. If. One of us doesn't.

[37:49] Do our bit. In the wall. Then the wall's not going to be built. And so. I'm trying to. Picture it really. For us. We've all got a part to play.

That's the point. We've all got a part to play. That every family. Every individual. They all had a part of that wall. That had to be built. It's the same with the work of God. In. In terms of the church of God.

You've all got a part to play. Play your part. Play your part. That. That this wall can be built. If you like. And. Again. Trying to. Translate it into.

Into terms we can relate to. In our own lives. As Nehemiah said. You see the distress. You see the waste. You see this. Broken down city. Look at.

Look at this city. Look at Adelaide. Look at. South Australia. Look at. Our nation. Look at our family. Our life. What areas. Need repair.

[38:46] What areas. Do. Need repair. God wanted. Jerusalem. To be a strong city. That could defend itself. From. The enemy. God wanted this city.

To be a city. Built strong. A city with peace. And protection. And think of it. For your own life. Your own family. For your own spiritual walk. God wants.

You and me. To be strong. To be strong. Christians. To have. Strong. Spiritual lives. That our families. Are strong. Spiritually strong. So. We need to.

As it were. As Nehemiah did. Do a bit of a. A recce. An assessment. He did that tour. Around the city. What about checking. Our own lives. Have a look around.

Have a look inside. Your own life. Where have. Our walls broken down. As individuals. As families. As a church. You know. We see. You know. We could look at other churches. And say that.

[39:40] Their walls are broken down. But honestly. Every church. We could build. We could build better. What's that. There's a slogan lately. Isn't there. A political slogan. Build back better. We need to.

That's probably true. We need to build back better. We need to build up. The walls of Jerusalem. We need to build up. Our spiritual lives. And have that same response. The same response. That Nehemiah had.

He didn't just go willy nilly. And just do things. He took time to pray. He fasted. And prayed. He had a burden. A concern. That moved him to action. And we can be concerned.

And burdened. And we might join the protest marches. About this. That. And the other. But we've got to be spiritual about it. We need to be prayerfully led. We need to have a spiritual burden.

Because that's what matters.

Not all of these other side issues. That are topical at the moment. It's more about. Actually. What's the spiritual need of our nation. What's the spiritual need of our city. And let's have that faith.

[40:35] And commitment. And that willingness to brave opposition too. Because you as the church of God. You know. You're in the firing line. You know. The devil's got his crosshairs on all of you. That he wants to take you out.

He wants to take out this church. He wants to destroy this church. But God wants this church to be built up. To be raised up and built up. And so let's have the same heart of Nehemiah.

To take that commitment. And make it active. What about you? What needs repairing? It's that self-assessment really isn't it?

To have an honest talk with God. To actually stand honestly before him. And examine the man that's standing in your shoes. And in our own lives. In our own homes. What rubble needs clearing away? You know. We could all think. There's a lot of rubbish. As the people talked about. Look. There's so much rubbish here. But yet the rubbish became the building blocks.

[41:30] Didn't it? That's an amazing thought too. That God can even use the rubble. That we. That our broken lives can be at times. To make them building blocks. And what needs restoring.

As Nehemiah did. And so the same message is. Come. Let us rise up and build. Let's be stirred up. Let's hear as it were. The Nehemiah. Speaking to us today.

Come. Let us rise up and build. And that can be our response. To that call. So God wants us to rise up and build. God wants to grant us. In our lives.

In our families. A fellowship. With a blessed oneness. And closeness to him. Friends. Just to recap. In a summing up.

Here. The book of Nehemiah. We could think of the book of Nehemiah. And park it on the shelf. On a dusty shelf. And say that was for Jerusalem. That was for that time. And of course it had that application.

[42:27] But how can we make an application. Of the principles of Nehemiah. In our lives. In the now. I put to you some. Points to consider. From this photo album.

Of Nehemiah. If you like. And he's been in the royal palaces. Where he started. He went to the rubble. And he went to that place of revival. It was the same Nehemiah. And he was in that comfort zone.

In the start. Of the book. In that comfy. Position. And he could have just stayed there. You know. A thousand miles away from Jerusalem. And done nothing. And said. Oh. Somebody's got to do something.

But no. He said. I've got to do something. And it's about you and me. Finding our God given mission. And fulfilling it. That's what we need to do. Prayerfully. Isn't it? To be.

Led by the spirit. To say. Lord. What's your mission for my life? Help me find it. And fulfill it. And let's be like Nehemiah. He heard the cries of souls. In affliction.

[43:24] And distress. He heard those cries. Through the messenger. That came to him. And he knew that his beloved city. Was a reproach. Friends. We need to hear the cry. Of souls.

And it's great to hear. There's soul winning efforts going on. All around these streets. And suburbs. Right here. By people. That are moved. To action. Because they've heard the cry.

Of souls. And really. It's the call of God. Is to hear the cry of souls. To leave that comfort zone. You know. To leave the. The. The do nothing. Zone. And to say.

Yes. I'm going to do something. As God puts in my heart. To do. That's. That's what matters. It's not. Not what I. Want to do. But what God puts on my heart. To do. And. And to go. To go with prayerful action.

With the hand of God. On your life. As it was on. Nehemiah's life. Go with his hand. On your life. That. That. It is his hand. That's pushing you. Pulling you. Prodding you.

[44:18] That. Also. You'd have a mind to work. You say. Deliberately decide. It's a decision. It's the willpower. You know. There is a sense. Where. We've got.

Need to put the. The brain power. Into play. We need to. To switch on. And say. I'm going to decide to do. Because God's moving me to decide. To do.

To have a mind to work. And. Realise that. The work of God. It's not just. The pastor here. That it all falls on his shoulders. Because. As much as he's got big shoulders.

It gets heavy on the pastor's shoulders. That. We all need to share. The load. Not be like the. Nobles of the. Techites. That. That didn't put their necks to the work. No. I'm going to stick my neck out.

And put my neck on the line. And I'm going to put. My. All into this. This work of God. Because it's a team effort. People. It's a team effort. It's this. The work of God. It's the people of God.

[45:13] Rising up. To. Aspire to the work of God. In this mission. This mission field. Be willing to overcome the discouragements. Because you're going to get that. People are going to knock you.

And laugh. And scorn. And try to pick fault. And even amongst. Your number. There might be some. That are flagging. And feeling. A bit heavy. And maybe morale.

Is sapping. That we've got to. Build up one another. As well as build up. The work. And so. Also know that God fights for you. That God fights for you. He's the one who's going to.

Win through. He's going to fight this fight. And win this battle. And have the heart. Bring the book. Have the heart. You want to cry out. Every time the book's open.

As the people of God. As the ministry of God. In this fellowship. Whenever they bring. They have the book. You want to be where the book is. You know. Bring the book. As your hearts cry.

Whenever he's.

[46:07] Whenever the preacher opens the book. You want to say. Yes. Bring the book preacher. We want to hear it. And we reverently will hear it. And heed it. And stand. So we'll have that same heart cry.

Of the people of God. And they'll say. And we're going to encourage one another. Let us. We're going to say it to each other. Let us rise up and build. Let us rise up and build.

In this good work. Friends. We all have a place to serve. To fulfil. God's calling. It's for all of us. And it's. Nehemiah.

Did his part. But the people of God. Were the ones that. Started to lay the bricks. And. It's that all the people got. Involved. Because they all had a mind to work.

To fulfil that. Calling. There's a work for all of us to do. So let's not neglect. Let's not be as the. As the nobles of the Tecalites. That just did. You know.

[47:03] Kind of half-hearted. You know. Lackadaisical. Kind of a complacent. Not putting their necks to the work. Let's not be like them. Let's learn from their example. Of how not to be.

But let's be like those who say. Yes. Let us rise up and build. Amen. Let us pray. Lord. We thank you. That Nehemiah speaks. Even to us. Even in the now.

In the place we are. Right here. Right now. Lord. And we know. That reproach that it was. That the city of God. Had walls broken down. And gates burnt.

And was open to the enemy's attack. And we see the city of Adelaide. The city of Adelaide. It's broken down. Lord.

We see Australia has fallen. Is falling. And continues to fall. We see society. Is desperately godless. And Lord.

[47:56] Ever. Ever more so. We see the scarcity. Of godly churches. We see. Many reasons. Why. We could be discouraged. Looking. At all the rubble.

All the rubbish. Yet Lord. Even in that. You call us to. To respond. In faith. In prayer. Lord. To be a people of God. That will rise up.

Lord. That. Those that. Know you're not. Will care about them. Lord. Will hear that cry. The distress. The affliction. Of those that are lost. The.

The. The. Once. Searching. And yet. Hopeless. Lord. We pray. Burden us. Burden us. Let your burden.

Nehemiah. Burden us. Lord. We pray. Help us to. Be prayerful. Like he was. Faithful. And Lord. To be as the people of God. That said.

[48:51] Bring the book. Lord. We want the word. We want to be where the word is. Lord. Help us to pray. Help us to. Fast and pray. If it be. Lord. Help us to. Respond with.

Hearts of faith. With a mind to work. That our hands will be put to the work. Lord. That we won't hold back. We pray for this church. We pray for every godly church.

For every church of God. Lord. That you might do a work in us. That even. A revival. Might happen. As it were. That each one individually.

Can be revived. Each one can have. A new spiritual. Fervour and strength. And Lord. To. Strengthen our hands. For the work.

That we must all be part of. Help us Lord. Not to see. Or think. Someone else is going to do it. But. To. Step out. And take our place.

[49:47] To. Fill our role. Our responsibility. In building that spiritual wall. Lord. In the kind of analogy of it. We would all. Play our part.

In this church. Or. Wherever you've called us. To. Minister. Lord. To be. Not stepping. Back. But to be stepping up. And Lord. Help us. To be faithful.

Like. Nehemiah was. That. Ultimately. We will see. Your hand. Will do the work. Lord. We pray for. Pastor Luz. And this fellowship. Lord.

For each soul here. Those watching from afar. Lord. Each one that might. Be stirred. By these thoughts. These. Snapshots. In Nehemiah's life.

Lord. That we all. Reflect. On how we can. Be moved. As he was. And as the people of God. Were moved. Lord. We pray for us. Any yet to trust you.

[50:41] That. They might. Know that. Saving. Grace. That gift. Of salvation. That. Is received. Just by faith.

By. By receiving. That gift. That you. Graciously. Offer to us. Lord. We can. Know. Your saving. Power. Because. Of your work. At the cross. It was finished. Everything. That had to be done. Was done there. And Lord. We thank you.

That. In Christ. You. Paid for our sin. And. Gave us. Eternal life. As we trusted you. Our risen. Lord and saviour. We praise you Lord.

And. Thank you for these things. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen. Thank you.