

# A Study of Nehemiah

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[0:00] I want to talk about Nehemiah today. Nehemiah. Now Nehemiah means Yahweh comforts. And Nehemiah is the only biblical book written mostly in the first person.

! Nehemiah was a cup bearer to the king. And he became a governor, a leader. And in the book of Nehemiah there's many principles we can apply in our lives.

Now people might know, I've spoken about Nehemiah a few times, but I always start with a blank piece of paper because I like to get something fresh from the book. Have a new look at the book.

And so this is a new look at the book of Nehemiah and of his life.

And Nehemiah was a man who had much that we can learn from as men and women today. Many principles that we can apply in our lives today. He was righteous, he was courageous, and he was prayerful.

He was a builder and a battler. He was a man who lived a life of faith. Righteous, courageous, and prayerful.

[1:13] Nehemiah had walls to build. And we had a church to build. Of course we know it's the Lord Jesus who builds his church. But we're in a church, in a church building. Because God's people are the building.

Ye are the building. A building of a church. A building of a family. A building of a business. A building of a marriage. A building of a life.

Life's all about building. And we can learn from Nehemiah today some spiritual truths about building. So Nehemiah was a man with a vision.

It starts off the book with Nehemiah hundreds of miles away from his home of Jerusalem. He was living in captivity in Persia. And news reaches him from home.

He hears that verse 3 of chapter 1. Chapter 1 verse 3. This was the news report that he got from home.

[2:22] And Nehemiah was a man with heart. A man with heart. A man with compassion. Verse 4 of chapter 1 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 before the God of heaven.

A man with heart. He responded with compassion and with sensitivity towards God and man. A man with a heart. A servant's heart.

A heart for the people. A heart of repentance. A man with heart. Secondly we see in the book of Nehemiah and there's many references to how he prayed.

Nehemiah was a man of prayer. At crucial times he prayed. When disaster struck he prayed. When he sought what to do he prayed.

And he gave glory to God when he prayed. Chapter 1 verse 10. Now these are thy servants and thy people whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power and by thy strong hand.

[3:26] He gave glory to God in his prayer. As he prepared to face the king he prayed. He prayed this in verse 11 of chapter 1.

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.

Nehemiah had the role of cup bearer. It was a responsibility to be the food taster. To partake of the drink before the king. And to bring it to him.

A very important responsibility. And Nehemiah was patient. He was patient. He waited on the Lord. He took time to pray. It was four months later in chapter 2 verse 1 that he approached the king.

[4:28] He came unto the king much as we could picture it here. He came before the king. And the king noticed that he was looking sad. And asked him what was wrong.

Chapter 2 verse 5 he said. If it pleased the king. And if thy servant had found favour in thy sight. That thou wouldest send me. Send me unto Judah. Unto the city of my father's sepulchres. That I may build it. Send me that I may build the city. Amazingly the king intervened. God intervened.

And the king agreed. And the king gave permission to Nehemiah. To go home. That was an amazing thing in itself. That he would release one of his chief servants to go on this mission. He gave him permission. He gave him protection. He gave him protection with an armed guard. On the journey. And not only that. But he gave him provision. He gave him provision in providing building materials along the way.

[5:32] For all that he needed. And Nehemiah gave glory to God again. In chapter 2 verse 8. In part it says. And the king granted me according to the good hand of my God upon me.

He recognised God. A man of faith. He recognised God. At work behind the scenes. Pulling the strings. Making everything happen. Orchestrating everything.

For God's good will. To happen. But. Not everyone. Was happy. There were some not so happy little Vegemites. And one was.

One was Sanballat the Horonite. And Tobiah the servant. And the Ammonite. When they heard of it. It grieved them exceedingly. That there was come a man to seek.

The welfare. Of the children of Israel. They were not happy chappies. They were. Grieved. And exceedingly so. That. God was going to use Nehemiah.

[6:32] To. This end. Nehemiah. A man of faith. Nehemiah. Was a man of action. A man of action. Nehemiah. Willingly sacrificed. This lifestyle.

This position. In the king's courts. To serve God. God. And he went personally. He took action. He went personally. To survey.

The walls. Of the city. God moved him. To action. Nehemiah. Was not just a man. Of. Faith. He was a man. Of action. He put.

His faith. Into. Action. And. We read from. Verse 11. Of chapter 2. So I came to Jerusalem. And was there.

Three days. And I rose in the night. I and some few men. With me. Neither told I. Any man. What God had. Put in my heart. To do. At Jerusalem. He didn't tell anyone.

[7:27] He got up in the night. And with some few men. Went and surveyed. The walls of the city. And verse 13. Of chapter 2. And I went out by night. And I hid the walls. Of Jerusalem.

Which were. Broken down. And the gates. Thereof. That were consumed. With fire. Nehemiah wanted to take. A first hand look. For himself. He took note.

Of the manpower. The materials. The money. That he would need. Well as he surveyed. That city. He would have seen. Certain features. Certain needs. Of the wall. Of the gates.

Of the doors. And so on. And he would have seen. Where he had to allocate. Some craftsmen. So perhaps. To attend to a hinge. Whether he needed. To send. Some carpenters.

To attend to. A gate. And where he had to send. Some stonemasons. To pay particular attention. To that path. That he observed.

[8:22] And this man. Of action. Exhorted. Others. To action. He exhorted. Others. To action. Verse 17. Of chapter 2.

He told the people. He said. You see the distress. That we are in. How Jerusalem lies waste. And the gates thereof. Are burnt with fire. Come.

And let us. Build the wall. Of Jerusalem. Come. And let us. Build the wall. Of Jerusalem. That. We be no more.

A reproach. Nehemiah. Encouraged. Others. To take action. With him. He encouraged. Others. By his own testimony. By the. The light. Of his own life.

By the witness. Of his own life. And he told them about it. In verse 18. He says. The hand of my God. Was good upon me. The king's words.

[9:18] That he had spoken unto me. He testified. How the king. Had released him. What a miracle. That was. And he said. Come on. Let us. Let us. Rise up.

And build. So they strengthened their hands. For this good work. They strengthened their hands. For this good work. He challenged the people. That. Look.

The gates are. Burned. The walls are broken down. Let's not be a reproach. Any longer. Let us. Rise up. Rise up. And build.

He challenged the people. To rebuild the wall. So. Each family. Was then assigned a section. Of the wall. To rebuild. Now. When you do something. For God.

Do you ever get. Opposition. Friends. You do. You do. It's common. That's right. It's common. You know. I've had some.

[10:13] Amazing interchanges. With people. Over the. 14 years. That we've had. This fellowship. And. You get to know people. You get to know people. And Nehemiah. Face some.

Opposition. Opposition. But when. Sambalat. The Horonite. And Tobiah. The servant. The Ammonite. And Geshem. The Arabian. Heard it. They laughed. As discord.

Ha ha ha ha. What a joke. I'm paraphrasing there. And. And despised us. And said. What is this thing. That you do. Well.

You rebellious. The king. They had a real. Time of it. Laughing. And scorning. Despising. And deriding.

Nehemiah. The whole project. Was a joke. That was what they were. Putting across. It's been said. That the door of opportunity. Swings on the hinges.

[11:08] Of opposition. I think there's a bit of truth. To that one. The door of opportunity. Swings on the hinges. Of opposition.

Now Wednesday nights. We've been covering. Long Corinthians. We're at. Verse. And verse 9 of 16. Which says. For a great door. And effectual. Is opened. Unto me.

And there are many. Adversaries. That was true. In Nehemiah's day. It's still true today. Brothers and sisters. When you step out in faith. You will face opposition. It's guaranteed.

It's guaranteed. It's a good thing for you. It'll do you good. A bit of opposition. Doesn't do anyone. Any harm. You know. It's more dangerous.

When all men speak well of you. That's right. Amen. You know. It's better that you're called an enemy. Because you tell someone the truth. Than you try to be. All things to all people.

[12:04] That's right. Opportunity. And opposition. They come hand in hand. We can expect gainsayers. And adversaries. When you do something for God. Expect opposition.

Don't let it put you off. Let it strengthen. And stir you to greater exploits. Let it steal you. And strengthen you. To greater persistence.

And perseverance. Now the devil uses. People just like these three. Someone put it quite amusingly. Which I'm quoting in part.

The devil uses people. Just like these three. In church life today. And it's interesting. What someone has observed. The meanings of their names. The meanings of their names.

Sambalat. Means thorn. Tobiah. Means Jehovah is good. Geshem. Geshem.

[13:01] Means rain. And someone suggested. From these name meetings. About these three. These three people. That you can encounter. In church life today. Of course there's no one here. Present this morning. But.

There's these three kinds of people. In church life today. You've got number one. The thorn. Sambalat. The thorn. He's a pain. In your side.

Does anyone know any. Any saints that are pains? Maybe some pastors that are pains. But you know. There's some pains. In church life today. And people like Sambalat.

They're a thorn. In your side. You know. In a church environment. They're critical. Of every little thing. That goes on. Knitpickers. Murmurers.

Complainers. Critical. Constantly moaning. And complaining. About decisions. And authority. Within the church. There's a few Sambalats. A few Sambalats.

[13:55] Secondly. There's some Tobias. Tobias. And it's Jehovah is good. Has kind of. Why would he have such a name as that? And someone has put it

like this. This is the kind of church goer.

That walks around all the time. Saying. Praise the Lord. We love you preacher. Oh that was a good sermon pastor. God is so good.

Until the first time. You make a decision. He doesn't like. He's the super spiritual one. Tobias. Jehovah is good.

Jehovah is good. God is good. Yeah. Praise the Lord. We love it. We love you preacher. And then they stab you in the back. Kick you in the guts. And kick you on the. While you're down on the ground as well.

Jehovah is good. There's some people like that in church life. God forbid. That there's any here today. And then thirdly. There's the Geshem. Geshem. It means rain.

[14:49] Geshem. It means rain. As someone has kind of intimated you could imagine it. He walks around with a cloud over his head. He's always full of gloom.

And despair. And agony. He brightens up a room. By leaving it. Rain. There's a cloud over his head. There's a cloud over his miserly face. The negative person. Now I'm not meaning we've all got to walk around with some fake plastic kind of smile. And pretend that everything's okay.

Friends we all have moments when our face looks like we're going through something. That's okay. I'm not condemning anyone here this morning. But I'm talking about the Geshems. They want to walk around like everything's doom and gloom and despair.

And they see the negative in every circumstance. And one of the biggest problems with the Geshems. They have this rain kind of philosophy.

[15:48] Is that they have trouble recognising they're such a misery. They have trouble recognising how negative they are. Three gainsayers.

Then verse 20. How did Nehemiah answer these three? He said unto them. The God of heaven. He will prosper us. Therefore we his servants will arise and build.

But ye have no portion nor right nor memorial in Jerusalem. Nehemiah stands in faith. He says it like it is. Some people need some hard truths.

They need to be confronted. The Bible speaks of rebuke them sharply. Now I'm not one who likes to rebuke anybody. And I don't know that I've ever really had occasion to rebuke someone sharply. But the word says there's a time and place for that. Some people need to be told. God will prosper us. We will arise and build.

[16:56] We will do the work of God no matter what. It doesn't matter what you guys say. You're not even going to be a part of it. You're going to miss out. You're going to miss the boat. It's what he said. Nehemiah faced opposition.

And then we see there's a mobilisation that happened in chapter 3. The people got on board. The people got on board. And there was a mobilising of God's people.

And Nehemiah in chapter 3, he assigned various tasks to the people according to their gifts and to their abilities. He stationed the people together in various teams.

We see that through the various verses of chapter 3. And everyone took personal responsibility. We read through chapter 3.

So-and-so next to so-and-so next to so-and-so next to so-and-so. We all have an assignment from God. Brother, sister, you have an assignment from God.

[18:00] Every one of us has an assignment from God. He calls every one of us to action. We see in chapter 3, who was there? There were priests, goldsmiths, perfumers, officials, families, servants, merchants.

Everybody was there. But, verse 5, not everybody pulled their way. Now, in church life, we often put a call out for volunteers.

Volunteers. Some people, you've got to volunteer. You've got to press game them into something. But, it's a fact in church life that some people don't put their neck to the work.

I know it's been said that the 20% do everything, just about. Maybe it's not even 20%. But, friends, in church life, we all have a responsibility.

Next to, next to, next to. We've all designated. We're all appointed and stationed at various parts in the project, if you like, of being the church, of building the kingdom of God, if you like.

[19:19] But, not everyone pulls their way. And, it says of the nobles of the Tekalites that they slapped off. They slapped off. Friends, let's not be like them.

Let's learn from their example. Let's not be like those who did not put their necks to the work of their Lord. We want to be in His yoke. Amen? His yoke is easy.

His burden is not. It's not a burden to serve Him. It's not a burden to fellowship. It's not a burden to be an active Christian. It's a blessing. It's a blessing. It's a blessing to be in His yoke and at His service.

Harden not your necks, but put your necks to the work of the Lord, unlike these guys. And, we see in Nehemiah, likewise, a persistence. That, in chapter 4, when the enemy was attacking, when Sanballat and Zabbiah were bent on mocking the Jews, trying to demoralize them and discourage them, trying to disrupt the work.

That, when Sanballat heard that the wall was built, he was wroth. He was angry and took great indignation and mocked the Jews.

[20:27] He just kept on and on, mocking and mocking. He 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? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves?

Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves?

Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? Will they kill themselves? by him said, even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall. Even a fox is going to knock this over.

[21:21] Five minutes it'll be falling over. Nehemiah had persistence. Friends, persistence. Perseverance is a good thing as a Christian.

That we should persevere in prayer. That we should persevere in what God has called us to do. Don't be a quitter. Do not be a quitter. Nehemiah prays and he keeps on building. Sometimes it's one step forward, two steps back, isn't it? Let's face it. In the Christian life, we all have those moments when it's like we're not making progress and we seem like we're going backwards. Just keep pressing on.

Keep pressing towards the mark. Keep your face like a flint. Go towards the mark. Press on. Press on. Press on. Do not be discouraged. If you're feeling like you're a Christian that's not going anywhere, it's common for us all to have those seasons.

Keep on building. Nehemiah was unstoppable. He kept on praying. Verse 4 of chapter 4. Oh, our God, hear us, for we are despised and turned their reproach upon their own head.

[22:36] Verse 6. So built we the wall. And all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof. For the people had a mind to work. The people had a mind to work.

They determined that they were doing the work that they were called to do. What about you? Be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord.

Your labour is not in vain in the Lord. Friends today, be encouraged. You've got a ministry. You've got abilities and callings. Be used of God. Be used of God. Have that mind to engage yourself in the ministry.

And we see another truth is that they kept up the fight. When they faced all of this opposition and trial, we must keep the work going, brothers and sisters. We must keep the work going.

It doesn't matter how many enemies attack us. When the enemies conspired to fight against God's people in chapter 4, verses 7 through 8, it says that Nehemiah made a prayer unto God.

[23:43] And he set up a watch against them day and night. Friends, when we face opposition, we should pray. When you're feeling like you're under attack, when you're feeling like there's spiritual warfare, when you're in a battleground, pray.

Set a watch and pray. Make your prayer unto God. There was also a discouragement within the ranks. The folk of Judah said, the strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed.

There is much rubbish. We are not able. Some Christians get discouraged. They say, we're not able. I've found some Christians who say, I'm not able to live the Christian life.

I'm not able to get victory. None of us are. None of us are able. Of our own selves. The arm of flesh will fail you.

Have no confidence in the flesh. No confidence. Like our brother prayed, it's 100% God. We are not able. But he is. He is. He is.

[24:52] He is able. He is able. Nehemiah kept on encouraging these discouraged ones. He kept on exhorting. He kept on lifting them up in faith. He kept on telling them, keep up the fight.

Keep up the fight. Verse 14. Be not afraid of them. Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren. In other words, he was awesome.

God is great and awesome. He strikes terror. He's terrible. He strikes terror in the hearts of the lost. It's a frightful thing. It's a dreadful thing. A fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God. That's what the enemies of God face. That will be their end.

God is great and he's terrible. Thank God to those that are saved, he is great. To those he has lost, who is lost, he is terrible. And he says, fight. Fight for your brethren.

[25:49] Fight for your sons. Fight for your daughters. Fight for your wives. Fight for your houses. Fight. Fight. Don't give up the fight, Christian soldier.

There's much battle yet ahead. Keep up the fight. Keep up the fight. There's military men and women who know what I'm talking about. I've only been a weekend warrior.

You know, I was just a make-believe soldier. But we need to keep up the fight, brothers and sisters. There's a fight on. A fight is on. We need to get in the trenches and fight on the front lines.

Fight for your families, it says. Nehemiah was a role model of faith. He organised that the people would have both work and weapons. It says, verse 17 of 4, it says, everyone with one of his hands brought in the work and with the other hand he held a weapon.

He stationed people in strategic places. armed and dangerous. And even those labouring on the wall, they had a sword and a trowel.

[27:01] They had the work of the wall building but they also had a weapon in their side ready to use.

Isn't that true of us Christians today? A sword of the spirit. A sword of the spirit. Amen. That's the sword we need, isn't it? We need God's word. We need God's truth. We need God's armour, the whole armour of God that we may overcome, that we may stand and win.

Everyone had a weapon. And friends, Nehemiah kept on in the fight of faith and he said, faith is the victory.

In effect, he said, our God shall fight for us. We are not able. Amen. Who can say amen to that? Amen. We are not able. But God is able.

God is able to fight for us. Our God shall fight for us. Chapter 4, verse 20. This is the victory that overcomes the world, even our faith.

[28:08] Amen. Faith is the victory. Our God shall fight for us. We go on to chapter 5 and we see the noble leadership of Nehemiah.

What a testimony, what an example and we're all in leadership. Leadership is not just for the select few that has some title or some up front responsibility.

You are all leaders. Everyone that is younger than you looks up to you. Let's face it. Everyone that is younger than you, maybe some that are older than you, look up to you.

They look to you for the example of your life. Nehemiah was an example of a noble leader. And when famine struck in chapter 5, the poor were mortgaged to the hilt, borrowing money for food and taxes.

They sold themselves into slavery in chapter 5. The people were burdened in debt and bondage and they cried out. And Nehemiah noticed that it was the nobles, the rulers, in chapter 5, verse 7, who were using and abusing their position.

[29:12] That happens in churches today. Leaders fleecing the sheep. He rebuked them. He rebuked the nobles and the rulers in chapter 5, verse 7.

And he called the rulers and nobles to release the poor from their debts, to give back their feils, to call the people back to the fear of God. Chapter 5, verse 9.  
He says to the rulers, ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God? And through his noble leadership, he confronted these ones that needed a rebuke.  
And he set the people free from their bondage into praise. And all the people said, Amen! Amen!  
And praised the Lord! There was glory there because of noble leadership.  
We see also Nehemiah, he had humility. He was a servant leader. He showed self-sacrifice. In chapter 5, 14 through 15, we read that he even made no claim of his rightful rights as the governor. [30:19] He was entitled to payment, he was entitled to privilege, and his servants likewise, but he refused it. He rejected it rather to honour God.

His life was filled with the sense of the fear of God. And Nehemiah identified himself with the people, with the everyday people, so much that he worked alongside them. It says, I continued in the work of this wall.

I, Nehemiah was there. Nehemiah was there as the bricklayer. Nehemiah was there as the craftsman. Nehemiah was there as the one bearing the sweat and toil of the day. Nehemiah was there rolling up his sleeves and getting down to business alongside the people of God. Nehemiah was servants. He could have stayed in his ivory tower and just sat back and let others bear the burden of the day.

But no, Nehemiah was humble. He was a servant leader. And he was generous. In chapter 5, verse 17, furthermore it says that he was generous such that everyday people he welcomed around the governor's table.

[31:28] Everyday people he fed at the governor's table, chapter 5, verse 17. He didn't let the position go to his head. Some people are like that. You give them a title and then they start, you know, walking a bit taller and looking a little bit well puffed up.

God forbid. God forbid. I'd rather you didn't have a title. I'd rather you did not have a title and just did the work. Amen. You know, some people, some churches, they make a big hullabaloo about all the particular positions and structures and hierarchies and who's above who and who reports to who. We're brethren. Brethren. Brethren. In chapter 6 it goes on, there was a dependence on God throughout the book. We see that. The work was almost complete.

Then the enemies come along and say, hey, come over here. Come over here, Nehemiah. Let's have a little talk. Let's have some dialogue. Let's have some dialogue.

Come let us meet together. Let's get together. Let's have an ecumenical meeting. Let's all get together and hold hands and sing songs about Jesus.

[32:46] That happens today. I've seen just a recent news report, some big meeting in, I think it's in the UK, the River of Life Conference.

They've got everybody there. They've got the Catholics there too. They've got Hillsong there. Everybody's there. It's one big party. It doesn't matter whether they worship Mary and they bow down to images and they've got no idea about salvation.

Let's all get together. You know, I was amazed lately. I had a letter from the Mormon Church. The Mormon Church invited me to an interfaith meeting.

This is happening in Elizabeth. An interfaith meeting. Of course, I told her I wasn't really that interested. Interfaith.

We've seen that more and more. It's beyond just churches getting together. Sometimes you could argue the point about some of that.

[33:50] Certainly as like-minded churches are going to get together. with like believers who share our love and devotion to the Word of God and salvation by faith and God's grace.

But not a blurring of the lines where it's anything goes. And we're seeing that where it's interfaith now. That means, as you see in America, they call this thing called Chris-land.

Chris-land. Christianity and Islam somehow kind of being melded together in some hodgepodge mishmash mayhem. Interfaith is very dangerous stuff.

Let us all get together. Nehemiah would not. He didn't want to have some powwow with God's enemies. His priority was to do what God had given him to do.

I'm doing a great work. I cannot come down. I'm not going to waste my time. My time is too precious for the kingdom of God that this work cease and I leave it and come down to bed.

[34:57] Friends, we see this confusion today. God is not the author of it. God is not the author of confusion. Absolutely not.

The enemy accused him of slander. Chapter 6, verse 6. What did Nehemiah do? He prayed again. Oh God, strengthen my hands. Friends, God is our strength.

God is our strength. Depend upon him. Upon his truth. Upon prayer. Depend upon him. And then we see in verses 15 of chapter 6.

The wall is finished. 52 days. Engineers apparently marvel today. How they could have done this with volunteer labour. I know what volunteer labour is like.

We have lots of volunteers in this church. Volunteers. Does the work get done? Sometimes it doesn't. It gets missed. Friends, the wall was restored because the people had a mind to work.

[35:59] Not a mind to say I'm going to work, but a mind to actually work. The wall was finished. The wall was finished through volunteer labour without modern equipment.

And even the enemies of God, they saw these things and they said, this work is wrought of God. They perceived, even the enemies of God perceived that the work was God's work.

Friends, God has given each of us a work to do. you and he will perform it in you. He will perform it. You are his workmanship created to this end.

Nehemiah had completed his mission. What a testimony it was and even the enemies of God perceived and gave glory to God. Just to wrap up, Nehemiah was much more than restoring a wall. The book goes on. The book goes on. The wall was restored and the word was restored. The word of God was restored.

[37:07] In chapter 8 verse 1 it says, the people gathered themselves together as one man in the street. They got there before the water gate it says, and they asked Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses.

They gathered together as one man in the street. They asked Ezra bring the book, bring the book. And Ezra brought the book and he read it to the congregation to all that could hear with understanding.

And I've been speaking to some folk of late and I've seen a book called, a film called divided. Some churches don't want to divide everybody up. Now, as a church we do have a youth group as an outreach, we do have a Sunday school as an outreach.

But by and large God's plan is that families will hear the word together. That God helping me, what I speak is clear enough that all can understand it.

That all of us can hear with understanding. Young and old, every age. That the word of God can come across clearly. He read right through the day from morning to midday.

[38:18] So we've got another half an hour yet? And the people, those that could hear, those that could understand, and friends, 8 verse 3, it says all the people were attentive.

The ears of all the people were attentive. Chapter 8 verse 3, they paid attention to God's word. I heard a preacher lately, he said that someone interrupted him in the sermon and said they wanted to be saved.

That's good news, isn't it? I like interruptions like that. If you want to be saved, yell out. Anytime, I'll be happy to hear from you. But they were attentive to the word. That man that yelled out, he said I want to be saved, tell me how I can be saved.

He was attentive to the word. That's what we need this morning. That's what we need every day when we have church. People who are receptive to the word of God. Receptive to it. Attentive to it.

Paying attention to it. And it goes on that they stood up as he preached. In chapter 8 verse 5 it says when he opened the book all the people stood up.

[39:21] They showed a reverence for the word of God. That's a good thing. We don't make that a tradition or an enforced thing in our church. Sometimes the preacher will say let's stand for the reading of God's word.

I think that's a good practice. It's a good practice. We don't make it a law but it is a good practice to revere this book. To revere the word of God. This is not something to take lightly.

I know a person was telling us Wednesday night they've got the Reader's Digest Bible now. 40% of it is missing. God help us. God help us. We need the book.

We need the book. Not cut bits and pieces out of it. We need the book. And they stood up when the word of God was read. They had a reference for it. And verse 6 today it says that Andrew blessed the Lord the great God.

And all the people said Amen. Amen. The word was restored. And lifting up their hands they bowed their heads. You might not see this picture that clearly but there's people bowing down.

[40:24] Imagine the occasion of it. The wonder. Oh the reverence of it. We're missing that church. We're missing that church. Now there's a time for a bit of humour and enjoyment but there's also that time of reverence.

Of reverence. Of honouring him. And they bowed their heads to the ground lifting up their hands. What a sight it would have been as all the people were attentive and they praised.

The word was restored. They worshipped the Lord with their faces to the ground. And there we see the worship was restored as well. It says there was very great gladness.

The worship was restored. All the people wept as they heard the words of the Lord. They received it with tender heartedness, with reverence, with obedience, with gladness.

And God restored the worship. It had been neglected. The word had been neglected as well as the wall and the worship had been neglected as well. It was revival.

[41:27] Real. Real revival. It was revival. Revival. Because the people heard the word, they were attentive unto it and they acted upon it.

God's word brings revival. God's word brings life. We need more and more and more of the word to get saturated in the word of God.

God's word brings life. And it says there was very great gladness. chapter 8 verse 17. There was a restoration of the feast. They restored the worship that had been neglected.

There was a very great gladness. And they stood up as they read the word and for one fourth part of the day. They read the Bible.

Read your Bible. Read your Bible. Read it. Read it. Read it. Read it. Read it. Read it. One fourth part of the day. That's a bit of time, isn't it? That's not just a little five minute kind of thing.

[42:29] And then verse 3 of chapter 9. Another fourth part. They confessed. They confessed and they worshipped the Lord their God. They read the word.

They confessed. There was repentance and they worshipped the Lord their God. A restoration, a revival. How we need that today. Don't we need that today?

Don't we need revival today? Here? Now? Right now? We need revival. We need to read it and heed it and worship.

Repentance was there in chapter 9 verse 3. They worshipped the Lord their God. The worship was restored.

We can see them as you can imagine in David's day as the ark was transported. as there was a great jubilation and reception of the holy things being restored.

[43:24] And he said, the Levites said, stand up and bless the Lord your God forever and ever. This is an eternal thing. This is not about this time and place.

Worship is forever. We ought to learn how to do it. Amen? We're going to have a long time doing it. Worship the Lord. Stand up and bless the Lord your God. And blessed be thy glorious name which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

And Nehemiah prayed, God you are ready to pardon. Merciful, gracious, slow to anger of great kindness. holiness. What a restoration it was.

With gladness, with thanksgivings, with singing, etc. And the priests and Levites purified themselves and purified the people and the gates and the wall.

Just the last remark here, it's important, holiness. Holiness is important. I was talking with someone lately how I grieve as a parent that it happened.

[44:37] My children went to Youth Alive, Youth Alive when I was a young dad, and they learned to do headbanging there. I didn't teach them that.

They didn't get it from going to a rock concert, they learned it from going to a Christian event. Holiness. Holiness. Holiness.

There's people that are coming here, I know Brother Brad makes no secret of it, how he left where he was because there wasn't any holiness there. It was the world and the love of the world and the things of the world.

God have mercy. Life's too short to play with fire and to play with the world. We need to be restoring God's truth.

Holiness. Holiness. We're not talking about going around wearing funny hats and riding in buggies and having a sombre, sorrowful face, but the reality of Christ, of the reality of a life lived in his service, of having that purifying of our hearts by faith.

[45:45] Not a holier than thou where we look down on others or we have a dress code that others have got to measure up to because of our own preconceptions of such things.

as much as we want to dress appropriately. But holiness is much more than all of those measures of men. It's about a measure of the heart. That's what we need, a purifying of ourselves.

Friends, just to recap, Nehemiah, he had heart. He heard of the name. He had heart. It prompted him to pray. He prayed some three months. Then it prompted him to action in faith.

Nehemiah was such a man. His heart was open. He prayed. He took action in faith.

He urged the people to mobilize no matter what the opposition and to persist and persevere. He urged the people to keep up the fight. And friends, we've been talking in an analogy of the wall being built.

[46:53] We're building today. You're building today. You're building in your families. You're building in your life. You're building in your Christian wall. Keep up the fight. There will be opposition.

Show noble leadership. Trust in him for strength. Have humility and depend upon him today. And we will see revival.

A restoration of biblical truth. A restoration of the wall, as it were. That which God has called us to do will be built. We need a restoration of the word and a restoration of the worship.

Let us pray. God