

Nehemiah

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[0:00] Nehemiah, one of the greatest heroes of the Bible is Nehemiah.

And we meet Nehemiah first up in a Persian palace as the king's cupbearer, a high official in the Persian court. And as a cupbearer, he was in a trusted position, a responsible position.

The king entrusted his own life to Nehemiah because he would taste the food and drink before the king to ensure it wasn't poisoned. Nehemiah, he was a man of influence, a man of integrity.

He was trustworthy, a confidant of the king who would always be at the king's side. He would have eaten the very best of food, worn the best of clothes, lived in such comfort in the palace.

And in the book of Nehemiah, we're going to travel with Nehemiah as he starts there as the king's cupbearer in the palace, then as the builder of the walls of Jerusalem, and lastly as the governor of Israel.

[1:10] And we would do well to learn from Nehemiah today. Nehemiah was a praying man, a faithful man, a man of the word, a man of courage, a man of God.

And reading Nehemiah chapter 1, we see prayerful Nehemiah. Firstly, we see Nehemiah got a burden. He saw the need. He heard the need. The broken down walls of Jerusalem.

In Nehemiah 1, from verse 1 through 4. And here we see what could be a representation of the Persian king, for example.

Nehemiah in the palace. Verse 1. The words of Nehemiah, the son of Harkaliah. And it came to pass in the month of Chislu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan, the palace, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came.

He and certain men of Judah. They came into the palace, brought news. And I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, concerning Jerusalem.

[2:20] He asked them, what's happening back home? Verse 3. And they said unto me, the remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach.

The wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire. The walls of Jerusalem.

We can ask, what's so important about walls being broken down? When we think of walls back in biblical times, it especially gave safety to the people.

And separation for the people. These walls, these huge stone walls, surrounded the cities as a defence. They were gated.

And those gates were guarded. And from the tops of these walls, these huge walls, watchmen would look out over the horizon to see, through great distances, whether anyone was coming and approaching the city.

[3:24] Whether it was visitors or invaders. And the watchmen kept watch day and night, day and night. And here at the gates of the city, the city leaders would gather.

And there they would conduct the business of the city. And make the decisions for the city. So the conditions of the walls and the gates of the city were very important.

It showed the pride or the reproach of the city, depending on the condition. And the city's walls gave it that safety, that separation, that safety. The protection that it needed.

And that separation. The walls were like a defence from invaders. And a city with broken walls was one that was defenceless against enemy attacks.

This was a big deal. It was certainly something serious for Nehemiah to hear this news back home that the walls were broken down.

[4:20] The walls were meant to keep the wrong people out and let the right people in through the gates. The walls were for protection and

showed the separation between God's people and the pagan world.

God's enemies. God is not glorified when the walls are broken down. When his people profess to believe but are not living any different from the world.

There should be a safety and a separation. And we're meant to be different from the world around us. People of God. We're meant to be the family of God.

The household of God. A distinctive people. Different from the rest of the world. As God's own precious people. And we're meant to think different. To have different values.

Different priorities. In how we relate to God and to one another. Friends. An evil agenda is being foisted on our world today.

[5:25] Turn on the TV. Hear the latest news. The latest media. The latest crazy talk. About what the world is swallowing these days. And going along with. And promoting.

An evil agenda. It's being foisted on us. And we have a duty to our families. To stand. There's a mass of social engineering going on.

A worldwide propaganda. From the USA. In every nation. And it's influencing this nation. And changing us. We're being changed.

By the change agents. So we need some walls. Don't we? We need some walls. Don't we? Walls that will help us. To stand strong for the Lord. To have that purity.

It's God's own people. Not a holier than thou. Looking down on others. But because we love our Lord. We want that godliness. We want to have that truth. We want to have that faithfulness to our God.

[6:21] Because the walls are getting broken down people. In our land. In our world. And the walls need rebuilding today. Nehemiah heard of those walls broken down. And the gates burnt with fire.

God's people were in great distress. And with troops. So what happened next? We see Nehemiah's response. What was Nehemiah's response?

This godly man. This prayerful man. He saw the great need. And he was burdened in his heart.

Verse 4. And it came to pass. When I heard these words.

That I sat down and I wept. And I mourned certain days. And fasted and prayed. Before the God of heaven. His first response. Nehemiah's first response. Was heartfelt prayer.

He poured out his heart before God. Why did Nehemiah react like this? Because the city of God. The place where God had placed his name. Was dishonoured. The sacred city was in shambles.

[7:20] The walls were in ruins. The gates were burned. So firstly he mourned. He wept. He fasted. He prayed for days. Seeking for God. To do something.

About this difficult situation. And God did respond. And do something. Through Nehemiah.

Sometimes what happens isn't it? When God gives you a burden.

God's telling you to do something. God's telling us to do something. About the situation. So Nehemiah was burdened by the need. Of God's own people. He wept for his city.

Oughtn't we to weep for our city. To weep for our land. To weep for our government. Our governors. Our sin. Evil is at the gates.

And our Lord wants us to have the same heart of Nehemiah. His heart. His compassion. To sense the need and to take action. And so Nehemiah.

[8:16] What did he do? He prayed. He prayed earnestly. And in his prayer. Nehemiah repented. He recognised his own sin. He identified that he himself was a part of the problem.

In verse 6 he says. We have sinned against thee. And he said. I beseech thee O Lord God of heaven. The great and the terrible God.

That keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him. And observe his commandments. And then it says in verse 6 there. Let thine ear now.

Be attentive. And thine eyes open. That thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant. Which I pray before thee now. Day and night. For the children of Israel thy servants.

And confess the sins of the children of Israel. Which we have sinned. We. He included himself. We have sinned against thee. Both I and my father's house have sinned.

[9:15] Nehemiah wasn't passing the buck. He was a part of acknowledging his own need. His own lack. Verse 7. We have kept. We have dealt very corruptly against thee.

And have not kept the commandments. Nor the statutes. Nor the judgments. Which thou commandest thy servant Moses. He acknowledged we've sinned. We've not kept the word. At the heart of mankind's problems is sin. It's not. Whatever the government rattles off as all the big priorities. At the heart of Australia's problems is sin.

And our greatest national need is not some new budget measure. Or some new program. Or some new expenditure. Or revenue raising. It's sin.

That's Australia's problem. And Nehemiah acknowledged this in his prayer. He acknowledged God's great redeeming power. And he prayed on behalf of his nation. What did we?

[10:13] To pray for Australia. He saw at the heart of the problem was the nation strained from God's ways. And like Nehemiah we should be moved to pray. Moved to pray sister.

Moved to pray brother. And our prayer should be joined with action. Nehemiah's wasp. Nehemiah committed himself to God. Despite the many difficulties. As we see through the book.

And we're just really hop skipping and jumping through the book. Because we can't do it justice in just this short time. But despite his many difficulties. Nehemiah prayed. He prayed through.

And his prayer had action. Nehemiah waited on God in prayer. For four months. Four months. He was burdened.

And he was praying. Before the opportunity came up for Nehemiah to come. And talk to the king. And so we see next Nehemiah's action. Nehemiah took action.

[11:07] He combined his faith with action. And we too ought to do so. That our faith is not just token words. Some glib profession. Mouthing words. Nehemiah could have stayed where he was.

He was living a comfortable life. He was living in the luxury of the palace. And Nehemiah yet was willing to take this awesome risk.

To give it all up. To lay it all on the altar. His security. His comforts. His convenience. To make that long.

Dangerous. Decision. That journey to Jerusalem. To go and endure hardship. Yet he was willing. To risk everything. To lay it all on the line. And to make a personal sacrifice. In chapter 2. We see Nehemiah. Faces up to the king.

[12:07] The king himself. Face to face. Eye to eye. With the king. A mighty ruler. Courageously. And prayerfully.

He steps in. Before the king. From verse 4. Of Nehemiah 2. Then the king said unto me. The king saw that Nehemiah was troubled. He said. For what?

Dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. Here he was. He said a prayer. I suppose. Under his breath. Within his heart. As he was challenged.

He prayed. As he. Was about to speak. And so too we. Sometimes we don't have time to go to a prayer meeting. But we have time to pray.

We can make time to pray. Even in the day by day decision. Of the moment we can pray. In that moment. That's what Nehemiah did. And verse 5. As he prayed.

[13:01] He said. Unto the king. If it please. The king. And if thy servant have found. Favor in thy sight. That thou wouldest. Send me. Unto Judah. Unto the city of my father's sepulchers.

That I may build it. The city of my father's tombs. Send me to my city. Send me. That I may build it. Send me. That I may build it. And the Persian king.

What did he do? Amazingly. He granted permission. For Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem. And. What's more. The king even gave blessing. And resources. Truly a blessing.

That the king would be. So generous to Nehemiah. It speaks of Nehemiah's. Integrity. Of his character. That the king. Valued him. And so Nehemiah. And so Nehemiah then went.

And inspected the walls. By night. And. Verse 13 of chapter 2. It says. That he went out by night. He viewed the walls. Which were broken down.

[13:59] And the gates. And then he went to the people. In verse 17. And he called the people. To action. Nehemiah prayed. Took action. That he

called the people of God. To further action.

In verse 17. Then, I said I answer them. 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 up the wall. Of Jerusalem. That we be no more. A reproach.

He exhorted the people. He said. Come. Let's get together. Let's build up the wall. Of Jerusalem.

He says. Come. Let us build. Brothers and sisters.

We're called to be builders. In a world. Where everything's being broken down. When the gates have been smashed. And burnt up. When the walls have come tumbling down. There's no separation. There's no consideration.

[14:54] Of God's honour. Of God's glory. Of the. What matters.

Everything's being trashed. In our world today. Come.

Let us build. Let us build. We need to be builders. Builders of our families. Builders of our homes. Builders of our own faith. Builders together for God. To work.

To labour. To be about the task. That really matters. To be about the work. Of building up God's kingdom. To work. To labour. For God.

So Nehemiah. Beckoned the people. In verse 18. Then I told them. Of the hand of my God. Which was good upon me. As also the king's words. That he had spoken unto me.

And they said. Let us. Rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands. For this work. The people.

[15:49] He exhorted them. Come and let us build. They said. Yes. Let us.

Rise up and build. That was the people of God. Getting enthused. Getting motivated. Getting into action.

And Nehemiah already had people. Hell bent against him at this time. Chapter 2 verse 10. Some were grieved exceedingly. At the idea. They didn't want Nehemiah.

On the scene. They didn't want Nehemiah. Interfering. With what. Was going on. And these were. Insiders. They were grieved exceedingly. They didn't want Nehemiah.

To come. And they opposed him. In chapter 2 verse 19. We hear of Sambalat. The Horonite.

Tobiah the servant. The Ammonite. Geshem the Arabian.

They heard it. And it says. They laughed us to scorn. And despised us. And said. What is this thing. That you do? You can almost hear that. The mocking scorn.

[16:44] And deriding. What is this thing. That you do? Will you rebel against the king? They just mocked him.

And the work. That God had put on his heart to do. Verse 20. It says. Then answered I them. And said unto them. The God of heaven. He will prosper us. Therefore we his servants.

Will arise and build. He have no portion. Nor right. Nor memorial. In Jerusalem. Nehemiah stood firm. He told them how it was. He went to mobilize the people.

To rebuild the walls. So that God's name would be honored. Amongst his people. And it was a team effort. We see that there. In chapter 3. The work being done. By all sorts. All sorts.

All sorts. And sizes. And shapes. And kinds of people. Everybody. Got their hands dirty. As it were. And got stuck into. This team effort. Of building this wall.

[17:40] We see here. In chapter 3. We see. Priests. And leaders. Ordinary people. Women. Perfumers. Goldsmiths. All kinds of people.

Got about. The work of building the wall. But verse 5 says. Of some. That were nobles. That were leaders. In Tekoa. They put not their necks. To the work of their Lord.

You know. Some people. Are kind of half-hearted. Aren't they? They're stiff-necked. When there's a work to be done. They'll find an excuse. To get out of it. They'll find a reason.

To shirk. To not. Work. Let's not be like. The nobles. Of Tekoa. Amen. In chapter 3. Verse 5. They put not their necks.

To the work of the Lord. Let's. Be in. All in. Out for God. All out for God. Pull out all the stops. Don't hold back.

[18:34] If God puts something on your heart to do. Give it your utmost.

Your most. Your best. So we see in chapter 3. Numbers of gates here. And these gates.

Were restored. The gates that had been burnt down. We're restored. And each gate. Speaks of a spiritual truth. That we can make application of.

Now. Different people interpret them differently. I'm just putting one interpretation. You could. Think of it differently from this. This is just. To reflect. To reflect.

Spiritual truth. So we could. Interpret. From. The gates. Of Jerusalem. Spiritual truths. Or doctrines. If you like. So we see here. The Jerusalem. Of Nehemiah's time. Nehemiah's Jerusalem. And we're going to travel with Nehemiah.

[19:30] Around the gates. Of the city. Of Jerusalem. Now. I was blessed. Myself. My wife and I. At our own expense. We went to Israel. And we saw.

Jerusalem. And. We were. Grateful. For that privilege. Of course. We know. The Jerusalem. That is there now. Is much different. And.

Probably. Scarcely. Much left. Of. Biblical times. But yet. There is these walls. It's an impressive. Site. To see. These walls. Around the city.

Of Jerusalem. These gates. Grand gates. And. It's an awesome site. And. There's one. One morning. Julia. Wanted to stay. Home.

We were staying. Very close. To the old city. Of Jerusalem. And so. I went. And had a jog. Around Jerusalem. I know there's a jogger. Here this morning. And I had. I had a jog.

[20:25] Around Jerusalem. And it took me. One hour. To go right around. The whole city. Around. The whole city. In a big circle. I didn't go around. Seven times. Because I thought. That might be done. But. I went.

I went. Around the ones. And it only took. One hour. To get around. You know. Jogging. At a fair place. And just to. To take it in. The atmosphere. It was just a wonderful.

Experience. And so. We see that. Here is Jerusalem. The city. And these gates. So. We are just going to. We are just going to. Quickly. Just touch on. The gates of Jerusalem. We are going to go around.

In the order that Nehemiah. Talks of them. In an anti-clockwise direction. So. Firstly. We see. The sheep gate. The sheep gate. Chapter 3.

Verse 1. And the shepherds. Were bringing their flocks. Through this gate. And they would keep them. In the safety of the folds. Within the city walls. The sheep gate.

[21:20] It speaks to us. We are called sheep. That's God's own people. And of our good shepherd. And this gate. Was where the sheep. And the lambs.

Were also brought. For the sacrifice. Into the city. So it speaks to us. Of our great shepherd. Who laid down his life. For the sheep. The sheep. And the shepherd.

The sheep gate. Secondly. We see. The fish gate. The fish gate. Here is. What they call. St. Peter's fish. From the Sea of Galilee. I was able to have.

A meal of. One of these. And. To sit around. The Sea of Galilee. And. It was quite a warm day. So I actually. I.

Took a quick. Jump into the Sea of Galilee. I tried to walk on water. But it didn't work. But I. Went into the Sea of Galilee. And had a little swim. And dived in. And just imagine.

[22:14] What it would be like. For. For Peter. As he dived in. Swam to shore. And what it would be like. To be. Swimming in the Sea of Galilee. But. Here we see. The. What they call.

St. Peter's fish. And. The fish gate. Speaks. Of. How the fishermen. Of Galilee. Would bring their catch. To be sold. In the city of Jerusalem.

And we could consider. How fish. Speaks to us. Of evangelism. Because what are we to be. Fishers of men. Fishers of men. Matthew 4.19.

We're called to be fishers of men. So we think of the fish gate. Thirdly. We see. The next gate. Is the old gate. The old gate. In verse 6. It speaks. Perhaps you could reflect.

Of foundational doctrine. You know. Sometimes people these days. Think. They kind of laugh at what's old. And people that are old. But really. There's a lot of wisdom.

[23:09] In ancient people. You know. People with grey hair. Now hopefully. They've got a bit of wisdom. Hopefully. I'm learning a bit more wisdom. As I get a bit gray. Now it doesn't always follow. The grey hair.

Is wisdom. But. Hopefully. They go together. But. The old gate. Now sometimes people. Mock and scorn. Old things. But. The Bible. Praises. Old paths.

Doesn't it? And. Not saying that everything. Old is necessarily. Good. And everything new. Is necessarily bad. But it says in Proverbs 22. 28. Remove not the ancient landmarks. Which my fathers. Thy fathers have said. The old truths of scripture. The old doctrines. We need to get back to them. Brothers and sisters. Then we see. The next gate.

Is the valley gate. Verse 13. This gate. Was at a low point. In the terrain. And when we think of valleys. We can think. How are we to humble ourselves. Under the mighty hand of God.

[24:04] How are we to trust him. Through those humbling times. Through those valley times. Those times of trials. And of humbling. It's for our personal growth.

And it helps us too. To reflect those that are brought down. And brought low. To reach out. In ministries of compassion. And caring. Those people in need. The next gate.

The next gate. Is the dung gate. Verse 14. And I've got a picture here. Of a dump burning. Because that was what it was. There was a dump burning. The valley of Hinnom.

We see. And it reflects hell. Old Jerusalem's refuse. And rubbish. Was thrown out onto this dump. This dump pile. This dung gate.

And the gate. Which speaks of. God's work of cleansing. And of a purging. And refining. Don't we need that? Brothers and sisters. Our Lord says. He's like a refiner's fire.

[25:00] And so God's spirit. Wants to cleanse this church. Cleanse the church. Of corruption and sin. And our lives. Of the rubbish. That accumulates. We need to go to the dung gate sometimes.

And throw some things out. Don't we? Amen. Next one is the fountain gate. Verse 15. This gate speaks of the moving of God's spirit. Of his converting.

As we see that everlasting life is like an everlasting fountain. A well. Springing up. It speaks of God's ministry. Of saving. Of refreshing.

Likewise we can see the water gate. Of verse 26. In Ephesians 5.26. It tells us that the church is cleansed. It's cleansed. By the washing of water. By the word.

This is what the church needs. The washing of water. By the word. That cleansing action. Of God's ministry. Through his word. We read how the word. Keeps us clean.

[25:57] In Psalm 119 verse 9. How shall a young man cleanse his way.

Taking heed to this. Amen. Amen. Next one is the horse gate. The horse gate.

Verse 28. And the horse gate was close to the king's stables. Where the men of Jerusalem would ride their horses out. To war. So we could reflect.

Perhaps that could indicate the spiritual war that we're engaged in. And the horse speaks of endurance of discipline. Of strength. Horses were used in battle. And they were a symbol of war. In case you didn't realise that we are at war. We are at war with our world. With those who are outside of God. Who refuse God. We're against that.

And we stand for the truth. For God and his truth. And so we should be strong. And obey and go where he sends us. Just like a horse is trained and disciplined.

[26:55] And used the master. Next we see the east gate. In Nehemiah 3.29. And this east gate. It stands. Alongside the Mount of Olives.

The east gate is boarded up at the moment. The east. We know that east speaks of the new day dawning. It speaks of yesterday gone. And of God's new purposes.

And the east gate opens to the Mount of Olives. Where our Lord will return. Our Lord will return and will stand on that mount. And Jerusalem. By the east gate.

He will enter. And it speaks of the restoration of the church. And of the return of our Lord. The east gate. One day that gate is going to be busted wide open.

And Jesus is going to come to his city. The city of Jerusalem. To this planet. And take it back in his rightful reign. And then we see. The last one.

[27:53] In Nehemiah 3. Is the gate Mithcad. Or you could call it the inspection gate. Mithcad. It means assignment. Numbering. And each one of us are numbered in God's plan.

He knows your number. He knows the hairs on your head. He knows who you are. He knows everything about you. And according to tradition. It was at this gate. That David would meet his troops.

And inspect them. You know. I was in the scouts. And in the army reserves. You know. And you stand in line. And they come and scrutinise every little aspect of your uniform. To make sure everything's just so. And in place. An inspection happens. That's what David did. For his troops. Tradition tells us. And so this final gate is the inspection gate. You know. One day we've got to be examined. We talked about examination. One day we've got to be examined by our Lord. Our Lord God. And it speaks of the examination of our lives by the Lord. [28:51] You know. As believers we're saved. We're assured of heaven. Our sins been paid. And the penalty for it. We face no judgement. But we do face the judgement.

Of the judgement seat of Christ. It says every one of us. Shall give account. How that judgement seat of Christ. Of 1 Corinthians 3. 2 Corinthians 5. Every believer.

Our lives will be inspected. And rewards will be given. So ought it to live. In the light. Of the east gate. Of the inspection gate. That one day.

An examination will happen. And we'll stand before our Lord. And we'll have to give account. Of ourselves. And ought it to live our lives now. With that eternity in view. To care more for the things of eternity.

To care more for the things of our Lord. Than these passing fancies here. Back to Nehemiah. Chapter 4 and 5. We see that Nehemiah. Faced many problems and trials.

[29:49] Now we can learn from how Nehemiah. Responded to these problems and trials. You know sometimes when problems come. We throw our hands up in the air. And pull our hair out. And we struggle.

And wonder what's going on. Nehemiah teaches us how to handle our problems. He faced each obstacle. And overcame them. One by one.

He faced opposition. From without. And from within. Ridicule. Physical threats. Scorn. Slander. Personal attacks. He had to overcome fear.

Conflict. Disunity. Discouragement. From his own workers. And many difficulties. And problems. But they did not stop Nehemiah. Let's be unstoppable like Nehemiah.

Amen. Be unstoppable like Nehemiah. Whatever problem. Whatever difficulty. That you face. Let it not deter you. Let it not stop you. Let it not hinder you.

[30:45] Nehemiah. Nehemiah. He met his problems. Head on. How? He prayed. Says verse 4. Of chapter 4. Hear. O our God. For we are despised.

And turn their reproach upon. Their own head. And give them for a prey. In the land of captivity. Mockery. Discouragement. What did he do? Nehemiah prayed. And he trusted in the Lord.

And the people persevered. And they pulled together. And they worked together. In verse 6 it says. That the people built the wall. And the wall was joined together.

Unto the half thereof. Why? For the people had a mind to work. Amen. Now brothers and sisters. Pray for such a mind.

Pray for such a mind. The people had a mind to work. To determine that you're going to serve God. To determine that you're going to put your feet into motion.

[31:42] And do something for God's glory. That's what these people did. And it was all to God's glory. And so Nehemiah faced attacks against him. With confidence and with prayer. And the next one it says.

Verse 9 of 4. Nevertheless we made our prayer unto God. Here they were. Enemies assailing them. Working on the wall. It tells how they held a weapon in one hand.

And they worked with the other. And it says that they set a watch against them day and night. Opposition grew. And friends as a Christian. You can be certain of this.

That as you stand for the Lord. You will face opposition. You have a committed enemy. And he's against you. And he'll use people. Against you.

And so. Nehemiah trusted in the Lord. And he defended the wall. Verse 10 it says. Some grew discouraged. It says Judah said.

[32:43] The strength of the burdens. The bearers of burdens is decayed. And there is much rubbish. So that we're not able to build the wall. Now maybe they should have gone to the dung gate. Threw out some of that rubbish.

Now sometimes we've got to ask God to help us. Clear some things out. And their strength was decayed. They were saying we're not able. But Nehemiah urged them. You know sometimes you've got to say to your brothers.

Your sisters. We're called to edify one another. Build one another up. The Bible says exalt one another. Encourage one another. Comfort one another. Speak to one another. Encourage one another.

It's God's people. And so Nehemiah did this. And he rose up and he said. Verse 14. Be not afraid of them. He says remember the Lord which is great and terrible.

And fight for your brethren, your daughters, your sons, your wives, your houses. You know brothers and sisters. These are days again. I know I'm possibly sounding a bit like a kind of a little heavy here.

[33:43] But we are engaged in a fight. It's a fight for our lives. It's a fight for our families. You know we need some walls. What do I mean?

Let me try to make it. Let me get right down to that very personal level. You know sometimes it's that effluent pipe that pumps things into your lounge room.

Sometimes we've got to put a wall up. Now in that technology terms they have a firewall to stop certain things coming into your computer. Now there's a sense we've got to put a wall up to stop some of that stuff coming into our homes.

Into our lives. Into our children's minds. And so Nehemiah says it's time to fight. Take it seriously. When you're slacking the enemy's still actively doing his bit.

And so verse 17 it says that everyone had in his hand a weapon. So Nehemiah stood strong. He took firm action to set things right.

[34:46] And he rallied the people. In verse 20 of Nehemiah 4 it says, In what place therefore you hear the sound of the trumpet? Resort you thither unto us. For our God shall fight for us.

He says to the people fight for your families. And he says our God will fight for us. He will fight for us. So we laboured in the work. Half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

It was around the clock. And we need to maintain that vigil. Like a watchman on the wall. Day and night. Day and night. We need to maintain that vigil.

We need to maintain that labouring in the work. Verse 21. They laboured in the work. They held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared. Now the enemy doesn't stop.

It's non-stop out there brothers and sisters. And we're in a battle. And sometimes the battle is within too. In our own number. Nehemiah faced a battle of the evil of discord.

[35:49] Discord. Discord. There was strife and infighting. And he rebuked his opponents and he kept on working. He organised the people to fight evil. To be always on guard.

And to keep on working. And brothers and sisters today. It's important that we understand this. This vital truth. That we're engaged in a great battle. A great battle is at hand.

Chapter 6. There's further conspiracies against Nehemiah. And then the enemy comes along and he says. Come on let's make a deal. Come on let's compromise.

Let's find some common ground here. Let's meet and make a compromise. In verse 2 of chapter 6. It says that Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me. Saying come.

Let us meet together. In some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief. But what did Nehemiah say? He said oh no. I'm not going to go to the valley of Ono.

[36:49] I'm not going to come and meet with you. I was able to find this picture of Sanballat and Geshem here. See. There we go.

He says come. Let us meet together. We've got the Pope here. An all manner of flavour of different religions. And they're saying come. Let us meet together. You know there's lots of talk and call for compromise.

For a unity. A false evil unity. Not based on truth. But based on lies. And the people say come. Let us meet together.

But no. Oh no. We don't want to do that. We don't want to meet. And compromise it. Hinders the work of God. And so Nehemiah would not compromise. He said verse 3.

That. I don't have that one on the screen there. But he said. I'm doing a great work. So that I cannot come down. Why should I stop. And leave that. And come down to you.

[37:44] So. You know. The truth is non-negotiable. It hasn't changed. The truth is the truth. It always has been the truth. It always was the truth. And it always will be the truth. And so Nehemiah says.

I cannot come down. I'm doing a great work. I'm serving God. I'm doing the work of God. The truth is non-negotiable. And we need to stand firm. So Nehemiah persisted.

And the wars were completed. In 52 days it says. Chapter 6 verse 15. And it says that. Verse 16 of chapter 6. They perceived that this work.

Was wrought of our God. They didn't claim praise. For Nehemiah's training. Or his schooling. Or his experience. Or his technology. Or his techniques.

They said. Our praise is to God. He's done the work. Or glory. And praise. And honour. Be unto him. This work was wrought. Of our God.

[38:38] Now. We're coming to. Wrap this up here. We've really only looked through. The first part. Of Nehemiah. And Nehemiah really. It has two main themes.

In the first six chapters. We see. The reconstruction. Of the work of God's city. And then. In the latter part. We see. The re-instruction. Of God's people. From chapter 7.

We see. That God's work. Happens. In God's own people. So the work wasn't complete. With just building the wall. Fixing the gates.

There had to be a rebuilding work. Of the people. God's people. The work wasn't complete. So the people were rebuilt. Spiritually.

And likewise. It is for us. That we need to be builders. Be building. Rebuilding. And keep on building. Building up ourselves. In our most holy faith.

[39:37] And so it came. That Ezra. Instructed the people. Ezra the preacher. Came. With God's word. Ezra the preacher. Opened the scroll. Of God's word.

And he instructed the people. And the people listened. And they recognised the sin. In their own lives. And they took some action. Some steps to remove it. So we see. In the latter half.

We're just going to touch quickly on that. In chapters 8 and 9. We see the people gathered. In chapter 8 verse 1. It says. All the people gathered themselves together. As one man.

Now there's a gathering here this morning. We're gathering together. I trust as one man. As one people. As one body. As one family. Of God. Gathering together.

To hear the precious word of God. The words of life. And they called out to Ezra. Bring the book. That's what we need. In some churches.

[40:32] They don't bring the book anymore. It's not. The book is almost secondary. To the entertainment. To the atmosphere. To whatever programs and distractions are going on.

We need to get to be like the people of Israel. Who said to the preacher. Bring the book. Bring the book. And so. Verse 3.

It says that he read. From the morning until midday. He read. Before the water gate. What did we hear about the water gate? The washing of water by the word.

The people came to hear the washing of water by the word. They came to the water gate. And they heard the preacher. From morning until midday. I've still got half an hour. So.

And. It says before the men and the women. And those that could understand. We're not going that long. And the ears of all the people were attentive. Unto the book of the law. The people gathered. The preacher was called.

[41:31] Bring the book. And the ears of all the people. Were attentive. No. They didn't have their iPhones out. I'm sure you're looking up scripture verses. Not texting your friends.

But. They weren't distracted by this and that. They were attentive. They were full attention. To the word of God. Full attention. And you know. One of the greatest revivalists of all. George Whitefield. He recorded his relationship with the scriptures. He said this. I began to read the holy scriptures upon my knees. Laying aside all other books. And praying over.

If possible. Every line. And word. Praying over. Every line. And word. And this proved me indeed. And drink indeed to my soul. I daily receive.

Fresh light. From power. And power. And power from above. I got more true knowledge. From reading the book. Of God. In one month. Than I could have ever acquired.

[42:27] From all the writings of men. And George Whitefield. He was a. Learned man. But he realised the importance of the book. He said to other people. Bring the book. Bring the book.

And because of that. Winfield was mightily used of God. Where thousands. Came into the kingdom of God. Jonathan Goforth was another man.

Called of God. To be greatly used in China. In revival times. 1908. And. He said this. We wish to affirm. We can entertain no hope.

Of a mighty globe. Encircling. Holy Spirit. Revival. Without there being first a. Back to the Bible. Movement. He said there can't be.

There can't be a revival. Except there first be. A back to the Bible. Movement. And. He practised what he preached.

[43:22] For 19 years. This man. Jonathan Goforth. He read the Chinese Bible. New Testament. 55 times. And of course. It was not his first language. And God mightily used this man too.

And so we see that. In Nehemiah's time. Revival came. In verse 5 of Nehemiah 9. He says. Stand up and bless the Lord your God. Forever and ever. We've seen Nehemiah.

We've seen this man. This book. We see this man. This man of God. This man of prayer. This prayerful man. This man of the word. This man of integrity. This man.

Called the people. And the people responded. In prayer. In praise. In worship. And the people gave praise. In Matthew. Nehemiah 9.33. They prayed.

To the Lord. Thou art just. In all that thou brought upon us. For thou hast done right. But we have done wickedly. They recognised their need. They recognised God's.

[44:20] Superintending. Oversight. And so too. We as God's people. We need to recommit. To pray. To fast. To repent. To recommit.

As the people of God. And one of the key themes. Right through the book of Nehemiah. You might want to read it through. For your homework. To maybe recapture some of this. That we've really just glossed over today.

One of the key themes of Nehemiah. Is prayer. And how the Lord hears prayer. And worship. It's at the centre. It's at the life. It's the life of God's people.

And we see this restored. Prayer was restored. The word was restored. And the worship was restored. As Nehemiah rebuked sin. And disobedience. And the people were attentive.

Unto the book. And the people renewed their devotion. Unto the Lord. And there was a renewed separation. The walls were built. The gates were reconstructed. In Nehemiah 13.3.

[45:16] It says that Israel separated. From all the mixed multitude. You know. There's a mixed multitude. Today. Where it's just. A total confusion. Of all manner of doctrine.

You know. Every time I meet someone. They've got lots of baggage. Tuning in to the. Faith prosperity gospel. I mean. Rubbish. It needs to go to the dunga.

And some of that stuff. You know. The faith prosperity gospel. The confusion that abounds.

Amongst God's people. Because they've gone astray. From sound doctrine. And this is not to condemn anyone.

I'm telling you how it is. I'm being honest with you today. And we need to separate. From the mixed multitude. We need to come out. And be separate. And so. Verse 13 of Nehemiah 13.

Leaders were appointed. Who were they? It says. They were counted faithful. The ones who were counted faithful. Were appointed. And God's looking for leadership. God's looking for Nehemiahs.

[46:11] He's looking for men and women. Who will rise up. To that need. To that awesome need. That we have. The gates are burned. And the walls are broken down people. We need to be a faithful people.

That we can be like Nehemiah. And find God's grace. You know. It's wonderful to see. Just to close with. Just one last thought. Is. The book of Nehemiah.

Starts with. A great reproach. The walls are broken down. The city's been trashed. The gates have been burned. It was a great reproach.

The enemy was. Invading. The city was defenseless. The people of God were not separated. And then it closes with a great rejoicing.

A great rejoicing. In Nehemiah 12.43. Says there was great joy. The word. The worship. It was restored.

[47:09] And there was great rejoicing. So friends. How about us. In our land. In our nation. In our city. In our community. There's great reproach. Yeah. Great reproach.

We know what our governments are trying to bring in. It's a great reproach. You know. It says in the word. That sinners are reproached to any people. But righteousness exalts a nation. Yeah.

And we need to get back to the book. Back to the Bible. Back. Bring back the book. Bring the book. Ask the preacher. Bring the book. We need the book. We thank God for faithful Bible preaching.

There's more of it tonight. Bring the book. Come and hear the book. Let your ears be attentive unto the book. God is seeking for a people with a burden. Let's get a burden for our land. Let's get a burden for our world.

Let's get a burden for our nation. For our families. Let's get a burden people of God. And be like Nehemiah and do something about it. God is seeking stealth for a people who will get a burden.

[48:04] And do something. Who will pray and persevere like Nehemiah did. No matter what the opposition. No matter what the dangers and difficulties. No matter what. To be that people willing to sacrifice.

To be that people willing to give ourselves to prayer. And commit our hearts and lives unto him. Amen. Amen.

Thank you.