

Nehemiah

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[0:00] The Lord's comfort and the Lord comfort and the Lord.

And the king of Persia's courts.

A cup bearer. A position of responsibility and of influence. And Nehemiah heard a troubling report from his beloved homeland. We see that in Nehemiah chapter 1.

Nehemiah chapter 1. We're going to travel with Nehemiah through just some snapshots through the key parts of his account. Of the rebuilding of the walls and the reestablishing of the gates of Jerusalem.

And firstly we see the report in Nehemiah chapter 1 verses 3 to 4. It says, And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach.

[1:12] The walls of Jerusalem also is broken down. And the gates thereof are burnt with fire. 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. Let us pray. Lord we thank you for your word. Help us Lord to heed it.

To obey it. Find some truth that we can apply. Lord speak to us we pray. By your word. By your spirit. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. 150 years before Nebuchadnezzar and the armies of Babylon had invaded Israel.

They carried many peoples away as slaves. And Jerusalem was in a terrible condition. The walls were torn down. The place was a shambles. It was a mess.

And God's people were in danger. The gates were opened. There was distress and confusion. And Nehemiah got the report. Now Nehemiah could have shrugged it off.

[2:12] Nehemiah could have said that's someone else's problem. He could have been complacent. He was really quite comfortable in the king's court. But no. God burdened Nehemiah.

God gave Nehemiah a burden. Nehemiah was willing to step out of the comfort zone into the danger zone. Into the God zone if you like. Leaving the comforts of the king's court.

Nehemiah became aware of the need. And it became a burden upon his heart. And so we see firstly Nehemiah had a burden. He had a burden. He had a burden for the rebuilding of the city.

For the people of God. And can we also seek the Lord for a burden? Can the Lord put a burden on your heart today? On our hearts today? For our broken down city as it were.

For the church as it were. A burden for repair. A burden for reformation. A burden for the sin damaged church. A burden for the rebuilding of broken lives.

[3:13] Because we live in a day when the walls are broken down. When the walls of spiritual truth and virtue are torn down. When the gates of decency are burning.

And in flames. And the so-called church of our day. Is damaged in many quarters by apathy and worldliness. It's powerless in many quarters.

And it needs repair. It needs reformation. As it were again. In the dark ages it had reformation. I think we're getting dark again. In these days that we live in.

Reformation is needed. The people of God need to. As Nehemiah did. Come in prayer. In repentance. In returning to true godliness.

And Nehemiah had a burden. A burden that moved him. And we too. Brothers and sisters. We need a burden. For our land. For our church. For our world.

[4:12] Nehemiah sat down and he wept. He fasted and he prayed. He prayed it says in verse 6 of chapter 1. Day and night. It was a burden. That obsessed him.

That possessed him. He sought and he caught a vision. Of God. Of the need. He interceded for the people. He asked for God's blessings. And he got before the Lord.

In prayer. He prayed until the answer came. Nehemiah called upon God. He could have been complacent. He could have stayed in the comfort zone. But no.

Nehemiah had a burden. And he went to the Lord with it. He went in worship. He went in confession. In repentance. And Nehemiah. The book of Nehemiah. It's got a very telling quality to it. That as someone had put it. Verse by verse. The book contains more personal prayer. Than any other book in the Bible. Nehemiah. The book. Is full of prayer.

[5:10] The personal prayer. Of the man Nehemiah. And of the people of God. It starts with prayer. It ends with prayer. Every decision. Nehemiah had to make. He prayed about.

Every work that he was to do. He prayed about. He lived a life. Of prayer. And as someone put it. Prayer. Service. And leadership. Go hand in hand.

We need to pray. Brothers. We need to pray. Sisters. We need to pray. And keep on praying. Nehemiah did that. He prayed. He took action. He took personal action.

His prayer. Had feet. Oh. On it. His prayer. Had action to it. And he took the risk. He approached the king. Who granted him favour. Here he was. Coming salmon before the king.

That in itself was a great risk. He came in that time of risk. Risking execution. For appearing before the king. In that heavy burden state. That he was in.

[6:06] And he shared the need before the king. The need of his people. The need of his lamb. The need of Jerusalem. He shared about the time frame that he would need. The resources that he needed.

And he obtained letters from the governors. To resource the work that had to be done. God provided. As Nehemiah prayed. And yet we see opposition from the very start.

The very start. Evil men opposed the vision. Evil men opposed the work. Sanballat and Tobiah. They heard that Nehemiah was going to restore the walls of Jerusalem.

And they got angry. They got angry about it. They didn't want to see it happen. And believer. The accuser. Is going to stop. If he can. That burden.

The accuser of the brethren. The accuser of the enemy. The evil one. He's going to want you to lose your burden. He's going to want you to take that burden off. He's not going to want you to take action.

[7:07] He will coax you with the comforts of the court. Or he will deter you with the detractors. Who will mock and scorn. And believers. We face it too.

We face it as God's people in this day and hour. But Nehemiah got up. And he went. Nehemiah got the burden. And he acted upon it. He took action. He departed for Jerusalem.

We see chapter 2 verse 11. And what did he do? While others were sleeping. Nehemiah got on his horse. And were a few men. Who were awake. And they surveyed the damage.

They took stop. Of the condition. Of the city. While others complained. And found fault. Nehemiah did something with the burden. He did something. Other than whinge about it.

He got. And took action. To solve the problem. We see that in verse 13. Of Nehemiah 2. It says he went out by night. He looked at the various gates.

[8:03] He viewed the walls. That were broken down. And the gates thereof. That were consumed with fire. He went and looked at the state. Of the nation. Of the city.

He acted in faith. He took the risk. He took action. Opposition was there. But he stood firm. We too. As the church of the living God.

We all face opposition. To the work of God. But we must press on. We must continue. The force of prayer drove him. Onwards. He got the burden. Number one.

Secondly. He got to the work of the building. He got to the work of the building. He says. Come. Let us build. He comes to the elders. He comes to the leaders. He says to the people.

Come. Let us build. The walls of Jerusalem. He shared the vision. We see that in Nehemiah 2. Verse 17. It says. Then said I unto them. Ye see the distress that we are in.

[8:57] How Jerusalem lieth waste. And the gates thereof. Are burnt with fire. Come and let us build. Up the walls of Jerusalem. That we be no

more a reproach.

Then verse 18. 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 all this good work. They said. Let us rise up and build. They caught the vision. He imparted it to them. When you step out.

And do something for God. Expect opposition. Expect the accuser. Expect the adversary. To dog your steps. But be like Nehemiah. We see that again.

In verse 19. The scoffers came. We've got Sambalat. Tobiah. Tobiah. And various others there. They heard it. They laughed us to scorn. They despised us.

[9:55] What is this thing that you do? Verse 20. Then answered I them. And said unto them. The God of heaven. He. Will prosper us. Therefore. We his servants.

Will arise. And build. But ye have no part. We his servants. Will arise. And build. You know. When you get opposition. Don't let it deter you.

Christians. In the workplace. Wherever the. Home place. Wherever you are. You will face some opposition. But let it not dissuade you. Let it not deter you. There was a preacher.

Who once said this. He said. If someone's kicking you. In the seat. Of the pants. You know that you are. In front of them. You know. Press on. Those who will. Mock and scorn.

And oppose. Are behind you. Press on. In the gospel. Work. Don't let opposition. Deter you. From the burden. That God has put. On your heart.

[10:52] And be about the work. Of building. Like Nehemiah was. Be about the work. Of building. Of doing the work. For God. Doing what God has put. On your heart.

To do. Let that be the burden. That motivates you. To work. Because. Likewise too. Prayer. Is no substitute. For hard work.

Work. And prayer. Goes hand in hand. They go together. They go together. God. Stirs us in prayer. To serve. They go together.

Friends. There's a work to do. And Nehemiah. But. Meyer mobilizes the people. For work. He mobilizes the people. For building for God. And building together.

How can we translate that. Into the here and now. How are we building now. Oughtn't we to be building. We ought to be building. And not a physical structure. But building up one another.

[11:48] As living stones. As lively. Alive stones. Built brick by brick. One by one. God's people. The same. Are a building.

A structure. That God is building. And we're building for him. We're building together. That's what the church is meant to be. A building up one another. That's what we need in this day. We need to be building up.

One another. That when we fellowship. There's an interaction. There's an encouragement. There's a mutual edification. We're building up one another. And we see through. Chapter three.

That the people got together. Everybody had a role to play. Everybody had a part. Of the structure. To restore. And they were all about the work. Of the building.

And it's interesting. In Nehemiah three. They had all kinds of jobs. All kinds of roles. There were those rulers there. There was various trades people.

[12:43] Various servants. And Levites. And priests. And so on. There wasn't any builders there. But they were all builders.

Amen. They all had a part to play in the building. Building up one another. It's a part that we all have to play. To be building up one another. So Nehemiah divided the work. Into 40 sections.

Along the wall. There was some 40 groups. Or teams. Of families. Of people together. Working together. And through Nehemiah three. We see. That one of the features is.

That they worked. One next to another. One next to another. They were working arm in arm.

Alongside one another. And while they all worked. They all watched as well. They watched out for one another.

So that they were aware. Of the enemy. And they could face. The challenges together. And we see that in Nehemiah four. Verse one. They faced opposition again.

[13:40] It says. Sam Palat heard. That we builded the wall. And he was wroth. He was angry. And he mocked the Jews. Verse two. He said. What do

these feeble Jews do?

Will they revive the stones. Out of the heap of the rubbish. Which are burnt. You know. The stones there. Around the city. They were burnt. It was a bit of a ruin.

It was a bit of a wreck. But the people. Were able to use what was there. They were able to work together. And pray together. And commit to the work together. They kept on building.

They kept on building. Despite the danger. The gates were down. There was danger there. Despite the detractors. These ones who were constantly mocking. They built together.

Until it was completed. And friends. Oughtn't that be the case in the church of God. That we're all united. In the work that must be done. The work that we call to be.

[14:34] The church. To be together. As a team. The Canadian geese fly in a V formation. People were wondering.

How come? And specialists in aerodynamics came. And studied this. Some engineers put some model together.

In a wind tunnel. And they found something happened. When the geese got in a V formation. When they got together. Heading in the same direction. That each goose flapping in his wings.

Created an upward lift. For the goose that follows. We need to be geese. Amen. We need to be geese. Don't we? We need to get together. Like the geese do. In a V formation.

And it says that when the whole plot got together. There was a 71% greater flying range. Than if they'd individually flown. Each goose depends upon the other.

[15:32] To get to its destination. And when one of the geese fell behind. They'd honk it back into place. You know. They'd stir it back into its place. In the pack.

And we need to be like that brothers and sisters. Encourage one another. As we see the day approaching. Encourage one another. To get together. And to build.

It says in verse 6 of 4. For 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 had that motivation. They had that determination. They wanted to be about. The work of building. And as the enemy threatened.

The people prayed. And the people were armed. The people mounted. And around the clock guard. Nehemiah 4 verse 9.

[16:32] It says. We made our prayer unto God. We made our prayer. Unto our God. And set a watch against them. Here the people of God. They pressed on.

They built on. Despite the enemy's threats. And we see that. Not only were the threats from without. There was discouragement from within. We see that in verse 10.

Of Nehemiah 4. There was discouragement from within. It says. 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.

Some people are feeling. This is just too hard. It's just too tough. It's just. Not achievable. We're not able to do it. When the people got discouraged.

Nehemiah spoke words of reassurance. And he armed all the workers. He urged them to keep on building. And he says in verse 14. The Lord is great and terrible.

[17:30] Fight for your brethren. Your sons and your daughters. Your wives and your houses. Fight. He says. Fight when the opposition comes. Fight when the discouragement comes. Fight when the accuser will come.

Fight for your families. Fight when the opposition comes. He urged them to the work of building up. Of building with unity. Of building in cooperation. Of building together with their family units. Of building together in those teams of workers.

Of building together in faith. And he pointed to the Lord's overshadowing care. We see that in chapter 4 verse 20. He says. Our God shall fight for us.

The work was unrelenting. And the enemy was unrelenting. But they pressed on. They built on. They would not be distracted. Even when the enemy tried another tactic.

In chapter 6 verse 2. He tried to coax them into a meeting together. Our enemy is cunning. I saw a cartoon lately.

[18:29] You know how our Lord says that. There'll be wolves in sheep's clothing. And this cartoon had a wolf that was in a shepherd's clothing.

He'd gone that little bit further. That's what's happening today. We've got wolves in shepherd's clothing. We've got wolves in sheep's clothing. We've got the opposition. That's all around about us. Our enemy is cunning. He'll try every tactic. He'll use every rule in the book. And every rule outside of the book. He'll try to hit you under the belt. As it were. He'll use all kinds of ploys.

To dog your steps. To get you down. And we see that here. In verse 2 of chapter 6. They say to Nehemiah. Come. Let us meet together. Come and let us meet together.

Let's have some dialogue. Let's have some compromise. You know. Let's find some middle ground here. Nehemiah. As it were. And verse 3. He says. No. I'm doing a great work.

[19:27] I cannot. Come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it. And come down to you. There's lots of compromise today. Brothers and sisters.

There's lots of compromise. I know. Some of our number gays and tracks out. At a recent event. And I got a call saying. The committee wanted to talk to me. About the tracks that were given out. And I didn't. I didn't want to enter into it. And it was the word of God. Those tracks were filled with the word of God. And I wasn't about to enter into. Some little meeting with the. Organising committee.

Composed of Catholics. And who knows what else. You know. We're not here to compromise. We're not here to have dialogue. Some things are black and white. They're crystal clear. It's thus saith the Lord.

There is no deviation. There is no time for dialogue. And compromise upon such things. Thus saith the Lord. It's clear cut. We cannot. Stop.

[20:24] Some would try to bring a dangerous kind of unity. Where if you can't beat them. Join them. They want us to join together. They say. Hey Nehemiah. Come. Let's talk. Come and meet us.

Four times they ask. He says. I'm doing a great work. I'm too busy with that which is important. We need to have that mindset. Brothers and sisters. That what we're doing for God.

Is too important. To muck about. Nehemiah prayed for strength. And he kept the focus. God's work was the priority. That he had to do. And at the end we see.

In Nehemiah 6 verse 16. They perceived that this work. Was wrought of our God. It was God's work. So we see. Number one. Nehemiah had a burden.

A burning burden. In his bosom. He had a burden. For the work. He had a burden. For the need. Secondly. We see. He got about the work of the building. He got about the work of building.

[21:17] He took action. He took action. And thirdly. We see. A feature of Nehemiah. The book. And the man. Is Nehemiah. Got the book. He got the book.

In Nehemiah 8 verse 1. The people called for the book. They said. Bring the book. They gathered together as one man. In the street. And they spake to Nehemiah.

Ezra. They spake to Ezra. Bring the book. And as God's people. We must likewise attend to the book. It must be the book. That guides our steps. It must be the book.

That guides our decisions. It must be the book. That guides our theology. The book of God. And the people listened for six hours. From dawn to noon. They said.

Bring the book. And Nehemiah 8 verse 3. What did they do? It says in Nehemiah 8 verse 3. As they gathered. The men and the women. And those that could understand. And it says.

[22:11] And the ears of all the people. Were attentive unto the book. The ears of all the people. Were attentive unto the book. Of the law. We need to respond. To the book.

We need to have ears. That will hear the book. We need to have hearts. That will respond to the book. The Bible. In Nehemiah 8 verse 5. It says. And Ezra opened the book.

In the sight of all the people. He opened the book. And what did the people do? All the people stood up. He opened the book. And all the people stood up. And Ezra blessed the Lord.

The great God. And all the people answered. Amen. Amen. With lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads. And worshipped the Lord. With their faces to the ground.

They stood up. They worshipped. They said. Bless the Lord. Amen. Amen. The word brought weeping. In verse 9. The word brought joy. In verse 10.

[23:06] The word brought fellowship. In verse 12. There was praise. They rejoiced. They said. Stand up and bless the Lord your God. Forever and ever.

And blessed be thy glorious name. Which is exalted. Above all blessing and praise. It was revival. It was revival. They didn't have neon lights.

And all the advertising campaigns. But there was revival. When Nehemiah and Ezra opened the book. And the people praised. There was revival. Real.

Tangible. Revival. It was revival. There was a repenting. From sin. Because of the book. There was a rejoicing. In heart. Because of the book.

There was a rebuilding. Because of the book. There was revival. Because of the book. In Nehemiah 12. 43. It says. That day they offered great sacrifices.

[24:04] And rejoiced. For God had made them rejoice. With great joy. The wives also. And the children. Rejoiced. So that the joy of Jerusalem.

Was heard. Even afar off. They rejoiced. When they opened the book. When they obeyed the book. And Nehemiah 13. 3. It says. And it came to pass. When they had heard the law.

That they separated. From Israel. All the mixed multitude. They sorted out the men. From the boys. They sorted out the goats. From the sheep. They sorted out. The lost.

From the saved. There was no mixed multitude there. They wanted to be full on. Straight out. Fair dinkum. True blue. Straight up and down. They didn't want to mess.

With compromise. There was a separation. There was a holiness. Because of the book. The people wanted a purity. To their fellowship. There was a unity. Because of the book.

[24:58] And there was a separation. Because of the book. A holiness. So the people had a mind to work. You know. When we open the book. When we see what Nehemiah had. When we can grasp.

Some of the burden that he had. For his city. For the walls broken down. How can we apply that now? In this city. In this place.

In this church. In this building. As it were. Of living stones. Brought together. I trust by God. That we can overcome the obstacles. We can overcome the adversary.

We can overcome the external mockers. Who will scorn. And laugh. Oh. You load of fuddy duddies. Or whatever it might be. Some mockery.

Some scorn. Maybe even discouragement. Within the camp. Maybe murmuring. Within the camp. He'll help you overcome.

[25:55] He'll say fight. He'll give you a weapon. And he'll give you. His seal. He'll give you. The spirit. To stand. Stand against ridicule.

To not fall. For deception. To get a burden. Friends. Our duty. Is clear. Our duty. Is clear. We are. The Nehemiahs. Of this day.

We are. The people. Of God. Of this time. And other. Like minded. Folk. Around about. In other places. Of worship. Where. We are the people.

Saved by his blood. Called by his grace. Redeemed. By his mercy. That should be. Like the people. Of Nehemiah's day. And stay on the wall. Stay on the wall.

Don't come down. And talk. Get on with the job. Get on with prayer. Get on. With a burden. Get on. And be a builder. For God. Building up. The walls.

[26:51] That are broken down. And like the people. Bring the book. Call for the book. To be brought. And finish the task. That has to be done. Friends. We're living in a time. Where we're seeing a society.

Where the walls are broken down. We're seeing immorality. Flooding in. And the danger. The incredible falling away. Of this time.

And hour. And we need to be the church. We need to be building. Building up. Building up one another. In our most holy faith. Be a builder. When you come to church.

Be a builder. That you'll find a chance. To maybe. Knock off a few rough edges. Off yourself. And maybe help. Another brother. Help another sister. To be stirred.

To be encouraged. To be welded together. To be cemented. In. To the fellowship. That you might be that. Building. That is the church. Not a building of bricks and mortar.

[27:46] But a building. Of living stones. And that you'll be. A people who will be burdened. You will not sit back. You will not stay. In the comfort zone. You will take the risk. To step out.

Into the God zone. Into the danger zone. As it were. And take risks for God. Be willing to face the mockers. And the scorn. There's tracks to give away.

There's opportunity for you. To stand up. And be counted. Please. Hand the call. Hand the call today. Let us pray. Heavenly Father.

We thank you that. These are challenging times. Just as in Nehemiah's day. Where we see. The enemy of our soul. Is at work. He's mocking and scorning. He's causing discouragement within. Lord help us to stand fast. To stand on the wall. And to be guarding. And watching out for one another. Working together. Cemented together. As those living stones.

[28:43] Of the church. That you are building. Lord help us to be those people. Who will. Hear. The word. That will take the book. And will learn it. Will hear it. Will obey it.

Lord will be challenged. By the testimony. By the witness of men. Like Nehemiah. Of men and women of faith. Help us to tread. In their steps Lord.

And Lord. Not that we can gain. Any credit. But because of your mercy. We can. But. Fail. To. Follow. Lord help us.

We cannot. But fail. To follow. Lord. We want to follow. And we want to be faithful.