

Nehemiah's Blueprint #buildthewall #bibleconference #biblebaptist #biblebeliever #oldtimegospel

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[0:00] Praise God. We're going to go to the book of Nehemiah. We're going to travel through the book, God willing, and just pick out a few bits and pieces that we can encourage ourselves in. And it's kind of topical, I think. You think about Nehemiah, he had a project. He had something to do and how the Lord enabled him to do that. And we can think of, for our church, the project coming up is probably the National Baptist Fellowship meetings, but we could think for ourselves individually on our own lives, of all the things that we have in our future, our future planning, how can we make it all to the glory of God? And so I love the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah led the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

And Nehemiah isn't just about a physical construction, a building project. We can see the application goes much wider to the restoration of spiritual life, of how God works in the church, in each one of us, in the building up of his church.

And the book speaks about leadership, about planning, about perseverance, about prayer, about restoration and revival of the people of God. So there's lots we can take heart in. And it's about rebuilding, about fortifying, not just of the walls that Nehemiah built and the safety of the city that that brought, but also about God's work in our own lives and hearts and in the community of faith that we are.

And we can see that spiritual foundation that we must build upon. So we're going to take some key verses from the book. We won't be able to cover the whole thing, but we'll pick out some of the main points and make application, I trust, for our lives today.

So firstly, we see that Nehemiah had a vision and a purpose. And Nehemiah's journey began with the burden in his heart. Now, Nehemiah really, he was, you could say, an ordinary person of himself. He was a servant.

[1:51] And then as he's abroad, he hears about what was happening back in his homeland and of the broken down city walls. So we're going to pick it up from Nehemiah chapter 1 verse 3.

And Nehemiah gets this report. Nehemiah 1 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. So Nehemiah hears about the destruction, the desolation, the desperate state of his beloved Jerusalem.

And it had been about 80 years now and the walls of the city had been broken down and were still in ruins. Its defences were in a sorry state.

And of course, the walls of the city were really its defence against enemy attacks. And so this was a great problem and disgrace, really, that the city was in such neglect.

[2:55] And there was such compromise, really, just such discouragement as to the neglect of the walls of the city and of the state, the spiritual state, too, of the people of God.

So Nehemiah got stirred up when he heard this news about what was going on back there in Jerusalem. And like Nehemiah, we could think, how can we have that clear vision of what the state of play is, of the spiritual state, of ourselves, of our community, of our world, of our church?

And do we have that clear vision, that burden? Can we get that burden like Nehemiah had? And we see, as he gets that burden, he realises that brokenness. We recognise the brokenness of our world.

And I was just listening, tuning in to a preacher this morning, talking about the sad state of affairs and how it's ramping up to where they're legalising all kinds of horrendous things.

I don't want to elaborate, but that's the brokenness of our planet, people. And God desires that we would be a people that would rise up and have that fervent desire to build up, to restore, to strengthen the work of God.

[4:04] And so verse 4 it reads on, And it came to pass when I heard these words, says Nehemiah, that I sat down and wept and mourned certain days and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

We see he heard the misery of Jerusalem and God burdened his heart such that he wept and prayed. Notice the mission starts with prayer. That's the mission for any of our projects, any of our ambitions, any of our future planning.

Start with prayer. Start with prayer. Nehemiah's heart was touched. He had this sensitive heart about the people of God and he was filled with compassion.

He realised the state that they were in back there in Jerusalem and he sought the Lord. He relied upon the Lord. And friends, brothers and sisters today, when we realise the needs around us, let's be prayerful.

We're prayerful people. Nehemiah prayed, prayed and prayed again. We see verse 5, He says, Notice Nehemiah's prayer.

[5:44] He was very humble. He was very broken up in his heart. And he trusted the Lord. He's prayed. And prayer really is a reflection of our dependence on the Lord, isn't it?

Why do we pray? We depend on Him. He's the one we need to rely upon. And so Nehemiah's immediate response was to pray. His response to the burden was to pray.

It's the same for you and me. When God puts a burden on your heart, what are you meant to do? Pray. Pray. And then he prayed for courage to take the next step as the king's cupbearer.

He prayed. He prayed some more. We see verse 11, 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. So he prayed and others were praying too. He got others praying. The prayer of thy servant and the prayer of thy servants, plural, who desire to fear thy name and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy at the sight of this man, for I was the king's cupbearer.

[6:45] So here was Nehemiah, the king's cupbearer. He was the person who the king trusted to ensure that the food and drink were not poisoned. So you can think, what a privileged position, really, that he was very trusted.

I mean, I don't know about you, but if I was likely to get some enemy dish-upper, some poison food or some toxic drink, I'd want someone else to drink it first, wouldn't you?

So the king trusted Nehemiah such that he was such a man. He trusted him with his very life. Think of that. So Nehemiah was trustworthy and the king ended up showing him favour and supported his mission with building materials.

So he prayed, he was brave enough to face the king and to share his heart and the king provided. What a testament to Nehemiah.

He was a man of integrity and character that the king so trusted him, trusted him with his life and now commissioned him and supported him with this mission, this pagan king.

[7:50] We note that Nehemiah didn't rush into action, did he? He sought God's direction and guidance first. Prayer first, action next. Amen? It's the same in building the church, isn't it?

And in our own lives too. When we face some situation, some project, some action that we want to take, pray first. Prayer must precede every plan, every step.

So we must depend on God's wisdom, truly, and his strength in what we do. That should be for every aspect of our life, shouldn't it? And more especially the work of God, even so, more so.

So notice Nehemiah, he then went out and he surveyed the walls. He went back to Jerusalem. It was a three-month journey to get there. And we take it up from Nehemiah 2 verse 12, where he's doing a bit of a survey trip.

And I arose in the night, I and some few men with me, neither told I any man what my God had put in my heart to do.

[8:50] Notice that. At Jerusalem, neither was there any beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon. Notice here verse 12. Nehemiah talks about what God had put in his heart to do.

God had put something in his heart to do. This is what we need, isn't it? With anything of our life, with any decision making that we want to make, that God is putting something in our heart to do. We want to be sure that that's who's putting it in our heart, that God's putting it in our heart. And he's putting it in our heart such that he wants us to take action. God's working in our heart. Think of it through your life. God's been working in your heart. Before you got saved, when you got saved, and then after you get saved, God's working, isn't he, in our heart.

And as God's people, we can know the power of prayer and seek God's guidance as we face up to challenges. So we see that Nehemiah got a burden and the Lord then prompted him to action. So verse 17 of chapter 2, we see Nehemiah, he urged the people. He said, answer them. You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burnt with fire.

[9:58] Come and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. He tells the people, you see the state that we're in, you see the ruins, you see the misery, the trouble, the devastation, the crisis.

Think of the world, think of Australia today, the crisis that we're in. Nehemiah motivated them to the work. Notice it says next in verse 18, it says, God put his hand upon him.

So not only had God put something in his heart to do, it says God put his hand upon him. Nehemiah 2 verse 18, it reads, 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 good work. The hand of God is upon us, amen? The hand of God is upon us with blessing.

The hand of God is upon us with unction. The hand of God is upon us with empowerment. And here is the call, let us rise up and build. Arise, build.

[11:06] There's an encouragement there. Let's get out of our seats and roll up our sleeves. Let's get busy, people. So let's put our hands and our hearts to this work, to God's work.

And diligently so. Let's put our hand up. Let's put our hand to the plough. Let's strengthen our hands and do the work. We have to trust in the Lord. Notice that Nehemiah encouraged the people.

And here's Nehemiah's heart. What God had put in my heart to do. That's what we need. And then we have the hand of God upon us. Maybe the hand of God's pushing us sometimes too.

He's pressing us, propelling us. Here was Nehemiah's heart. What happens next? Verse 19. And he immediately met with opposition. And it tells how people laughed and scorned and despised.

Nehemiah determined, though, not to let the discouragement get to him. We see verse 20.

Nehemiah 2, verse 20. As he answers these ones. Then answered I them and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us.

[12:12] Therefore we, his servants, will arise and build. But ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial in Jerusalem. So he was straight up there. We're going to rise up and build.

Trust the Lord, people. When God gives you something to do, trust him to enable you. Trust in his provision. Sometimes the people got tired along the way. Some disputed.

Yet Nehemiah, what did he do? He persevered. Prayerfully so. I like to think that he planned prayerfully. He planned prayerfully. And he acted prayerfully.

He persevered prayerfully. And through the book we see this building project. I know we've got some building managers here. Some project managers in the building game. We think that this is bigger than just a building project, though.

This is a spiritual thing, isn't it? And it tells how Nehemiah mustered the people. It talks about how the different people worked on different sections of the wall. That's in chapter 3. You see, people laboured.

[13:11] One next to another. Next to another. Next to another. They all had something to do. And it's the same in the church, isn't it? That we've all got something to do. We've all got a part to play. We've all got something we can contribute and be a part of in this project.

That is the church. And some were there working, but some were not putting in their best. We see that in Nehemiah 3, verse 5. And next unto them the Tekawites repaired.

But their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord. Some people didn't put their necks to the work of the Lord. They put their necks on the pillow. You know, that can be the case, can't it? When there's work to do, not everybody gets working.

But how sad would it be to let the team down? What a shame that would be for the Word of God to record. The nobles here, they were really slackers. They were slackers, let's face it.

Nehemiah faced many challenges. He faced the critics. He faced the slackers. Then there were the critics like Sambalat, Tobiah and Geshem. And what did they do?

[14:10] We see that in chapter 4. They continued to mock and scorn, to pick fault, to undermine what he was doing. They made fun of it.

And they tried to discourage. Friends, when you try to do something for God, you're going to get the knockers. You're going to get those who don't have the faith. We see chapter 4, verse 1.

But it came to pass that when Sambalat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth. And he took great indignation and mocked the Jews. And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria.

And 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? Now, here they were. They were angry. They were indignant. They were mocking. They thought, look at these heaps of rubbish, these stones. You're going to build something out of all this rubbish? What a joke.

[15:04] What a hopeless task you have. But Nehemiah faced that hostility and hatred with faith. And so can you, people of God. Amen? You can face that discouragement with faith, the destructive criticism, the insults, the attacks.

We see verse 3 of chapter 4. Now, Tobiah the Ammonite was by him. And he said, even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

Their work is so flimsy and hopeless, so pathetic that even a little fox is going to knock down that wall. Their weak wall is going to come tumbling down the next time a fox goes nearer. That was the kind of barbs that they threw in his direction.

Now, you might try to do something for God and people are saying, well, you haven't got a hope.

You're hopeless. You're weak. You're not able. You're not going to be able to cope. Trust God.

If God's put it in your heart to do, if the hand of God is upon you to do it, then God is going to enable you. Amen? Each of us just have to find, what is the will of God for me? And then do it.

[16:06] Trust God that he will enable you to do it. Notice Nehemiah's response. He didn't react. And this is an important note here. Don't react to criticism. If you can help it, it's better to not.

He did not react at all to their criticism. He didn't retaliate against the enemies, even though they had unkind words. He didn't do that. What did he do? What did Nehemiah do? He prayed.

He prayed. He prayed again. He prayed through. We see that. Verses 4 through 5. He said, Look, God's going to deal with them.

When we face attacks, we can trust the Lord will prevail, and the Lord will provide, and the Lord will overshadow us as we pour out our heart to him. If God's put something on your heart to do, to minister, to serve, to be a blessing, to reach out, to use what ability, limited though it be, for his glory, trust him to prevail.

Trust him to help you through. What did Nehemiah do? When criticism came, he prayed. And what happened next in verse 6? The people worked even harder. It wouldn't put them off.

[17:24] And we see that Nehemiah 4 verse 6. And we should have the same resolve. When we face criticism, what did it evoke? It evoked a mind, a mind to work.

Notice that. Chapter 4 verse 6. It reads, So built we the wall, and all the wall was joined together until the half thereof, why? For the people had a mind to work.

Now, if we keep our thinking focused, we've got a mission. We've got a work to do. We've got to get to this. We've got to apply our thinking and our planning and our creativity.

We've got to focus our thinking on what God's put in our heart to do. And we're going to be determined to do it. Instead of getting all discouraged by what the enemies were saying, the words of their enemies, they said, no, we're going to do this.

We're going to have a mind to work. And God's people, it seemed, despite all of those things, that they got even more determined to get on with the work more than ever before. What about you when you face criticism?

[18:28] And you can face criticism in your own daily walk with the Lord. It might be criticism from unsaved workmates or friends and family. Don't be deterred.

If you're in the will of God, trust Him to enable you and do what He's put on your heart to do. It's interesting how the criticism that was intended to discourage them actually ended it up encouraging them.

As I quote here, the more difficulties we face in the Lord's work, the more determined we ought to be to persevere and get it done with His help. So the people, it says, they had a mind to work. It's about getting the mind switched on, isn't it? Hey, God's given me a work to do. I'm going to apply my mind, my thinking, my energy, my mental energy, my attitude to get the work done with His help.

And so this is what happened. The people were even more fully committed to doing the work. They had that desire. They had that determination to press on in faith. And they were prepared to make all kinds of sacrifices too.

[19:30] When you do something for God, it means stepping out of your comfort area, doesn't it? It means making a challenge to yourself. It means counting the cost. And this is what they were prepared to do.

Notice it's interesting. It says a few times, as we read here in verse 6, it says likewise in verse 1, 9 and 21, we, the word we, we built the work.

We built the wall. It wasn't Nehemiah, it was the we. Amen? And it's the same with church life, isn't it? It's not all about the pastor or the select few.

It's we, the body. It's we, the people. It's we, every one of us, corporately, the people working together as a team. And so it says this word we over and over again.

Chapter 4. Four times. Nehemiah prayed and he kept on praying. He went to prayer as the work continued. Not only did he pray at the beginning, he prayed through, right through.

[20:31] He kept on praying. We see that in verse 9 of chapter 4. Nevertheless, we made our prayer unto our God and set a watch against them day and night because of them.

Notice here too, it wasn't just Nehemiah's prayer, our prayer. Corporate prayer matters, doesn't it? That's why we have a prayer meeting. That's why we pray together.

There's a prayer meeting at 5.30. That's a corporate prayer. We should be here. Our prayer. Our prayer unto God and set a watch against them. So not only did Nehemiah pray, but the people prayed.

Corporately, the church prayed. It was a prayer meeting of the church. He worked, he prayed, he prayed, and he worked. But there was yet more discouragement. Pick it up in Nehemiah 4 verse 10. Judah now chimes in. The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed. And there is much rubbish so that we are not able to build the wall.

[21:28] Look, we're getting tired. It's wearisome. It's hard yakka. We're getting weary. The bearers of the burdens, they're getting weary. Their strength is decayed. And look at all this rubbish.

There's much rubbish. So we're not able. We are not able. People are going to knock you when you do something for God. When you say, I'm going to stand for Christ. When you stand for your faith. When you say, I'm a believer and I stand for Christ. They're going to say, you're not able. You're not able. You're a loser. You're going to fail. You're going to backslide.

You're going to slip and slide. You're going to muck it up. You're going to fail. And we can chime in too and say, yeah, I know. I'm not able. My strength is so weak. I'm so weak and I'm so weary.

And there's so much rubbish going on. We are not able. The people were tired here. They were discouraged. We can have those times. It's too hard. We're not able, they said.

[22:24] What did Nehemiah do? He kept urging the people onwards, onwards, to do the work of God. Nehemiah, he planned the work and he worked the plan. And Nehemiah got the people organised.

He gave them jobs to do. He appointed the people to specific tasks. And he armed the people and he supported the families. We see that here in chapter 4, verse 13.

Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall and on the high places I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears and their bows. It's interesting when he set the people, they worked by their house.

They were working in family groups. They were working in units, in teams within the team. They had little household teams, family teams.

And he supported them in that, that all worked together to that one task as much as they had specific tasks. And we noticed too that they were armed.

[23:27] And as each one of us, when we think, in the church setting, as we find our place to serve, we serve well. We want to serve well. And God will bless when we do so.

And every one of us has a role to play. Amen? You might think my role's not very consequential. I haven't got a very important role. Everyone working on that wall had their part to play.

They had their part of the wall that they were responsible for. And it's the same in the church. Every one of us has a role to play. So let's keep the right spirit. And it's a together thing. When we get together, that's church.

It's togetherness. There's a team aspect. That we're all in this together. There's a team spirit. We get together with a corporate spirit. And we're working together in unity with the right spirit.

In unity to be resolved, to man up and fight ahead. As we see, they were armed. They had their swords, their spears, and their bows.

[24:24] There's a fight ahead for us. There's no kidding here. This is the reality. We see the world that we're living in. We see the state of our Jerusalem, as it were.

We see the state of our nation, Australia. We see godless laws are being brought in everywhere. There's talk of legalising prostitution in South Australia.

There's all kinds of things going on that this world is going down, down, down, downwards into more and more hellish ways. And friends, it's time for us to fight, to fight back, to man up.

We see there, verse 14, as Nehemiah looked out, and he says, I looked and rose up and said unto the nobles and to the rulers and to the rest of the people, be not ye afraid of them.

Remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses. Friends, we've got to fight for our families.

[25:20] In this world that's so corrupt and more corrupt, we've got to fight for our children, don't we? For our sons, for our daughters, for our wives, for our families. And let's have that heart to fight, not to retreat, but to rally.

Let's uplift and support one another. This is a time for us to rise up, rise up and build, rise up and fight. Let's urge each of us together. Let's be that body that encourages one another.

And when you see a downhearted one, don't pick on them, lift them up. This is not for us to fight one another, but to fight the enemy and to band together, to urge each other onwards in this journey of faith.

We see that the negativity of the enemy was of no effect. We see that in verse 15. That should be the same for us, shouldn't it? When we get knockers, when we do something for God, and people are knocking us, it should be all the more that we would trust, more ever so trust, prayerfully trust in the Lord to help us and enable us.

And we see that verse 15, how the enemy was put to shame. Verse 15, And it came to pass when our enemies heard that it was known unto us, and God had brought their counsel to naught, that we return all of us to the wall, everyone unto his work.

[26:40] Notice here verse 15, God frustrated the plan of the enemy. Nehemiah just kept on. When you do something for God, and this applies to everything you could think of, really, I'm not talking in specific terms, but when you do something for God, the enemy's counsel is going to be

brought to naught.

All right? The enemy's bad-mouthing you, the enemy's attacks against you, the enemy's doubts that he would instil within you, it's going to come to nothing.

The enemy can't stop you. If God is for you, who can be against you? You've got to fight to fight, fight the good fight with all thy might. Notice here, God frustrated the plan of the enemy.

And then Nehemiah caught his team back to action. He rallied the team to get back to work. And everyone returned to the work, to his work. And the people kept on in the ministry, in the mission. Amen? God is faithful. It was a battle zone. It was a battle zone here for Nehemiah as he fought there on the front line. We see that Nehemiah 4 verse 18, it reads, For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so build it.

[27:53] And he that sounded the trumpet was by me. Notice this, the builders were building, and every one of them had a sword on their side. It's like this picture that had a trowel and a sword. You know, they were working, they were building, but they had a sword as well.

They were ready to fight. They were ready to defend the city. And it says, and the one that sounded the trumpet was by him as well. So he had this kind of warning system. If the enemy was to come, that it was going to sound a warning.

And we see that Nehemiah, he showed such resilience here in the face of opposition. Now friends, this was no picnic. This was no picnic. They faced a real enemy, and they had to have some real swords and some real readiness to fight back, to combat.

And they steeled themselves against the enemy. It's been said that leaders ought to, and I'm going to quote here, here's a quote to take home. Leaders ought to welcome conflict as a heart-shaping tool of God.

End quote. It's a good one, isn't it? Welcome conflict as a heart-shaping tool of God. Now when you get conflict, when you get challenge, when you get opposition, friends, it's ever more so that we prayfully seek God's help and find his grace to strengthen us for the task ahead.

[29:05] Nehemiah took whatever practical and spiritual steps that he could to look after the people of God. So he put them together in units, in family units, in areas of responsibility.

He armed them, and they were building. Every man was ready to this task that they had before them. And we read on Nehemiah 4 verse 20, it says, In what place, therefore, you hear the sound of the trumpet, resort you thither unto us, our God shall fight for us.

So he said, look, the man with the trumpet's nearby, and if you hear that sound of the trumpet, he says, come here, and our God shall fight for us. So Nehemiah, he had these practical things that he did too, such that there was an alarm system to counter attacks.

And we think of it today, brothers and sisters, now more than ever, we need to sound the alarm. We need to sound the alarm. The enemy is at the doors. But we see that we can know our God, our God.

He shall fight for us. So above all, they trusted that God was able to fight for them. And it's the same for you, brother, sister, in the spiritual fight that you fight.

[30:17] What does it say? The battle is not yours, it's the Lord's. The Lord will enable, the Lord will enable you to do great things, because our God, our God, shall fight for us.

So we think, for ourselves today, of our work today, of our Christian walk and life, of the challenges of wanting to serve God, in some aspect or other, how can we fulfil God's mission?

Listen, he's going to fight for you. He's going to help you do what he's put on your heart to do, and what he's put his hand on you to do. So for us, we think today of the building up of the church. We can think of all manner of things, of the work of the church, of discipleship, of evangelism, of the youth, of the children's works, of mission, of the spiritual growth, of the evangelism of our church. As we trust our Lord, our God shall fight for us. And friends, on the front line of evangelism, it's not always easy. You get knockbacks, you get fierce opposition, but are we to quit?

No. We're to ever more press the fight. And Nehemiah kept on in the work. It says there, chapter 5, verse 16, Yea, also I continue, in the work of this war.

[31:30] When you get fierce opposition, what do you do? Continue.

Continue. When you get criticism, what do you do? Continue. Interesting

here, Nehemiah easily could have delegated all of the work to his followers, but he laboured on personally in the task, alongside of them as a role model.

He says, I continued in the work. And this should be the same for all of us. If we want to lead others, we've got to do the work too. You know, if you're in an area of ministry, you've got to do the work too.

Don't just pass on the buck. Be involved yourself. And we see that Nehemiah remained steadfast and resolute. He was firm and he would not be hindered.

And it's the same for you, brother, sister. God puts something on your heart to do. Don't be dissuaded. Be firm. Nehemiah 6, verse 3, it tells, Nehemiah tells us, I sent messengers unto them saying, I'm doing a great work so that I cannot come down.

Why should the work cease? Will I leave it and come down to you? You know, there were some that were kind of hindering him. And he said, look, we can't stop the work.

[32:41] We've got to keep going. Now, God is doing a great work. It's his work. The great work is his work. And we cannot stop. So his enemy slandered him, but he would not be deterred.

Now, we've caught some criticism, but we must not be deterred. Nehemiah countered the fears with faith, with prayer.

And when fear came, Nehemiah prayed. We see that chapter 6, verse 9. It reads, For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done.

Now, therefore, O God, strengthen my hands. So when you feel weak, pray. Lord, strengthen my hands. Amen? I meant to bring some bricks here to kind of demonstrate.

After a while, putting those bricks, putting those bricks, your hands start to get a bit weary. Your hands start to get a bit weak. Your hands start to get a bit strained. After you're loading brick, after brick, after brick, O God, strengthen my hands.

[33:42] Strengthen my hands. When Nehemiah felt weak, he said, Lord, strengthen, strengthen my hands. When fear came, Nehemiah prayed.

He counted the fears with faith, with prayer. And again, notice, Nehemiah prayed, didn't he? Nehemiah prayed. And we read there, Nehemiah 6, verse 16.

God will accomplish his task. If it's a God-given task, if it's the work of God, God will do it. God will do it. God will accomplish his work, despite all of the failings of you and me.

Nehemiah 6, verse 16. And it came to pass, when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes, for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

This is what we want to see, isn't it? That we see this work is wrought of our God. All the human effort, all of your own machinations of your desire to follow God, to live for God, that in all of it, you'll look back and say, God's done it.

[34:53] God's done it. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us. Ebenezer, hitherto hath the Lord helped us. God has done this work. God has done this work, despite all of my failings and mistakes, that this work was wrought of our God.

And that's what we want to see. We do our humble part, but this is the work of God, isn't it? The church of God. Anything that we endeavour to do, as a corporate people, as God's people gathering together, despite all the mistakes that we may make, and that I may make indeed, along the way, that it'll all be glory to God in the end of it all, that God will get all the glory for anything good that he's done.

And in chapter 7, it tells us, and Nehemiah went further, he organised the city. It didn't just stop with the wall. He organised the city. He organised the business of the community.

He had all the leaders in necessary places. It talks about porters and guards there. In Nehemiah 7, it talks about the porters and the guards, which were like the law enforcement of the city, the military of the city.

And what does he do? Verse 2, it tells us that he appoints men of character to be the leaders.

Chapter 7, verse 2, it reads that, Nehemiah appointed these ones, for he was a faithful man, and feared God among many.

[36:16] So Nehemiah didn't just appoint his mates. He wanted the people that were faithful men. He wanted the people that were fearers of God. And Nehemiah not only built the wall, but he cared for the practical needs of the city too.

And we see at the close of the book, he restored the proper worship. And so through the book, we see the work of God, we see the wall of God, we see the worship of God, we see the word of God, as we come to in chapter 8, verse 1.

Chapter 8, verse 1, it comes to this kind of crescendo of what God has done, that God has built this wall, it's all been wrought of God, we see the worship restored, we see the worship, the word. Nehemiah organises that. And it's interesting, chapter 8, verse 1, it kind of made me chuckle a bit when I noted how one commentator describes it in chapter 8. And the heading is, quote, Nehemiah organises a Bible conference.

I thought that was very interesting. Nehemiah organises a Bible conference. It's quite topical for us right now, wasn't it? And Nehemiah 8, verse 1, it says, And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street.

[37:28] And that was before the water gate. And they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel. And what happened next?

The people wept as they heard the word of God. And Nehemiah invites Ezra to come and preach at the conference. And the people place great emphasis upon the precious word of God.

And Ezra stands in the pulpit and he reads and he teaches and he preaches the Bible. And the people respond to what they hear in faith and they engage in worship.

What was it? It was revival. It was revival. What about us today? Can we have that same faith? What application can we make from the lessons of his life?

As we labour on in God's work, we can all expect opposition. It's to be expected. Let's find God's strength.

[38:28] Find God's strength for the work that we must do, for what he's put on our heart to do. And let's stand firm in our faith, unrelenting, trusting in the one who holds the future, trusting in his power.

We are not able, but he is, isn't he? Trusting in his provision, his protection. And sure, we're going to inevitably feel weak, inadequate, unworthy, unfit.

Let's realise that our strength is in him. Our joy is in the Lord, regardless of our circumstances.

And there's been some glad outbreaks of joy that our strength is in the Lord. The joy of the Lord is our strength.

And God did a work in the people. They've been through a lot. Discouragement, devastation, the city was destroyed, such crisis, hopelessness was everywhere you looked, downheartedness.

[39:40] When you do something for God, you're going to be copying it. That's normal. Get used to it. If you can't take the heat, get out of the kitchen.

Come on, people. If you want to do something for God, stand fast. Stand fast. Stand fast. And that's what they did with the word of God. Nehemiah soldiered on to the end.

And in the end, what happened? God got the glory. God got the glory. This is wrought of our God. God will do the work. And the people gave him all the glory. We see, as we close, chapter 6, verse 15, again, the wall was finished, so they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

That's what we want, isn't it? That people are going to see this is the work of God. Only God could do this. Only God. Despite the challenges, Nehemiah and the people completed the wall.

And they gave praise for God's faithfulness. Look at the scene as we close. So it's right at the end here, at this finale of the dedication of the wall.

[40:51] And at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem, they sought the Levites out of all their places to bring them to Jerusalem to keep the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and with singing, with cymbals, psalteries, and with harps.

It's God's hand that must enable us, isn't it? For anything that we want to do for God. Anything you can imagine, anything you can picture yourself, whatever you're going to do next for God in your life, it's God's hand that must be upon you to do it.

What is our part? Pray. Believe God. Be a prayerful people. And don't, and I know, I can very often act rashly and carelessly and foolishly and not prayerfully enough.

And it's important, it's incumbent on all of us when we think, what is God putting on my heart to do?

What's God calling me to do? What's my next step in this Christian walk that I'm living?

What is my ministry? What's God putting on my heart to do? That you prayerfully prepare, prayerfully plan. and may his hand be upon you as he strengthens you, as he revives you to do his work, as he puts his hand upon you to do his work.

[42:16] And he gives you a mind to work such that your mind's not going to be overwhelmed with all of these negativity things, but the mind that you're going to have is actually God's got something he wants me to do and I'm going to do it.

You're going to have a mind to work. And God's going to enable you to do your best. You might say, I'm not able. I'm not able. We are not able.

You can give of your best. Maybe your best is minute. Maybe your best seems nothing. But give of your best unto the Master and at the end, may it be said that the work was wrought of our God.

Let us pray. Lord God, we thank you that you are building a church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Lord, we know that we can learn much from Nehemiah and what he did of his heart.

Lord, for your hand upon him, for your working in him. Lord, that you put in his heart something that he had to do he gave him a burden that he had to take action on, Lord.

[43:29] And Lord, we know that for all of us we're at different stages. We pray that each one might know you for a start, to know you as their saviour.

And then, like Paul on the Damascus road, Lord, what would you have me to do? Lord, what would you have me to do? Lord, give us that unction, give us that mission, give us that direction, and give us, Lord, the gumption to keep on doing it.

In Jesus' name, Amen. Amen. Thank you.