

Lessons from the Wall

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[0:00] So we're going to turn to chapter 3 in the book of Nehemiah, if you can. Chapter 3, and we're going to start at verse 1. Then Eliashib, the high priest, rose up with his brethren, the priests, and they builded the sheep gate.

They sanctified it and set up the doors of it, even unto the tower of Meah, they sanctified it unto the tower of Hananiel. And next unto him builded the men of Jericho, and next unto them builded Sekur, the son of Imri.

But the fish gate did the sons of Hassanah build, who also laid the beams thereof, and set up the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof.

And next unto them repaired Merimoth, the son of Uriah, and the son of Koz. Then next unto them repaired Meshulam, the son of Berichai, the son of Meshez-Ebel.

And next unto them repaired Zadok, the son of Banna. And next unto them the Ticoites repaired, but their nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord.

[1:18] Moreover, the old gate repaired Jehudiah, the son of Passiah, and Meshulam, the son of Besodiah.

They laid the beams thereof, and set the doors thereof, and the locks thereof, and the bars thereof. And next unto them repaired Melatiah, the Gibeonite, and Jadon, the Maranathite, and the men of Gibeon, and of Mizpah, unto the throne of the governor, on this side of the river.

And next unto them repaired Uziel, the son of Haraniah, the goldsmiths. And next unto him repaired Hananiah, the son of one of the apothecaries.

They fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall. And next unto them repaired Rephiah, the son of Hur, the ruler of half part of Jerusalem. And next unto them repaired Jedidiah, the son of Haruhmah, even against his house.

And next unto him repaired Hattush, the son of Hashib, Benaiah, and Malchijah, the son of Hamron, and Hashib, the son of Pathmoab, repaired the other piece, and to the tower of the furnaces.

[2:39] And next unto him repaired Shalom, the son of Haloresh, the ruler of half part of Jerusalem, he and his daughters. The valley gate repaired Hanun, and the inhabitants of Zenoa.

They built it, and set the doors thereof, the locks thereof, and the bars thereof, and a thousand cubits of the wall unto the dung gate. And we're going to leave off the reading of our passage there. Now I know what you're thinking. What are we doing here? What are we doing here in this portion of Nehemiah here? And I will tell you that it has been my practice, any opportunity that I've had to share God's word, that I would not bring something to you, and to try and teach you something, if God first has not taught me.

So by way of encouragement, I was looking to show you from God's word, how all of God's word is a benefit to you. And so many of you know this passage, in 2 Timothy chapter 3, verses 16 and 17, it says, All scripture is God-breathed, all scripture is God-breathed, and is profitable for doctrine, and reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness, that the man of God may be perfect, thoroughly furnished, furnished unto all good works.

So that means even a list of workers at a construction site, in God's word, is going to be profitable to us. And so we trust that the Holy Spirit will do his work, and show us what he has for us today.

[4:34] But as I was trying to attach this verse in 2 Timothy, as an encouragement for you, the Lord stopped me.

And for the better part of a week, I was caused to contemplate the precious breath of God.

The precious breath of God. I had an image in my head. This is not from scripture. This is at best sanctified imagination. But I had an image in my head, which I could not get out for nearly a week.

And I found myself, at the end of my time, standing before God in judgment, seeing Jesus, and running into his arms.

And I began to feel his breath. His sweet, warm breath on me. And all of the heartaches of this world.

[6 : 08] All of the trials and sorrow. All of the pain and suffering. All of my fear and anxiety.

Begins to melt away. And in his embrace, sin and shame and regret no longer have any meaning. And with his nail-pierced hands, he's wiping away my tears. You know, at the beginning of time, the Bible says that God breathed into man the breath of life.

And man became a living soul. We just read in 2 Timothy that God breathed scripture for us. His holy word. And we cannot forget, with his dying breath, he called out, it is finished.

[7 : 34] The precious breath of God. There is a modern-day hymn.

It says, Behold the man upon a cross, my sin upon his shoulders. Ashamed I hear my mocking voice.

My mocking voice call out among the scoffers. It was my sin that held him there until it was accomplished.

His dying breath has brought me life. I know that it is finished. I spent nearly a week of my time preparing the rest of the message that, Lord willing, we'll get to here because the Lord stopped me to think about the precious breath of God.

And I was reminded that if I am striving today to encourage you with godly encouragement, God says, I must first encourage you.

[8 : 59] Back towards Nehemiah. Thank you for bearing with me as we went through these names this morning.

I wanted to encourage you all, as I said before, to dive into all of God's scripture. How many of us hang out in the Gospels, Proverbs, or Psalms, hang out in Genesis?

How many of us venture into Ezra or Lamentations, Deuteronomy, or Leviticus? Has anybody here read Hosea or Zathaniah?

I think we still have at the back these read-through-the-Bible-in-a-year plans, and I will tell you, it is amazing as you read through some of these books how all of a sudden other parts of the Bible begin to come to life.

We see here in Nehemiah what appears to be a list of workers at a construction site. For those of you who are unfamiliar with the story of Nehemiah, he was a cupbearer in a pagan king's hall.

[10 : 37] The nation of Israel were under captivity at this time. And God called him because of Nehemiah's own heartache for his people. The city wall of Jerusalem had been broken down.

And so God caused him to have favor with the king that he served as cupbearer to. And the king sent him with letters to not only provide him safe passage back to Jerusalem, but also to provide him with the things he would need to rebuild the wall.

And so we come to this portion here where we begin to read. That's not even the whole list of names here. And at first glance, we may look at this and say there's a list of names.

Well, actually, I believe there's two lists here. There's actually two lists here. We have a list of many names. And it talks about their sons and their brothers and their daughters building.

But then in verse 5 it says, But their nobles put not their necks to the work of the Lord. And so we actually have two lists here.

[11 : 50] We have a list of those who did work and a list of those who did not work. We have a list of those who put their necks to the work of the Lord and a list of those who did not.

So the first thing I see here in Scripture is actually God's plea for salvation for each and every one of us. Do you know that these names are in God's book here?

The Bible that He's given us. But the Bible tells us that there's another book somewhere. It's called The Book of Life.

And interestingly enough, in that book there's a list of names. In that book it lists the names of those who have cried out to Jesus in faith knowing that His finished work on the cross is the only way to salvation.

Knowing that from Jesus' own mouth He says, None come to the Father except by me. And as I contemplated these two lists that were here and the names that were written in the book here I thought to myself were all of our names written in the book of life?

[13 : 26] It's very interesting to note as we look at the second list they are known only as nobles.

God chose not to even mention their names in Scripture. Do you know it will be the same for you when you see God in judgment if you have not accepted Jesus as your Lord and Savior?

In Matthew chapter 7 a very familiar a very to the point cautious point of Scripture it says Not everyone that saith unto me Lord, Lord shall enter into the kingdom of heaven but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven many many how many of you sitting here today will be among that many many will say unto me in that day Lord, Lord have we not prophesied in thy name and in thy name have cast out devils and in thy name have done many wonderful works and then this is Jesus I will profess unto them I never knew you depart from me ye that work in equity when you stand before the Lord in judgment will he know your name or will he be nameless like these nobles I think it's very interesting to us that we know that they are nobles because how many of us how many of the people that we know how many people in this room think that their position in life or their goodness in life these are nobles of the nation of God's chosen people are you telling me these nobles never went to the synagogue are you telling me these nobles never celebrated the religious ceremonies and did works did good works of course they did of course they did but just like we see here in their ear in this passage their names are not mentioned this is a very solemn warning that we do not know what tomorrow may bring and the day when you stand in front of the Lord it is forever and too late for you to decide I said this the last time I spoke I remember speaking at my great aunt's funeral and I've told this story before and my grandfather retired preacher asked me to speak I don't know why he did that it was his sister and I said we don't know whether or not she's saved we actually think she probably wasn't saved when she passed I'm like what do I say what do I say to that and he said you know what you say now she knows without a shadow of a doubt that there is a God when you stand before the Lord it is forever and too late you need to decide before that time happens I wonder if you are here today and you are similar to these nobles in that you are a respected member of the community maybe a respected regular tender of this church maybe you're a member of this church but you haven't actually put your faith in Jesus just as these nobles did not put their necks to the work of the

[18 : 35] Lord to bend their backs over to build this wall maybe there are some of you that have not bent your heart yielded your soul to the Lord Jesus I heard someone say once how much do I have to hate you to absolutely despise you to not tell you that danger is coming if I was to see you walking into traffic and looking down the road not seeing traffic come this way how much would I have to hate you to not call out to you to not if I had an opportunity run and grab you and pull you out of traffic how much more that we don't share the gospel how much more that

I'm not honest with you today we see here in many parts of the this passage here we saw once already and verse 10 it says that he built against his house we see also in other places in verse 21 from the door of his house verse 23 their house built by their house verse 27 28 in their house 29 they built in their house towards their house many many preachers I've heard preach on that preach on the fact that they worked on the house worked on the portion of the wall that was in front of their house all these workers came but they worked in front of their house and

I will mention some things on that but I think the interesting thing here and it's by example I think most predominantly in verse 12 it says and next unto him repaired Shalom the son of Halohesh the ruler of half part of Jerusalem he and his daughters builded the wall now I'm a sucker being a dad to girls but I will tell you that you cannot strive to do the Lord's work outside of your house until you work to build the Lord and King Jesus inside your house first when I first came across this passage I was struck by the way that Shalom's daughters brought him honor they're building a wall with bricks and mortar this is man's work this is hard work but ultimately in verse five it says it's the work of the Lord what kind of man must shall have been inside his home that when he said

I'm going outside to do the Lord's work his family followed his daughters followed not concerned about how hard it would be not concerned what others would think about doing man's work quote unquote I will tell you Shalom is a man that I want to be like what do we know about Shalom we know who his dad was Hal Ohesh we know that he was the half part ruler of half of Jerusalem and we know that he had daughters but by reason of what he did and what his daughters did

[23 : 56] I can tell you that he loved the Lord he was a man that I would be willing to follow because you can see that what he did inside his home led to how he behaved outside of his home and no doubt he led half of Jerusalem well my daughters have brought me honor not because they strive to do the things that make me happy or make me proud although they do them but because they strive to do what

God wants of them they strive to learn more about God strive to honor God with their actions and I will tell you that the Bible says that those who honor God he will honor how many of you think that Shalom's daughters thought when they walked out that door and rolled up their sleeves and started making brick and making mortar that they would be in God's word for all time oh to be honored of God just as they stepped outside and looked at this broken wall so we're stepping outside into a broken world full of broken hearts and broken lives broken families and broken relationships lives without

Christ do you know that we cannot fix lives we can't put them back together but we can be used of God we can point people to Christ he is that great rock that blessed cornerstone that is the head of the corner on which broken men and women and children can begin to rebuild their lives would we not roll up our sleeves and be used of

God to rebuild lives and to point people to Jesus I also want to make a point here in verse five we've read it before it makes it very clear whose work this is it is the work of the Lord it is the Lord's work and as we go through this list we see a little bit into what it means to serve the Lord we have priests and we have goldsmiths we have men and women we don't have any ages so we don't know if we have young and old probably do because there's generations parents and sons parents and daughters it is about the

Lord it is not about us it is about the Lord it's not about our abilities or our inabilities when God asks us to do his work it's not about us it's about him I don't know how many of you remember the story of Naaman the great commander of the army but he was a leper he had leprosy all over his body and he went to Elijah the prophet the great man of God and he came with his chariots and servants Elijah didn't even meet him Elijah sent out a servant and said tell him that

[29 : 48] God says go wash in the Jordan seven times so here comes Naaman with his pomp and whatever position and stature he thinks he has to see the great man of God to be healed and the man of God doesn't even go out to see him now this is all orchestrated by God in heaven how this all plays out and the servant says my master tells me that you need to go wash in the Jordan seven times and you'll be healed and Naaman doesn't do it Naaman is like mad he's like I'm Naaman I'm Naaman you want me to go wash in the dirty Jordan river seven times you want me to take my clothes off and my armor off like in front of my front of my my subordinates and hop in the water here and he doesn't do it but he is humbled by one who loves him because one of his servants comes near to him 2nd

Kings 5 verse 13 says and spake unto him and say my father if the prophet had bid thee to do some great thing what's thou not have done it how much rather than when he saith to thee wash and be clean I wonder how many of us if we were handed a microphone in a stadium like Billy Graham would be willing to share the gospel share your testimony with somebody or how many of us through ministry of song in front of a great audience would sing God's praises but we won't even give thanks for our meal in the lunchroom at work we won't even speak the name of Jesus around our neighbor how many of us if we were called to do a great thing for

God would do it but I would put to you today by example of brick and mortar that everything God calls you to do is a great thing what greater thing than to point someone to your savior do you think you're not equipped to do it I don't know if Shalom's daughters had much experience in masonry masonry I don't know how much the goldsmith had experience in masonry I don't know how much the soft hands of the cup bearer for the king Nehemiah himself had experience in masonry but God called them to do it and I want to make clear this isn't some great call from heaven lightning strikes and thunder bolts this was a righteous cause of

Christ and when these men listed here and these sons and these daughters listed here heard Nehemiah say let's do this thing for the Lord he's with us that's enough there was no clouds and thunderstorm on top of Mount Sinai no pillars of smoke or fire no great no great speech from a prophet how many of us already know what the Lord wants us to do and we're just not doing it how many of you think it's the pastor's job to talk to your neighbor about Jesus if only I can get the pastor over when my neighbor is out gardening then we can start the conversation how many think you know you're somebody Shalom was the half ruler of Jerusalem what's he doing building the wall men women sons daughters it's the Lord's work I wonder today what he's been calling you to do I know that I need to be bold I know that I need to be not ashamed of the gospel it's very easy to be worried about what people will think it's very easy to be worried about your own reputation that's why if

[35 : 40] Shalom the half ruler of Jerusalem can take off of his ruler garments and roll up his sleeves and do the work of the Lord so can I and I pray by my example my house will follow I believe it was Joshua who said choose this day who you will serve as for me and my house we will serve the Lord if you haven't figured out already I'm a very emotional guy it's who I am I can't stop it it is it just is who

I am who God has made me to be and I will tell you that there is no greater joy no greater feeling than when you have finished the wall when you've done that thing that God has called you to do and you walk away from that conversation or you walk away from that visit in the hospital you walk away from sharing your testimony with a perfect stranger oh what a feeling it is it is like the well done the good pat on the back it is the loving embrace of

God I would encourage you all to think today and I don't think if we're honest with ourselves we have to think very far what work of the Lord has God been asking you to do that you've been finding every and all excuse to not do maybe it's a little thing maybe maybe it's a little way that God wants you to stand up for Christ as you go about your days maybe it's a big thing maybe someone here the Lord has put a call to ministry maybe on your heart and you've been trying to ignore it trying to push it away maybe for the cause of

Christ you have been withholding forgiveness so for the cause of Christ you must make that right you see like when we bind up things on earth the Bible says he binds up things in heaven we can't expect to have good fellowship with God when we are not following what he asks us to do to offer grace and mercy and forgiveness it's the work of the Lord how can we say that we are forgiven if we don't forgive before I beat this horse to death I just want to say that

God's word on our hearts is a work of the Lord and so if you want to do the work of the Lord if you want to make King Jesus the king of your house the king of your home the king of your family you must let the Lord's work work in your life and in your heart you can't expect to give godly wisdom if you yourself have not received the wisdom of God from his word you cannot expect to give godly encouragement if you yourself have not been encouraged by God's word and you can't expect to share the living gospel with someone else if the

[41 : 36] Holy Spirit does not live within you they're just words we read already all these people that came to the Lord and said did we not prophesy in your name did we not do all these things all scripture is God breathed and is given for inspiration of God given by inspiration of God and is profitable for doctrine for reproof for correction and instruction in righteousness that the man and woman of God may be perfect thoroughly furnished unto all good works the works of the Lord I've been encouraged and maybe today this message is just for me and if that's the case thanks for listening to me

I am honored by my daughters as they seek to honor the Lord just before we close up here today I just want to say that we are pastors going to come here and read some scripture but we're about to remember the work of the Lord Jesus Christ and I talked to one of my youngest daughters this week discussed with her about communion and I'm not going to take away from what Pastor Josh is going to say but I just wanted to say that this is a time that we remember what the Lord has done for us and this is where we get energized but this is not a mandatory thing for every

Christian for every time it comes around and so if there's something that is not right and needs to get dealt with it is far more beneficial to the cause of Christ and to the work of the Lord that you sort that out first before we take time to remember the Lord and what he did on the cross for us I'll leave that to the pastor to finish up here to what the one t is more