

Getting to work

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Preacher: Nick Hallett

[0 : 00] Nehemiah chapter 3. Then Eliashib, the high priest, rose up with his brothers, the priests, and they built the sheep gate.

They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel. And next to him the men of Jericho built, and next to them Zakur the son of Imri built.

The sons of Hassanah built the fish gate. They laid its beams, set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them Merimoth, the son of Uriah, son of Hakoz, repaired.

And next to them Meshulam, the son of Berechiah, son of Meshzebel, repaired. And next to them Sadok, the son of Barna, repaired. And next to them the Tekawites repaired.

But their nobles would not stoop to serve their lord. Jadah, the son of Peseah, and Meshulam, the son of Bezadeah, repaired the gate of Yeshanah.

[1 : 06] They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them repaired Melatiah, the Gibeonite, and Jadon, the Meronithite, the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah, the seat of the governor of the province beyond the river.

Next to them Uziel, the son of Hachiah, goldsmiths, repaired. And next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, repaired. And they restored Jerusalem as far as the broad wall.

Next to them Rephiah, the son of Hur, ruler of half of the district of Jerusalem, repaired. Next to them Jediah, the son of Haramath, repaired opposite his house.

And next to him Hattush, the son of Hashabnea, repaired. Malkiah, the son of Haram, and Hashab, the son of Pahath Moab, repaired another section and the tower of the ovens.

Next to him, Shalom, the son of Halahesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, repaired. He and his daughters. Hanan and the inhabitants of Sanoah repaired the valley gate.

[2 : 19] They rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And repaired a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the dung gate. Malkiah, the son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth-Hakarem, repaired the dung gate.

He rebuilt it, set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And Shalom, the son of Kolhose, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the fountain gate.

He rebuilt it, covered it, set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And he built the wall of the pool of Shelah, of the king's garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the city of David.

After him, Nehemiah, the son of Asbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-Zerh, repaired to a point opposite the tombs of David, as far as the artificial pool, and as far as the house of the mighty men.

After him, the Levites repaired. Reham, the son of Bani. Next to him, Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, repaired for his district.

[3 : 26] After him, their brothers repaired. Bivai, the son of Henadad, ruler of half the district of Keilah. Next to him, Ezah, the son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section, opposite the ascent to the armory at the buttress.

After him, Baruch, the son of Zabai, repaired another section from the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib, the high priest. After him, Merimoth, the son of Uriah, son of Hachoz, repaired another section from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib.

After him, the priests, the men of the surrounding area, repaired. After them, Benjamin and Hashab repaired opposite their house. After them, Azariah, the son of Masaiah, son of Ananiah, repaired beside his own house.

After him, Benwai, the son of Henadad, repaired another section from the house of Azariah to the buttress and to the corner. Palal, the son of Uzzi, repaired opposite the buttress and the tower, projecting from the upper house of the king at the court of the guard.

After him, Pedziah, the son of Parosh, and the temple servants living on Ophel, repaired to a point opposite the water gate on the east and projecting tower.

[4 : 47] After him, the Tekawites repaired another section opposite the great projecting tower and as far as the wall of Ophel. Above the horse gate, the priests repaired, each one opposite his own house.

After them, Zadok, the son of Immer, repaired opposite his own house. After him, Shemaiah, the son of Shekariah, the keeper of the east gate, repaired. After him, Hananiah, the son of Shalamiah and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaf, repaired another section.

After him, Meshulam, the son of Berechiah, repaired opposite his chamber. After him, Malkiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, opposite the muster gate and to the upper chamber of the corner.

Between the upper chamber of the corner and the Sheep gate, the goldsmiths and the merchants repaired. Nehemiah, chapter 4.

Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, What are these feeble Jews doing?

[6 : 04] Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish and burned ones at that?

Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, Yes, what they are building, if a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall.

Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives.

Do not cover their guilt and do not let their sin be blotted out from your sight, for they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders. So we built the wall.

And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashtodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry.

[7 : 15] And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night.

In Judah, it was said, The strength of those who bear the burdens is falling, failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves, we will not be able to rebuild the wall.

And our enemies said, They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work. At that time, the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, You must return to us.

So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans with their swords, their spears and their bows. And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, Do not be afraid of them.

Remember the Lord who is great and awesome and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your homes. When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work.

[8 : 46] From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction and half held the spears, shields, bows and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah who were building on the wall.

Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built.

The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, The work is great and widely spread and we are separated on the wall far from one another.

In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us. So we labored at the work and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out.

I also said to the people at that time, Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day.

[10:02] So neither I, nor my brothers, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me, None of us took off his clothes. Each kept his weapon at his right hand.

Great. Thank you, Marcus. London loves building. In the past year alone, there was about 100 new skyscrapers or towers proposed for construction in London.

And many of them are still at the planning stages. It takes a long time to get them built. But if they were all built, in London alone there'd be over 400 skyscrapers. Now you might think that the shard, the cheese grater, and numerous kind of towers at Canary Wharf would be enough.

You'd think that London had enough buildings. But London just can't stop building. And there's plans for a construction at 22 Bishopsgate to make the first vertical city tower in London, whatever that means, at 278 meters tall.

And according to the developer, Sir Stuart Lipton, it would apparently have all the benefits of a village green, kind of up in the air, kind of paradise. And closer to home, there's not a road in Dulwich where someone's not having a loft conversion or an extension being built.

[11:23] And it seems we just can't stop building. But it's not just bricks and mortar, is it? We talk about building when we talk about building. Anything that we use our time and energy for.

So we talk about building up our careers or our professional reputation, our businesses, our academic achievements, our money, our investments, our children's education.

So if someone looked at your life, what would they say you were building? What are you devoting your time and resources into?

Well, for the past couple of weeks at Grace Church, we've been looking at the book of Nehemiah in the Old Testament. And Nehemiah was the leader of God's people who rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem.

Nehemiah lived around 445 BC. Long after Jerusalem had been destroyed and its people carried off into exile in Babylon. And so when they returned home under the Persian kings, they found the temple destroyed and the walls of Jerusalem burned to the ground.

[12:31] Imagine how they would have felt. The place where God dwelt with his people utterly ruined. But under Ezra, the temple had been rebuilt. They had somewhere to meet with God.

But still no city wall. The people of God were vulnerable to attack and despised by the nations around them. And it's not just the wall itself that they cared about.

It's what it represented. God's people were broken, as we saw in Nehemiah chapter 1 a couple of weeks ago. I don't know if you remember a couple of months ago in the news, we found out that the Palace of Westminster is in disrepair, in need of repair urgently.

And if we don't do something soon, the whole of the House of Parliament are going to have to be moved out. And the whole place will be, you know, uninhabitable. How do you think the country would feel if the House of Parliament was in disrepair?

It would bring shame on our country. It would represent a broken country. And it's similar for Nehemiah. It's not so much his own reputation that he's concerned about, but God's reputation.

[13:43] As he says in chapter 1, verse 10, God, they're your servants and your people. God's reputation is at stake with the walls of Jerusalem burned down.

In the Bible, in Psalm 48, verse 2, it says that Jerusalem should be the joy of the whole earth. Well, how can Jerusalem be the joy of the whole earth when its walls are burnt down?

Do you see, why Nehemiah cares so much about the walls of Jerusalem? It's not just another construction project at Canary Wharf. It's fundamental to God dwelling with his people.

Well, what about us here today in London, 2016? Well, for us living after Jesus has come, God dwells with his people, not in a temple in Jerusalem or even in a church building, but with us by his spirit.

The church is a people of God gathered together. So it's not so much walls that we need to build, but people, people who are built up to be followers of Jesus.

[14:48] In the New Testament, as we've heard already this morning, it uses the imagery of the church, the people of God, as the new Jerusalem, ultimately gathered together in the new world that God will make when Jesus returns.

See, Nehemiah was building the old Jerusalem, but it looks forward to the new Jerusalem, the people of God, the church. And so as we look back at the book of Nehemiah, it can teach us a lot of things about what it meant for God's people to be built up in the Old Testament and also for us today in the New Testament.

Now perhaps you're sitting here this morning, you're thinking, well, you know what, I'm not really that bothered about building up the church. I mean, I've got enough problems of my own and there's all kinds of other things that I want to devote my time and energy and resources to.

You know, perhaps I'll turn up here on a Sunday, but I won't go to a growth group or I won't come to prayer meetings, I won't give money to church because, well, church, you know, it's not really that fashionable anymore.

Society's moved on. You know, lots of people, they don't really like it when you tell them you're a Christian. You risk getting laughed at. Last year in *The Spectator*, Michael Gove wrote an article about Christianity.

[16:06] And in it he says, to call yourself a Christian in contemporary Britain is to invite pity, condescension, or cool dismissal. In a culture that prizes sophistication, non-judgmentalism, irony, and detachment is to declare yourself intolerant, naive, superstitious, and backward.

People don't really like Christians on the whole today. And that's exactly what Nehemiah and the Jews of his day would have been tempted to feel. As they saw the walls of Jerusalem burn down, you know, society had moved on.

And opposition to God's people grew and grew. See, the enemies laughed at the idea of rebuilding the walls in chapter 2, verse 19.

And I wonder if you saw in chapter 4, as Marcus read it, that there's constant ridicule, threats, and discouragement for Nehemiah. He would have really felt tempted to give up. And there were plenty of other projects Nehemiah could have got involved with.

Or perhaps he could have designed a city skyscraper instead. But Nehemiah knows that God is with his people and ultimately God will build his church.

[17:20] Have a look at, back at chapter 2, verse 20, if you've got the passage open with you, just before we begun chapter 3. Chapter 2, verse 20, Nehemiah says to God's enemies, he says, the God of heaven will make us prosper and we, his servants, will arise and build.

See, Nehemiah knew that there was nothing that was going to stop God rebuilding his church. So having a look at chapter 3 and 4 as we are today, there are at least three big themes that I think the writer wants to draw our attention to.

And the first is that we ought to build together. and that's from chapter 3, build together. You'll have noticed as Helen read chapter 3 that it's a whole list of all kinds of names that we've never, never heard of and don't really mean much to us.

But it starts with the sheep gate in verse 1 and finishes at the sheep gate in verse 32, going around in a kind of anti-clockwise direction if we are rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

And we might be tempted to kind of ignore who they are. You know, after all, not much is known about them. We don't really know much about the different portions of the wall. But the reason there might include them is because he makes a note of all of their names is because people matter.

[18:40] So you could come along here and say that Grace Church Dulwich is a bunch of people who meet together each week and try to build up each other as followers of Jesus. But that would be to completely miss the point of individuals, individuals working together because people matter.

The person sat right now on your right and on your left really matters. Perhaps you're in a growth group. The people in your growth group really matter. And the reason is because we need each other.

Simon Dowdy, our main leader here, he can't build the church up on his own. And neither could Nehemiah build the walls of Jerusalem on his own. So have a look at chapter 3, verse 1.

All kinds of people from all walks of life come together for the common purpose of rebuilding the walls. So Elisha, the high priest, helps to build the sheep gate in verse 1.

In verse 2, we see the sons of Jericho and Zaka, the sons of Imri. Verse 3, the sons of Hanassiah. And verse 5, the Tuakites.

[19:53] Verse 8, we see a group of goldsmiths and perfumers. All kinds of people come together. It doesn't matter what family they're in or what their occupations are. They come together to rebuild the wall.

In verse 12, we get a guy called Hannah and the inhabitants, sorry, Halasher, and his daughters come and repair. All kinds of people have different resources and different abilities.

But they come together. Now, you can tell they're built quite well, can't you? Because in verse 4, Sambala and his friends are angry.

And in verse 6, they say that the people had a mind to work. You know, they really thought it was worth devoting their time and energy and effort to rebuilding the wall. And they all did their individual bit.

22 Bishopsgate is still under construction. I think it's predicted for something like 2019 for completion. But it will not get built, will it, unless everyone works together.

[20 : 56] You see, if the architects fall out with the structural engineers, if the building control team fall out with the builders, nothing will happen at all. And if the Jews in Nehemiah's day, you know, started arguing with each other about, you know, who wasn't working hard enough, nothing would have been built.

If the goldsmiths had kind of complained that the perfumers smelt too much and no one offered to rebuild the dungate, you know, everyone would be in chaos. Nothing would have got done. And similarly, here at Grace Church, we need to build together. You know, we all have different abilities and gifts. We all belong to the New Jerusalem, God's church, throughout the ages. And the moment we kind of stop being united around the gospel, perhaps arguing about who should clear away afterwards or about which songs we should sing or which growth group we're in, we stop building together.

But I need you and you need me. Now, if you're in a growth group here, you'll know that we've been working through this series, Six Steps to Loving Your Church, through the last few weeks, which is exactly the issue here, isn't it?

[22 : 00] How do I build up the church? Imagine how things would be different if we all came to church or to a prayer meeting or a growth group with the same enthusiasm that Nehemiah and the Jews had about rebuilding the wall.

And where are we building something better than the old walls of Jerusalem? Where are we building the new Jerusalem, the church? So we need to build together. That's the first thing. The second thing, then, is that we need to remember the Lord. And that's from chapter four. We need to remember the Lord. It's easy to feel discouraged, isn't it, when we face opposition as Christians.

And no doubt, that's how Nehemiah felt. Have a look at chapter four, if you've got it in front of you, and verses one to three, and particularly in verse two. Sambalat and his friends become angry and they say in verse two, what are these feeble Jews doing?

Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of heaps of rubbish and burned ones at that? They've got no idea what they're taking on.

[23 : 09] They think they can rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, not a chance. If a fox jumps on it, he'll tear it down. Do you ever feel like that when people oppose Christianity, when people see Christians as intolerant, naive, superstitious, and backward?

The world seems to despise Christians. But Nehemiah prays to God. Did you notice that throughout the whole of chapter four, he prays to God. We've seen it already in the book of Nehemiah, chapter one, verse four to 11, and chapter two, verse four.

And Nehemiah knew that the hand of God was on him. As we saw chapter two, verse eight, and two, verse 18. And so again, in chapter four, Nehemiah prays to God.

Have a look at chapter four, verse four. He says, hear, oh, our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunts on their own heads. He remembers the Lord. God. And why is the mocking so serious? Sam Ballard and his friends, why is their mocking so serious? Well, because, verse five, they've provoked you to anger. See, God is the real object of their mocking.

[24 : 19] And it's the same today. People who mock Christians today are really mocking God. But it doesn't stop there, does it? The opposition intensifies even more.

In chapter four, verse seven, they see that the wall is getting rebuilt and people join in from all sides. Literally. Sam Ballard in the north, Tobiah and the Amorites in the east, the Arabs from the south and the Ashdodites in the west.

They're furious. And in verse eight, they come and plot together to destroy the Jews in Jerusalem, to fight against Jerusalem. Nehemiah is surrounded, but again, he prays to God.

In verse nine, and again, verse 10, he gets more problems from the Jews. They're saying there's too much rubble. They can't finish their work.

The enemies are plotting to kill them. And you can imagine the Jews in the villages around perhaps coming and seeing their family or friends, rebuilding the walls and telling them to stop, fearing for their lives.

[25 : 18] But in verse 14, Nehemiah says, do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord who is great and awesome. And again, in verse 20, the end of the chapter, our God will fight for us.

Well, perhaps you're sitting here and you're thinking, well, you know, it's all right for Nehemiah. I mean, he was cut bearer to the king, as we saw in chapter one. He was given letters from the king, timber from the gates, army officers, and horsemen in two, verse nine.

But I could never be as courageous as Nehemiah. You know, there's just too much rubble, too much to rebuild, too many problems in the church today, too much opposition.

You know, God might be great and awesome, but will he win? Is God really able to rebuild his church? Is God really more powerful than his enemies?

Will the church around the world today just slowly, slowly die? We'll have a look at chapter four, verse 15. The writer says that when our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall.

[26 : 33] It's interesting, isn't it, that he says that God had frustrated Sambalot's plans. It didn't surprise Nehemiah, and it shouldn't surprise us, that God had frustrated his enemies' plans.

In Psalm 2, it asks, you know, why do the nations plot together against the Lord? Why do they bother? He frustrates their plans. God laughs at his enemies.

Do they think they're stronger than God? I guess many of you here will be familiar with the idea of a child, and I guess all the rest of you as well, the idea of a child struggling in protest against his parents.

Perhaps you're holding the child in your arms and perhaps stopping them from hitting their brother or sister again, and despite having absolutely no chance of success, they're still struggling against you, trying to escape.

And the more and more they try and escape, the more and more you keep them there. I mean, it's ridiculous, isn't it? Do they think they're stronger than you? Of course not. There's absolutely no chance they'll win.

[27 : 38] And Nehemiah knew that opposing God is as foolish as a child trying to break free of his parents' grasp. See, God had promised that he would rebuild his people.

God is great and awesome. And Nehemiah had prayed in chapter 1, verse 9, that God would bring his people from scattered in the exile together to the place where he'd be with them, to Jerusalem. But I wonder what you think about the church today. Perhaps keep a finger in the book of Nehemiah and turn forward in your Bibles to Matthew chapter 16.

It's on page 991 if you've got your Bibles there. Matthew chapter 16, page 991. In Matthew 16, verse 18, Jesus is speaking to Peter about his church.

And he says, on this rock I will build my church and the gates of hell shall not prevail against it. Jesus promises that his church will be built.

[28 : 56] How much we're able to contribute to it, perhaps our gifts or abilities, how much time and energy we have, we have to remember that it's God's church. It's his people that he will rebuild.

It's not our little kingdom of Grace Church Dulwich or our kingdom of the Church of England or our small growth group. It's God's church and he will rebuild it.

And perhaps you're sitting here thinking, well, phew, that's a weight of my shoulders. You know, for a moment I thought I had to do something. But you know, it turns out if God will build his church, great, fantastic, I can just sit back and watch.

Well, not at all. You know, God does build his church but he builds it through people. Nehemiah built the walls with the help of people as well as the hand of God on him.

In Psalm 127 it says, unless the Lord builds a house the laborers labor in vain. Unless the Lord watches over the city its watchmen stand guard in vain. So it's not that there are no builders, no watchmen, but it's that God works through the builders or in our case and through us to build the church.

[30 : 14] So the prayer meetings that we have each month here are a good example of how we can depend on God rather than merely ourselves. Obviously we might not all be able to get to it but unless God builds his church we labor in vain.

We might as well all go home if we're not depending on God in prayer. But we do need to build. And that's the final thing I want us to see from these chapters is that we need to work hard from chapters 3 and chapter 4.

I guess we've already seen this haven't we? Chapter 3 people work incredibly hard but in chapter 4 almost because of the intensified opposition they work even harder under enormous pressure and see how their building goes hand in hand with praying.

Turn back to Nehemiah chapter 4 if you can. In verse 4 and 5 Nehemiah prays and then verse 6 so we built the wall.

They didn't over spiritualize it sort of they just built the wall. They worked hard. It wasn't complicated. Nehemiah didn't wait to get a PhD in construction or a high diploma in defending half finished buildings.

[31 : 29] He just got on with the work. And similarly we shouldn't think here that we have to be kind of expert Bible teachers or experienced coffee makers before we can serve each other or share God's word with people.

in the rest of chapter 4 Nehemiah prays and he acts. So have a look at verse 9 Nehemiah prays and he sets a guard.

In verse 13 the people are discouraged so he gives them weapons and sets them in groups. In verse 14 he prays remembers the Lord and prepares them to fight.

In verses 15 to 23 they continue to work with weapons by their sides. They have a trumpet ready in case of attack. And in verse 22 they even sleep at Jerusalem by night so Sambal can't attack them by surprise.

And in verse 23 Nehemiah leaves by example and he's constantly vigilant for any attack. It's not complicated. Nehemiah works hard and he gets on with it.

[32 : 36] There's no doubt is there that Londoners by and large work very hard. Quite apart from the commute and many people do long hours a few lunch breaks perhaps go to conferences or travel abroad on top of that.

And that doesn't include checking work emails at home thinking about work or any of the other things that we do outside work that take a lot of energy and effort not to mention caring for children or elderly relatives.

But how hard do we work to build up the church? We might not be able to spend all of our time reading the Bible with other people or helping to organise things at church. But I wonder how concerned you are about those things compared to your day job or things you do at home.

I'm aware that in Grace Church there are loads of people who work incredibly hard to build up the church and that should encourage us. This passage should encourage us to keep going. God works through his people.

But perhaps you're here this morning and you're a bit more on the edge of things. Perhaps you're not really sure whether you want to get that involved in Grace Church. Well, God knows how much time and energy you have and he never asks you to do more than you can.

[33 : 50] But the reason the wall got built was in chapter 4 verse 6. The people had a mind to work. They were desperate to build the wall.

They wanted God's name to be honoured. God's church. It's important to say here this morning that we're not earning our way into God's people by building his church. We're not trying to earn our way into his favour.

We're already part of his family because of Jesus' death on the cross. But we do want his name to be honoured. We want to build up his church. I wonder what you felt about when we read about Nehemiah telling his people to fight.

He gives them shields and spears and bows and arrows and coats of mail in verse 16. I wonder what you felt when Marcus read that. It's important to say obviously that God does not command us today to get involved with physical fights, with armed conflicts or with weapons.

But instead in Ephesians chapter 6 he tells us to put on the armour of God which is truth, righteousness, peace, faith, salvation, the word of God and prayer.

[35 : 01] In other words, things that build up the church. So Nehemiah chapter 3 and 4 encourage us to work hard together remembering that ultimately God is the one who will rebuild his church.

In the next 10 or 20 years I guess that London will keep building. It's very likely that London will continue to build more skyscrapers and more extensions to their houses and homes.

They'll invest their money and time and energy into building things that won't last forever. Nehemiah and his people worked hard remembering the Lord and invested their money and time and energy into rebuilding the walls of the old Jerusalem as it points forward to the new Jerusalem which will last forever.

never. So I wonder what you will spend the next 10 or 20 years doing. What will you put your time and energy and money and resources into?

The only thing that will last forever is the church, the people of God united together under Jesus. Let's pray together. Father, we thank you very much for the example of Nehemiah, that he both trusted you and worked hard.

[36 : 26] Thank you for the example of the people working together with the shared aim of building the walls of Jerusalem in order to restore your people. And Father, we pray that we would trust you as we work together to build your church despite opposition.

And we pray this in Jesus' name. Amen.