

Establishing Order in the Midst of Chaos # 18

Nehemiah 7: 1-4

In our last study we found that Nehemiah had completed the work of reconstruction. It had been a difficult task, but by the help and guidance of the Lord, they had prevailed. At this point it would have been tempting to relish in their accomplishment and fail to press on with the necessary activities. Nehemiah could have possessed the attitude that his work was complete and there was no further need of him.

However we find in our text that Nehemiah realized the work was not complete. They had finished the actual construction of the wall, but there was still much that needed to be done. If Jerusalem was to be restored to any resemblance of her former glory and the people were to dwell within the city, order and authority had to be established. Nehemiah's work was far from over; he is now in the process of transitioning from a rebuilding effort to the reestablishment of essential elements of society to ensure the health, prosperity, and well being of the inhabitants of Jerusalem.

These verses present an interesting challenge to us. In them we are reminded that the work of the Lord must continue. It is easy to get complacent and lose sight of the big picture when we achieve a particular goal. We must be reminded that there is much yet to accomplish and we cannot abandon the efforts that we have begun. There is nothing wrong in rejoicing over the completion of a particular phase of work, but we cannot assume that we have accomplished all there is to do.

As we consider this passage, I want to remind us that Nehemiah's opposition was still present. Quite often he was forced to deal with a volatile situation. As so many times before, Nehemiah refuses to allow the hindrances of life to defeat him. I want to consider the [principles](#) listed as we think on: [Establishing Order in the Midst of Chaos](#).

I. The Accomplishment Mentioned (1a) – [Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors](#). Here Nehemiah offers an encouraging reminder of their accomplishment. In this simple statement he reveals much. We find that he spoke:

A. A Word of Comfort – [Now it came to pass](#). We are well aware of the great progress the people made in such a short amount of time, but we cannot forget the great adversity and opposition they faced each step of the way. The reconstruction effort may not have been long, but it was certainly difficult.

- We all face various trials of differing intensity and duration, but God is always faithful to His own. He will never leave nor forsake us. He is always there to provide the strength and provision we need to press on for Him. When you find yourself in the midst of a difficult situation, keep in mind that it will eventually come to pass. As we engage in the work of the Lord, we can do so with full assurance that God will provide what we need to be successful and accomplish His will as long as we follow Him!

B. A Word of Confidence – [Now it came to pass, when the wall was built.](#) Nehemiah also offered a word of confidence to the people. From the very beginning there were those who doubted and scoffed. Many believed they would never complete the work they had begun. God had honored and blessed their faithfulness and the work was complete; the wall had been built.

- We live in a world that has no confidence in our faith. We are surrounded by those who think we are delusional. They can see no way that we will ever achieve success or ever experience life beyond the grave. God has called to labor for Him while on this earth and He is right now preparing a home for the redeemed in heaven. It may appear at times that we are accomplishing very little, but rest assured, one glorious day our spiritual wall will be complete!

C. A Word of Completion – [Now it came to pass, when the wall was built, and I had set up the doors.](#) It would be easy to read this verse and miss the profound truth here. The wall had been built and Nehemiah had set the doors. That was the final touch on the entire project. The reconstruction efforts were completed with the hanging of the doors.

- It would have been easy to have become satisfied with the progress that had been made. There was likely a temptation to take a break from the labor. Nehemiah would not rest until the wall was complete in its entirety. The doors were an essential element in the wall and he ensured that the work did not stop until all was complete.

- That presents a tremendous challenge to me. It is easy to consider what we have been able to accomplish and grow complacent. It is easy to believe that there is plenty of time. I pray that God will so stir our hearts that we will labor tirelessly, continuing in the work we've been called to do. We have made great progress, but there is still so much that needs to be done! Our work is not complete and it never will be as long as there are souls in need of salvation.

I. The Accomplishment Mentioned (1a)

II. The Appointment Made (1b-2) – Nehemiah appointed necessary positions within the city.

A. Security (1b) – **Porters**. A porter is a *gatekeeper*. These are those who were charged with keeping the gates. The walls were built as a defense for the inhabitants and gates were necessary for access to the city, but there had to be those who stood guard, monitoring those who were allowed access.

- I know that isn't a popular line of thought among the modern church, but we still have a need for gatekeepers. We want to ensure that all are welcomed to hear the gospel, but we must be cautious about what comes through our doors. The enemy would like to send those in among us who desire to hinder and disrupt. We must stand our ground upon the truths of God's Word. I am thankful for those who kept watch over me when I was too young and immature to know what I needed. The young and weak need security.

B. Singers (1b) – Nehemiah also appointed singers among the people. Their task was exactly what we would expect. These were appointed to sing praises unto the Lord. Nehemiah was well aware of the good hand and favor of God upon them and he wanted to ensure that praise was offered continually to the Lord.

- We too have much to rejoice in and be thankful for, but I fear many congregations and people are not offering the praise our Lord is due. It is imperative that we make worship the focus of our services. We are here to lift up the name of Christ and worship Him. This is not limited to singing, but praise in song is a wonderful and necessary part of worship. I rejoice that Fellowship is blessed with those who have the ability to sing and are willing to do so.

C. Service (1b) – **Levites**. Since the giving of the law and the construction of the Tabernacle in Moses' day, the Levites were appointed servants in the work of the Lord. They were the attendants of the Tabernacle and later the Temple, carrying out the duties of the priesthood. Nehemiah immediately appointed the Levites to continue their work of service.

- I know that all are not called to preach or pastor, but there is a principle we need to consider. We need those who are willing to be used of the Lord, in service to Him. Far too many churches are filled with spectators with few participators. If you are a child of God, He has blessed you with a spiritual gift and the ability to serve Him and others. We need to submit ourselves unto the Lord and seek to serve in whatever way He chooses.

D. Supervision (2) – **That I gave my brother Hanani, and Hananiah the ruler of the palace, charge over Jerusalem: for he was a faithful man, and feared God above many**. Nehemiah also understood the need for leadership and supervision. This task was given to his brother, Hanani and another man named Hananiah, the ruler of the palace.

- We live in an age of rebellion where many resent authority and accountability. Where there is no authority, chaos will rule. Leadership is seen throughout the Bible and was instructed of God. Down through the ages, God has called individuals to lead His people and watch over them. Just because our society has changed doesn't mean that God has. There is still a need for godly leadership in the church, the home, our communities, and throughout the world. Much of what we are facing today can be attributed to a lack of authority and leadership.
- Hananiah is described as [a faithful man who feared God above many](#). Those are attributes that we need in leaders today. Churches, families, and nations are influenced by leaders. We need to pray that all would possess these godly characteristics. If you are in a place of leadership and authority, I pray that you will seek to develop these qualities as well.

I. The Accomplishment Mentioned (1a)

II. The Appointment Made (1b-2)

III. The Attention Mandated (3-4) – In the closing verses, Nehemiah mandates that particular attention be made regarding specific areas. There is great application here for us as well.

A. He Spoke of Entrance (3a) – [And I said unto them, Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun be hot](#); He offers specific detail regarding the opening and closing of the gates. They were naturally to be closed at night, and they were not to be opened in the morning until the sun had risen and become hot. He knew the city was surrounded by many who sought their demise and he made provision to ensure that the enemy did not secretly enter among them early in the morning without detection.

- This goes hand in hand with the security that we spoke of a moment ago, and it reinforces the truth that we must be careful of what we allow within the church and be wise to the ungodly influences that the enemy seeks to bring in among us. We cannot throw caution to the wind and neglect biblical purity for the approval of the world.

B. He Spoke of Prudence (3b) – [and while they stand by, let them shut the doors, and bar them](#): Nehemiah mandated a continual effort regarding security by being cautious and preventive in their efforts. I could not with certainty discern the actual meaning of “[while they stand by](#).” It is possible he was speaking of times when the gatekeepers had other duties or times when there was no traffic in and out of the gates. Whatever the circumstance, Nehemiah was advising

caution. He warned of complacency or laziness while keeping the gates. If someone wasn't there to secure them, the gates were required to be shut and barred.

- This is just common sense. As we think of application in our lives, we cannot afford to abandon our post. There are those among us who are depending on us to stay focused and prevent hindrances and distractions from among us. The enemy is always seeking a means of entrance to defeat, devour, and destroy. This will not always be pleasing or well received, but we have received too much and are responsible for too much not to protect what we have been entrusted with.

C. He Spoke of Observance (3a) – [and appoint watches of the inhabitants of Jerusalem, every one in his watch, and every one to be over against his house](#). This speaks of much we have already considered. He had appointed those who were responsible to keep a continual watch over the city. They were expected to sound the alarm when danger approached.

- We desperately need those today that are observant and willing to sound the alarm. We cannot assume that everyone we meet or each situation we encounter will be to our advantage. The church and the Lord's work need those of discernment who will speak up when things are not as they should be or when trouble is imminent.

D. He Spoke of Dependence (4) – [Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded](#). At this time some had returned from captivity, and more would follow, but Jerusalem had not yet been greatly populated. As Nehemiah surveyed the expanse of the city he realized that they were few in number and spread out throughout the city. In essence they depended on each other for their overall safety and were counting on each other to ensure safety for all.

- Time and cultures may have changed, but this simple truth has not. We need each other. It takes each of us, being in our place, fulfilling our work, and looking out for one another. The work is too great and the opposition too strong for us to lose sight of the need for one another. United we can accomplish much with confidence, but divided or unconcerned, we will likely fall one by one to the attack of the enemy. We are obligated to the Lord and each other to contribute to the work whatever the need or circumstance.

Clearly this was an exciting time for the people of Jerusalem, but it was also a perilous time. Their success or failure depended in large part on their actions and commitment. They had completed the wall, but the work was by no means finished. There was much yet to do and if they were to be successful they would have to work together and follow the leadership of those in authority.

We too live in a chaotic time. The pressures of the world are stronger than we've ever seen. The influence of the enemy continues to advance. But, just as it was in Jerusalem, we have much yet to do. We cannot allow the tactics or presence of the enemy hinder us in fulfilling our calling. Most, if not all of us, know what we need to do and how to do it. We just need to embrace the task and continue on for the glory of God.