

The Commitment of a Godly Leader

Nehemiah 4: 14; 19; 22-23

“Conversion is a turning into the right road; the next thing is to walk in it. The daily going on in that road is as essential as the first starting if you would reach the desired end. To strike the first blow is not all the battle; to him that overcomes the crown is promised. To start in the race is nothing, many have done that who have failed; but to hold out till you reach the winning post is the great point of the matter. Perseverance is as necessary to a man’s salvation as conversion,”
Through the Eyes of C.H. Spurgeon: Quotes from a Reformed Baptist Preacher.

Nehemiah began a journey into the unknown as he left the king’s palace in order to begin reconstructing the walls in Jerusalem. He had proven his ability to lead, influencing others to catch the vision, motivating them for the task ahead, and organized an effective strategy to mobilize the teams to work. This was not without opposition or hindrances. Nehemiah faced much adversity in seeking to do God’s will and yet he remained steadfast in his commitment to the work.

In the preceding verses, we find that Sanballat and Tobiah have once again sought to hinder the work in Jerusalem. Judah, the strongest among the tribes of Israel, had become weary and succumbed to the pressure from without. They declared that the strength of the people had decayed and there was too much rubbish; the work cannot go on – we are unable to finish the task, Verse 10. In the midst of increasing opposition and pessimism, Nehemiah once again rises to the occasion and remains committed, determined to finish the work.

Godly leaders will face opposition and discouragement. There will be times when it seems as if you and Lord are the only ones who care about the task at hand. In those times, you must remember your calling and remain committed to the task. As we examine the [declarations of Nehemiah](#), I want to consider: [The Commitment of Godly Leaders](#). Nehemiah declared:

I. The Lord is Great (14) – [And 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 \(awesome\), and fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters, your wives, and your houses.](#) There can be no doubt that the task Nehemiah faced was enormous, but his God was greater than any difficulty or adversity. Having been granted leave from the king, along with all of the resources and credentials necessary, Nehemiah was well aware of the hand of God on his life and the work in which he was engaged. The task he had undertaken was greater than man could possibly complete within his own means – this work required the mighty hand of God to provide and sustain.

- Although Nehemiah faced tremendous obstacles, he was able to commit to the reconstruction effort with full assurance of the faithfulness of God. The people of Judah had been

led captive to Babylon decades prior, but God had promised a remnant would return to Jerusalem before the first captive was ever led away in bondage. God had kept His promise. Zerubbabel had led the first group back to Jerusalem almost 100 years prior. Ezra the priest had led the second group back to Jerusalem about 14 years earlier, and God continued to keep His promise with Nehemiah returning to rebuild the walls. Why would Nehemiah question the faithfulness of God's promises when He had proven Himself faithful time and time again?

- Nehemiah and those who served alongside him would have been familiar with the faithfulness of God, not just in their lives, but in the lives of their fathers as well. God had led the people out of Egypt's bondage and drove out the inhabitants of the Promised Land. The people had no legitimate reason to question the faithfulness and power of their God.

- While we are not the people of Judah, the church can rest in the power of provision of God as well. We serve the same God who has proven Himself faithful to the Hebrews throughout the times of the Old Testament. While many failed to see it, God always had a plan and purpose in mind, even as He dealt with the Jews of the Old Testament. He was preparing the way for the promised Messiah. Jesus came and fulfilled the promise of redemption, providing salvation for those who come to Him by faith. Following Jesus' ascension back to the Father, the church was born at Pentecost. There have been many challenges in the two centuries that have followed, and yet the Lord has been faithful through it all. We can rest in the promises and provision of our great God! [Eph.3:20-21 – Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,](#) ²¹ [Unto him be glory in the church by Christ Jesus throughout all ages, world without end. Amen.](#)

II. The Work is Great (19) – [And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.](#) Nehemiah was also well aware of the enormity of the task at hand. It was a great task, spread out all around the city. Even in the best of environments, this would have required much effort and cooperation to complete; not to mention, the continued verbal, psychological, and physical attacks the workers faced. Such a great task required committed workers and dedicated leadership.

- Again, the Bible served as a reference for Nehemiah in the midst of this great challenge. One instance in particular might have encouraged him. As Moses initially prepared to invade the Promised Land, he sent out a team of twelve spies to bring back a report of the land and its inhabitants. Upon their return, ten were overwhelmed with what they had experienced and urged the people to abandon the effort. Only Joshua and Caleb gave a favorable report. They did not deny the task would be difficult, but they were confident in God's ability to enable them to overcome. While it took forty years before they would enjoy the land, Joshua and Caleb eventually inhabited it.

- The book of Acts and the Epistles record many instances where the early church and the apostles were tasked with performing a great task. When one considers the Great Commission, it would certainly be identified as a great and large or expansive effort, and yet they engaged in the work with joy and commitment. It wasn't easy, and yet God provided success!
- The task before us today remains great and large. Those who have gone before us have labored in the Great Commission. As the baton was passed to our generation, we remain responsible for this great and large work. In and of ourselves, we will never be successful, but with the help of the Lord, through the enabling of the Holy Spirit, we can fulfill the work done the Lord has called us to engage. This will require committed workers and dedicated leaders, but we can overcome and advance the Kingdom! [2 Cor.10:3-5 – For though we walk in the flesh, we do not war after the flesh: ⁴ \(For the weapons of our warfare are not carnal, but mighty through God to the pulling down of strong holds\); ⁵ Casting down imaginations, and every high thing that exalteth itself against the knowledge of God, and bringing into captivity every thought to the obedience of Christ.](#)

III. The Sacrifice is Great (22-23) – [Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let everyone with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labor on the day. ²³ So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that everyone put them off for washing.](#) The reconstruction effort was not for the lazy or uncommitted. This work required sacrifice and dedication from everyone who labored on the wall. Even those who came in from outside Jerusalem to help were expected to remain within the city. They people rotated service in guard duty. The work was too great and there was too much at stake for the rebuilding efforts to fail. Their lives, the lives of their families, and all their livelihood depended upon this work being successful.

- As we consider the great sacrifices recorded in Scripture, none are greater than the sacrifice our Lord made on our behalf. He, being God in flesh, bore our sin upon the cross, offering Himself the atoning sacrifice for our sin. He who knew no sin, was made sin, that we might be made the righteousness of God in Him.
- Paul and the other apostles sacrificed greatly for the cause of Christ. Many of the early believers were forced to flee their homes, families, and livelihood because of their faith. Hebrews 11 records the sacrifice of many who were committed to the Lord. [Heb.11:33-38 – Who through faith subdued kingdoms, wrought righteousness, obtained promises, stopped the mouths of lions, ³⁴ Quenched the violence of fire, escaped the edge of the sword, out of weakness were made strong, waxed valiant in fight, turned to flight the armies of the aliens. ³⁵ Women received their dead raised to life again: and others were tortured, not accepting deliverance; that they might obtain a better resurrection: ³⁶ And others had trial of cruel mockings and scourgings, yea, moreover of bonds and imprisonment: ³⁷ They were stoned, they were sawn asunder, were tempted, were slain with the sword: they wandered about in sheepskins and](#)

goatskins; being destitute, afflicted, tormented; ³⁸ (Of whom the world was not worthy:) they wandered in deserts, and in mountains, and in dens and caves of the earth.

➤ Our labor for the Lord requires great sacrifice. We must desire His will and purposes above our own. We must be willing to die to the flesh daily so that we might take up our cross and follow Jesus. The work of the Kingdom calls for believers who are willing to make necessary sacrifices in service to the Lord. Again, this will require committed servants and dedicated leaders. Like the work Nehemiah was engaged in, we cannot fail. There is too much at stake. The Lord has called us for such a time as this. Are you willing to sacrifice greatly for the work of the Lord? Are you willing to lay aside personal desires and step outside of your comfort zone to answer the call?

Conclusion: There is so much more that could be said about the text recorded in this chapter. However, I hope you realize that we serve a great Lord, that we have been called to a great work, that requires great sacrifice. Who among us is willing to pick up the mantle and move forward in Kingdom work? Do you know Christ as your Lord and Savior? He made the greatest sacrifice in history for you to be saved. If you are yet unsaved, apart from a personal relationship with Christ, come to Him in repentance and faith today!