

The Workmen on the Wall #5

Nehemiah 3: 1-32

We have gotten acquainted with Nehemiah over the past few weeks. The Jewish cupbearer who served king Artaxerxes in the palace of Shushan had received word of the devastation in Jerusalem and became deeply burdened for the needs of the great city. He obtained commission from the king to make the long trip to Jerusalem in order to oversee the rebuilding efforts. After surveying the damage and creating a plan for reconstruction, Nehemiah leads the people of Jerusalem in this enormous effort. Our text today reveals the beginning of the restoration under the guidance of Nehemiah.

This is a passage that many would glance at and pass by. I will admit that most of the names recorded in this chapter have been a challenge to pronounce. Often we are tempted to assume that passages such as this that list a summary of names will have no real benefit or application for our daily lives. It would be a tragedy in our study of Nehemiah to bypass this great passage. Hidden among the names that are difficult to pronounce is an abundance of truth and great challenges for our daily lives. In fact, we will spend a few weeks in this chapter.

Tonight I want to begin with the first message from this chapter, looking at it from the perspective of those who actually labored in the rebuilding efforts. Time may have forgotten these devoted servants, but the Word of God has recorded their efforts for all eternity. That in itself is a tremendous lesson. The world and even those around us may not recognize our names or appreciate our efforts, but we are engaged in a noble task in which the Lord has called us to and we are assured that he is keeping a record of our labor. I want to begin tonight by looking at the [characteristics](#) of these men as we consider: [The Workmen on the Wall](#).

I. Their Craftsmen – As we jump into this wonderful passage we discover that there were some thirty-eight individuals listed as those who labored constructing the walls. There were at least fifteen different groups listed as working on the wall. These include such groups as [the priests V. 1](#), the [men of Jericho, V.2](#), the [sons of Hassenaah V. 3](#), [the Tekoites V. 5](#), the [men of Gibeon V. 7](#), the [goldsmiths and apothecaries V.8](#), the [inhabitants of Zanoah, V.13](#), and various rulers, among others. We could go on, but clearly there was a vast array of individuals and talents that had come together in an effort to rebuild the city walls.

- Certainly there were countless others who labored alongside those mentioned, but it is likely that Nehemiah only recorded those who were selected as overseers of certain portions of the project. Their names or association weren't mentioned and yet they labored tirelessly with those who were. This wasn't about name recognition, but service unto the Lord.

- What a great lesson for us today. Some of our labor may be noticed, and it may even be mentioned, but that is not why we are here. We are not here for our names to be listed in the bulletin or called out in public; we are here to serve our Lord alongside others who share the same desire!

II. Their Commission – As we will consider in a later study, each of these individuals were part of a larger group that was assigned to a particular task within a certain portion of the wall. In my humble estimation none of the work was coveted labor, but it was needful nonetheless. Nehemiah records the efforts of these as they labored alongside each other in order to achieve a common goal. We find no record of division or envy among the workers. Surely they were placed where they would be most beneficial in using their individual talents, but there was no jealousy or complaining. Each went about the work they were asked to do.

- It would likely be inaccurate to assume that there were no disagreements among those who labored on the wall; they were human like we are, but I couldn't help but notice the sense of harmony and commitment revealed in this effort. As I pondered what made the difference I realized they were engaged in a noble task. This was not an effort of little significance. They were working to restore the pride of Judah. They sought to restore the city to her former beauty and honor. Surely they were aware that their efforts were ordained of God and there was a sense of pride and commitment, both nationally and spiritually.

- What a challenge that presents to us. Have you considered lately the task that we are engaged in? I will admit that it isn't always easy, but it is worthwhile. We are privileged to have part in the kingdom work. The task that we are engaged in is bigger than we are. We have the opportunity to labor alongside those of like faith, each contributing their individual talents, for the glory of God and the good of His people. We have received orders from the King and are commissioned of Him for the task at hand!

III. Their Courage – We have already dealt with the first mention of Nehemiah's resistance. [Neh. 2:10 – When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard of it, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel. \[19\] But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?](#) We can be certain this was not the first resistance the others had faced and yet they rose in the face of opposition and began the work. They determined not to allow fear and anxiety hinder them in the work of reconstruction.

- We can be certain that we too will face hindrances and opposition. The adversary seeks to plant fear and doubt in our hearts to discourage us from the work. We fear failure and how our work will be perceived of others.

- We cannot allow fear to hinder us. We must take courage and rise to the occasion, assuming our responsibilities and engaging in the work.

IV. Their Cooperation – Some 24 times we find the phrase “*next unto him*,” “*next to him*,” or “*after him*” speaking of their working side by side, each one filling their gap and fulfilling their work. We already spoke of their unity and commitment, but we must realize that this was a monumental task. Nehemiah had a great burden for Jerusalem but he could never have completed the rebuilding of the wall without the devoted help of countless others. Each one found their place and worked together to accomplish a common goal.

- That is a challenging and encouraging lesson for us today. I have said before that there is no room for “lone rangers” in the work of the Lord. We can’t do it by ourselves, and our way is not always the best way. We need to be reminded of the need for one another and be willing to labor alongside each other to accomplish the common goal.

- The task is far greater than the pastor can accomplish himself. Even with the help the deacons, there is still more to do than they can possibly achieve. If you are a child of God there is a work for you to do. If you are a member of this body of believers, you need to be found in your place, contributing to the work of the Lord with the talents He has blessed you with! Eph.4:11-12, 16 – *And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some, evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; [12] For the perfecting of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ: [16] From whom the whole body fitly joined together and compacted by that which every joint supplieth, according to the effectual working in the measure of every part, maketh increase of the body unto the edifying of itself in love.*

V. Their Connection – As we study the third chapter we discover that those who participated in the rebuilding efforts were not all from Jerusalem. They were working on the city wall, but there were laborers from all over Judah who took part in the work. They came from [Jericho V.2](#), [Tekoah V.5](#), [Gibeon V.7](#), [Zanoah V.13](#), [Beth-haccerem V.14](#), [Mizpah Vv.15, 19](#), [Beth-zur V.16](#), and [Keilah Vv.17-18](#), to help with the construction.

- These had not come necessarily for their own protection and benefit, but their brethren in Jerusalem stood in need and they rallied together to help them fulfill the task at hand. Also we need to consider that even though they didn’t dwell in Jerusalem there was a sense of national pride for Jerusalem. It was where the temple was located. They gathered there throughout the year for the feasts and other religious activities. Even though they didn’t live there, they had a vested interest in the welfare and construction of Jerusalem.

- This paints a picture of the cooperative efforts of Baptist. We support and even engage in projects that may have no direct bearing on Fellowship, but we are working together for the

good of the church as a whole. God has blessed us abundantly and we are obligated to use those blessings in a way that pleases God for the advancement of the kingdom.

- Even on a smaller scale I think of the fact that our church members are scattered throughout the county and even into Virginia. We all do not live within the same community, but we come together as one for the common good of Fellowship. This is where we meet to worship our Lord. We have an obligation to this place and this people.

VI. Their Credentials – As you read these verses you will notice that the Lord had brought together a group that was varied in their talents as well. He had gifted individuals with certain abilities and they used those gifts in the work of reconstruction. We find that there were **priests** involved in the work, **Vv.1, 22, 28**, **goldsmiths, V.8**, **apothecaries** (those who made perfume and ointments) **V.8**, **men of the plain** (those of Jordan and Jericho) **V.22**, **merchants, Vv.31-32**, various **rulers**, and even the **daughters of rulers, V.12**. This was a challenging task and each of those involved were beneficial to the work. Their individual gifts were used greatly. Many of those who were listed by name must have had skill in construction. God had brought together a remarkable group to assist Nehemiah in this noble task.

- Just as we made application concerning their cooperation, there is great application for their credentials as well. You will have to agree that we are blessed with a wide array of talent here at Fellowship. We have those who do particular jobs and do them well, but if for some reason they are absent, we are not crippled by that. God has so blessed us that we have several who can do the same tasks.
- I will have to say that we are blessed with the finest leadership that a church could desire; we are blessed with many who have the ability to teach classes, and teach them well; we are blessed beyond measure with those of varied musical gifts; we have those whom we may not hear much from, but they are blessed with the ability to pray and intercede for others; we have those who are blessed with the gift of hospitality, in that they care for the needs of others and visit them when they are sick.
- I could go on and on, but I think you see the point I'm making. We all have individual gifts, and as we work together using those gifts, we create something wonderful in worship and ministry. Each of you are special and your gifts and talents are needed and contribute much to the success and abundance of our church!

VII. Their Coordination – There isn't anything mentioned in this chapter regarding the leadership of Nehemiah, but it is clearly evident. This was a monumental task, and God used Nehemiah to gather this talented group together for the reconstruction effort. His leadership was of tremendous value. He likely organized it and was the general overseer.

- I do not mention that for any glory of my own, but each group must have a leader if they are to be successful. I don't take the work that God has called me to lightly. In fact, I am humbled and even intimidated by it at times. There is a lot resting upon the leadership of this church. If I am not where I need to be with the Lord, leading in the right way, we will get off course and miss the goal that God has set for us. I desire your prayers each day. I want to be sensitive to the leadership of the Lord and possess the courage and wisdom to follow Him.
- A leader is often characterized by those who follow them. If no one is following, then the leader really isn't a leader. We must work together and press on toward the goal, seeking to achieve all that the Lord has for us. Will you stand with me and work together as we endeavor to please the Lord with our efforts? If so, we will be blessed and we will achieve much for the Lord.

As we close out this evening I am reminded that even though some of those who worked on the wall possessed great talent, they were just people like you and me. They were ordinary people whom the Lord used in an extraordinary way. Common people accomplished a great work for the Lord.

I am convinced that we could do the same if we had a mind to work. I want to challenge each of us to use the talents and gifts we have been given for the work of the Lord. If He has given you a special ability, use that for His glory.