

The Task of Rebuilding #6

Nehemiah 3: 1-32

In our last study of this powerful and enlightening chapter we considered the workmen on the wall. Hidden within the listing of those who labored we discovered their commitment, their courage, their confidence, and their cooperation. This was a group that faced a monumental task and yet they were undeterred by the challenge before them. They rose up together and embraced the work that they had been commissioned to perform.

What a challenge we found as we considered those who labored tirelessly, side by side, upon the wall. If we are to be successful and accomplish the work we have been commissioned to embrace, we too must be willing to come together as these did and share the same attitude and commitment that was so evident in their lives.

Tonight I want to continue our study in the third chapter and look at this passage from a different point of view. We have considered the workmen on the wall and tonight I want to spend our time considering the great task that was before them. I trust by considering these verses from the perspective of the task at hand, it will motivate and challenge us to continue in the noble task that we are engaged in. I want to look at the [accomplishments](#) revealed in the text as we consider: [The Task of Rebuilding](#). Notice with me first of all:

I. The Details of the Work – A hurried reading of this passage will not fully grasp the great detail that is recorded for our benefit. A close examination of the text reveals many details regarding the work they pursued. Consider:

A. The Expanse of the Work – I have given each of you a copy of a map depicting the walls of Jerusalem in that time. As you consider the expanse of the wall around the city, you get a better understanding of the expanse of the work they were engaged in. Clearly this was not a small or insignificant endeavor. There was much to be done.

- One of the first references we find regarding the task at hand was the actual [building](#) of the wall. This is quickly mentioned in [V.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 Hananeel](#). Seven times in this chapter alone we find reference to the actual building of the wall: [builded, build, and built](#). Each of these references comes from the same Hebrew word meaning “*to build, rebuild, establish, to cause to continue.*” The walls lay before them in ruin and they began the task of rebuilding.

- As we consider the enormity of the work before us, it can seem a bit overwhelming. As we consider the spiritual walls that have stood for so long and yet they have been neglected and stand in a state of disrepair, we wonder if we possess what it takes to rebuild that which has been torn down. Nehemiah's group didn't accomplish their task in a single day and we won't either. The walls about us did not get in the condition they are in overnight and we can't expect to restore them in a matter of hours or days, but we must engage in the work and set forth in seeking to make a difference. We cannot allow the expanse of the task prevent us from engaging in that which we know must be done!

B. The Excellence of the Work – As we continue to consider the passage we find that they also repaired the walls, V.4 – *And next unto them repaired Meremoth the son of Urijah, the son of Koz. And next unto them repaired Meshullam the son of Berechiah, the son of Meshezabeel. And next unto them repaired Zadok the son of Baana.* This word is found some 35 times in this chapter alone. That reveals an effort “*to strengthen, prevail, harden, be strong, be courageous, be firm, and resolute.*” They knew the necessity of the wall and the benefit of it and they were not willing to accept anything less than the best. They were determined to repair the walls to a state of strength and firmness.

- Would you not agree that we are engaged in a noble and worthy cause? My dad used to say that anything that was worth doing was worth doing right. That is especially true when it comes to the work of the Lord. We ought to give it our best, seeking excellence in all we do, endeavoring to strengthen the spiritual walls around us so that we can prosper and prevail in the Lord.

C. The Emphasis on the Work – Also we find an interesting term concerning their labor in V.8 – *Next unto him repaired Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, of the goldsmiths. Next unto him also repaired Hananiah the son of one of the apothecaries, and they fortified Jerusalem unto the broad wall.* Here we find that they fortified the area near the Broad Wall. This term is only used once in this chapter and yet it holds great significance. It literally means “*to depart from, leave behind, or let alone.*” That in no way indicates neglect for that portion of the wall, but apparently it didn't need as much attention as some of the other areas. Those who were engaged in that portion of the effort rebuilt that area and left it behind; they moved on to another area that needed further attention. Simply these didn't stand around wasting time appearing to be busy when they had completed the necessary work there and saw other needs undone.

- The average Baptist needs to grasp the concept of fortifying the wall. We have many who are happy to stand around within their comfort zone, even though it may not need attention, for fear they may be asked or expected to do something else.

- We need a passion for the task at hand that will motivate us to complete the work we are doing and move on to another aspect of ministry needing further attention. Your Sunday school class may be doing well while another is struggling. Your family may all be in church while a brother or sister's is not. May we never get to the place that we lose focus of the big picture? There is more to this than the small area of our influence. We need to be willing to step out in faith and assume another task for the glory of God and the good of His people!

I. The Details of the Work

II. The Desire in the Work – As you look at this passage as a whole it quickly becomes apparent that those involved had a deep passion for the work and a desire to fulfill the task of restoring the wall. I am convinced that the nature of the wall certainly was a factor in their desire. They were convinced that it was:

A. A Wall of Hope – As I said it is evident to see their desire in this chapter, but we also discover insight to their passion and desire in the previous chapter. [Neh. 2:17-18 – Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach. \[18\] Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.](#) Can you imagine the despair that most of them felt? Keep in mind that many of those present had likely been in Jerusalem for some time. Most likely had returned with Ezra or were possibly descendent of those who returned with Zerubbabel. They were weary of things as they were and Nehemiah had sparked a ray of hope within them to see the wall completed. As the wall began to be completed a sense of hope for the future was restored to them.

- We too need to see the task at hand as a wall of hope. We have lived with the despair of sin and the opposition of the world. Many are weary in the journey and almost ready to abandon the faith. We need to do all we can to restore and even resurrect some walls that are in disrepair. I am confident that this would restore hope to many who have lost hope.

B. A Wall of Honor – Keep in mind this was the royal city, the crown jewel of Judah. The city of Jerusalem was an emblem of national pride. No Jew relished the idea of Jerusalem and the city walls lying in ruin. Back in [Chp.2:17](#) Nehemiah encouraged them to rise and build up the wall so that they would no longer be a reproach. This wasn't just about a physical wall, but a matter of pride and honor before the Lord.

- Notice V.1 of our text again: [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 Hananeel. Twice in this verse we discover the word **sanctified**. This means “*to consecrate, sanctify, prepare, dedicate, be hallowed, be holy, to set apart.*” This was a work of honor unto the Lord. To the Jews it was a consecrated and hallowed endeavor. There was more at stake than just national pride for Judah, they saw it as a task to return the city to a state that glorified and honored the Lord.

- If for no other reason, we need to embrace the task at hand to glorify and honor the Lord. This isn't about physical walls or buildings; it isn't about recognition or egos; this is about being faithful and committed to the work of the Lord. We can find no better way to glorify our Lord than through obedience to the commission we have been given. Let us rise up together and stand united in this worthy endeavor for the glory of our blessed Lord!

I. The Details of the Work

II. The Desire in the Work

III. The Dedication to the Work – Lastly this evening I would like to point out the dedication revealed in the efforts of those who labored on the wall. Consider:

A. The Urgency – Notice **V.19 – And next to him repaired Ezer the son of Jeshua, the ruler of Mizpah, another piece over against the going up to the armoury at the turning of the wall.** Six times in these verses we find the phrase “**another piece**” or “**other piece,**” both having the same meaning. As they labored to restore the wall, as soon as one task was completed they immediately began to work on another piece or portion of the wall. They were not complacent or lazy. They were committed and determined to completing the task. There was a sense of urgency that would not allow them to quit until the wall was complete.

- My how we need to sense that urgency in our day. There is so much that needs to be done; there are many portions of the wall that need repair. Some are more involved and others require less attention. Whatever the case we need to develop that passion and urgency to labor tirelessly upon our portion until it is completed and quickly move on to the next portion of work that we can successfully accomplish. I can assure you if we don't sense the urgency and take the initiative, this world isn't going to for us. If the walls get rebuilt, we will have to do it.

B. The Intensity – This is revealed in **V.20 – After him Baruch the son of Zabbai earnestly repaired the other piece, from the turning of the wall unto the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest.** Baruch **earnestly** repaired the other piece. That literally has the idea of “*being hot, glowing, or blazing up.*” It is what we refer to as working at a feverous pitch. It is not casually or nonchalantly going about the work, but getting in there and getting busy.

- This goes hand in hand with our urgency. Once we have sensed the urgency, we need to allow that urgency to create an intensity about us. We need to be consumed with a burning passion for the Lord's work. I pray that we will be so moved that we will labor till the point of exhaustion and at the end of the day evaluate our performance to see if we could have accomplished more. We need to develop that mentality for the task ahead. This is not for the faint or weak of heart, but for those with a burning passion to get in there and get it done!

C. The Generosity – V.5 – [And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord. \[27\] – After them the Tekoites repaired another piece, over against the great tower that lieth out, even unto the wall of Ophel.](#) The Tekoites were not residents of Jerusalem and yet they labored just as intently as the others. In fact it would have been easy for them to have walked off the job because their nobles refused to lift a hand in the effort. These men genuinely felt for the needs of the people of Jerusalem and sought their good above loyalty to their own nobles. Clearly we see a heart of generosity from those who would have had a good excuse to walk away and abandon the work.

- We need to realize that this isn't about our personal needs or wants; it isn't even about providing for the wants of Fellowship. This is bigger than you or me and even our congregation. This is about fulfilling the great commission and restoring the walls of truth and faith that have been attacked, forsaken, and in many instances, torn down. We must look beyond our own wants and preferences for the common good of the church as a whole. We need to be generous and giving with our talents, our time, and even our money whether it benefits us directly or not. We are servants of the King to labor for the benefit of His kingdom and that kingdom is not limited to Fellowship or Mount Airy.

I will have to admit that this study has challenged and humbled me as much as any in a long time. Honestly when I was praying about preaching through Nehemiah I dreaded this passage because I wondered what I could possibly glean that needed to be shared. This just confirms that all Scripture is given of the Lord and is beneficial for our lives if we will spend the time and effort to mine the great treasure that it holds.

How would you describe our congregation? Do we resemble the workers on the wall? Do we sense the need and possess a passion for the work as they did? If not, we need to. I pray that the Lord will deal with our hearts and bring us to the place that we are willing to embrace the work He has called us to whatever the cost or obligation!