

## Resilient Rebuilders 4: Assessing Our Situation

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# Intro

### **Nehemiah 2:11-20 NASB 2020**

So I came to Jerusalem and was there for three days. And I got up in the night, I and a few men with me. I did not tell anyone what my God was putting into my mind to do for Jerusalem, and there was no animal with me except the animal on which I was riding. So I went out at night by the Valley Gate in the direction of the Dragon's Spring and *on* to the Dung Gate, and I was inspecting the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which had been consumed by fire. Then I passed on to the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was no place for my mount to pass. So I was going up at night by the ravine and inspecting the wall. Then I entered the Valley Gate again and returned. However, the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing; nor had I as yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the rest who were doing the work.

Then I said to them, "You see the bad situation we are in, that Jerusalem is desolate and its gates have been burned by fire. Come, let's rebuild the wall of Jerusalem so that we will no longer be a disgrace." And I told them how the hand of my God had been favorable to me and also about the

king's words which he had spoken to me. Then they said, "Let's arise and build." So they put their hands to the good *work*. But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard *about it*, they mocked us and despised us, and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" So I answered them and said to them, "The God of heaven will make us successful; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no part, right, or memorial in Jerusalem."

**Big Idea:** Before we can address the situation, we must assess the situation. We need the Lord's wisdom and His vision before we rush into situations where we see something that is broken and needs to be fixed. Rather than going in with our own wisdom and strength alone, the Christian way is to seek the Lord first.

Once we have seen the problem and have discerned God's plan for fixing it we can address it through clearly declaring God's plan, remembering His faithfulness to us, and by keeping our eyes on Jesus.

## Truth

By observing Nehemiah's actions when he came into the land, we can get an idea of what it looks like for us to prepare to rebuild broken walls around us.

### **I. Nehemiah took time to inspect the**

## **damage before he said a word.**

- **Nehemiah waited three days before going out.**

- As Americans, we can be so very impatient. We want the solution now, and so we often run into situations guns blazing. It is good for us to learn to wait on God.

- If God is doing something, it won't matter if you wait a few days or even years as some believers have had to do. Patience and trust in the Lord's vision rather than our own is key.

- Before we inspect the damage, it is important that we pray and wait on the Lord.

- We must never jump into any action before we have spent time praying and listening for the Lord's direction. Praying over every situation must be our standard.

- Our success depends on the Lord's involvement with whatever we do.

- **Nehemiah took time to look over the situation before he communicated his vision.**

- Likewise, we must have a good grasp on what is broken before we can make a plan to fix it.

- Consider what is damaged. For Nehemiah, it was the wall but also the house he was supposed to be living in.

- When fixing what is broken, we must not neglect our own house.

- Later we will see that the walls being down were also a physical representation of the condition of the people who had accepted sin and idol worship into the land.

- Their apathy to finish the work was a reflection of their spiritual lethargy and lack of passion for God.

## **II. Nehemiah boldly and clearly communicated God's vision.**

- **Once Nehemiah had assessed the situation thoroughly, he boldly declared his intentions to the people, to carry out what God said He wanted to do.**
- **Likewise, we must boldly declare God's vision for the restoration of His Church and our culture which the Lord has given us.**
- We know beyond a shadow of a doubt that Jesus wants to restore our culture because we know the end of the story and it will end in a restored Earth.

### **Revelation 21:5 NASB 2020**

And He who sits on the throne said, "Behold, I am making all things new." And He said, "Write, for these words are faithful and true."

- If Jesus is making all things new, and He is our Lord, then it is clear that making all things new is the family business which we are partners in because of who we are in Christ.
- What needs to be made new around you? Think of the people, the places, and God's vision to redeem and restore them.
- What would it look like for
- god's kingdom to absolutely invade our city? We need God's vision to see that, and like Nehemiah we must

communicate what we have seen as possible in the Lord.

- Everyone tends to get weighed down in what we can see, but we must be lifted up in what Christ sees.

### **III. Nehemiah told his story of God's faithfulness and empowering.**

- **Nehemiah punctuated his call to the people by telling them the story about how God had already miraculously come through for him.**

- Because of Nehemiah's words, the people were encouraged and emboldened to the point that they said, "let's arise and build."

- As Jesus' church, we must also continue to tell the stories about how God has been good to us. Our testimonies help build faith in both ourselves and others, and faith is powerful.

- **We say this often, but mustard seed sized faith in a great God can move mountains, while mountain sized faith in anything besides God won't even move a mustard seed.**

- Our God stories help keep our hearts focused on God and what He can do rather than on ourselves and what we can do alone, which isn't much.

- **Nehemiah knew that if they were to rebuild the walls, it would be a God-sized work and they would need Him to empower them.**

- Remembering how God had already been moving gave

him confidence to keep on going and it gave the people confidence to go with him.

- Sometimes all we need is a reminder that we are God's people and God is still moving among us as He always has.
- It is so easy for us to lose our faith and sense of wonder when we live in this naturalistic and sinful world. Tell your stories friends, give testimony to what God has done for you and for us.

## **IV. Nehemiah kept his eyes on God.**

- **Distractions, lies, and opposition will always arise when we are doing the Lord's work.**

**2 Timothy 3:10–17 NASB 2020**

Now you followed my teaching, conduct, purpose, faith, patience, love, perseverance, persecutions, *and* sufferings, such as happened to me at Antioch, at Iconium, *and* at Lystra; what persecutions I endured, and out of them all the Lord rescued me! Indeed, all who want to live in a godly way in Christ Jesus will be persecuted. But evil people and impostors will proceed *from bad* to worse, deceiving and being deceived. You, however, continue in the things you have learned and become convinced of, knowing from whom you have learned *them*, and that from childhood you have known the sacred writings which are able to give you the wisdom that leads to salvation through faith which is in Christ Jesus. All Scripture is inspired by God and beneficial for teaching, for rebuke, for

correction, for training in righteousness; so that the man *or woman* of God may be fully capable, equipped for every good work.

- The enemy does not want us to succeed. He has always opposed God and he isn't going to stop doing that now. People who are with the Devil will say Devil sorts of things so that's nothing new.
- The key to our rising above the noise and staying focused on God, is to stay in His word which keeps us rooted in our identity in Christ rather than in the world and its lies.
- **Our answer to oppositions must always be to speak truth about God rather than entertaining the lies. We don't argue with them about their lies, but we proclaim what is true about God and about ourselves because of who God is and who we are in Him.**

## Gospel Application

The enemy wants us discouraged. He wants us focused on our shortcomings rather than on Christ's victory in us. He wants us to believe that our nation is too far gone and that the greater church is too broken so we should just retreat.

The Lord wants us encouraged. He wants us focused on who He is, what He has done, who we are in Him, and what He has promised to do through us. If our eyes are on Jesus and what He is doing rather than on us and how limited we are, we will have confidence to go with God into His work of saving and restoring this world no matter how bad it was

look around us.

It was never about our circumstances nor our abilities. It has always been about a good God who gave His only Son to redeem and restore a broken world. It has always been about His plan to equip us and minister through us, bringing about His declared ending.

Today we are reminded that we need to know what our situation is, but we must stay focused on God and His solutions, always encouraging one another to keep our eyes on Christ and to keep going as long as Jesus is working and He is always working.

## Challenge

Our challenge this week is to take time to pray and assess the brokenness in yourself and around you. Look for opportunities to give testimony about what God has done for you and dedicate yourself to His word. When you are opposed, speak the truth about who you are in Christ and let His word be louder in you than the world.