

Resilient Rebuilders 5: Working Together When the Walls Are Down (Part 1)

Nick Tarter / General

Intro

Big Idea: A true rebuilding work is a team effort, and everyone playing his or her role matters. In fact, in order for God's purposes to be worked out in our world, God's family must work together.

Jesus said it clearly when talking about the kingdom of darkness.

Mark 3:25 NASB 2020

If a house is divided against itself, that house will not be able to stand.

Abraham Lincoln quoted these words of Christ in his famous "A House Divided" speech when he was running for the U.S. Senate. He followed the scripture quote with the following words...

"I believe this government cannot endure, permanently half *slave* and half *free*. I do not expect the Union to be *dissolved* – I do not expect the house to *fall* – but I *do* expect it will cease to be divided. It will become *all* one thing, or *all* the other. Either the *opponents* of slavery, will arrest the further spread of it, and place it where the public mind shall rest in the belief that it is in course of ultimate extinction; or its *advocates* will push it forward, till it shall become alike lawful in *all* the states, *old* as well as *new* – *North* as well as *South*. Have we no *tendency* to the latter

condition? Let any one who doubts, carefully contemplate that now almost complete legal combination – piece of *machinery* so to speak – compounded of the Nebraska doctrine, and the Dred Scott decision.” -Abraham Lincoln

Lincoln understood that any nation won't get very far when there are disagreements over basic issues, particularly disagreement over the sanctity of human life. Tragically, our country has not yet learned our lesson. We still undermine the humanity of others. While it used to be about slavery and race, now it is about abortion and the propagation of destructive and false sexual ethics. There is a clear attack on Children in America today. Many in the culture have no problem both sexualizing them and pressuring them to conform to twisted cultural narratives. The neo-marxists want everyone to feel oppressed so they can be easily swayed and controlled. The LGBTQ+ movement seeks to pressure people into denying their true identity as God made them and to destroy their bodies in an attempt to gain something which is impossible to gain. These are nothing more than attempts to undermine God's natural order, and to divide people so that chaos can reign.

But we, church, are the light of the world and the hope for turning the tide of the cultural rot and restoring what has been broken. Yet even among our ranks, there is much disunity. This is exactly what the enemy wants. As long as he can keep true Christians divided over minor doctrinal issues and petty differences, we will not be effective.

The keys to our success in restoring this culture are clear. They are...

1. Repentance of our sinful behavior and a clear return to Christ.
2. A dedication to prayer and seeking the empowering of the Holy Spirit.
3. Rising up together in our common unity to rebuild and restore what is broken.

We must have a unified front if we are to truly repair the broken world around us. Part of the reason why the wall went unbuilt for 150 years was that the people could not get together. God remedied much of that through the ministry of Nehemiah. **The big question for us today, is can we unify for the cause of Christ in our times and can we join Christ in His work around us in our day just as they did?**

Truth

The priests were the first to begin the work. Christ is our High Priest and He is working. We are a nation of priests serving under Him. Since He has risen to work, it is our job to rise up with Him by His grace and join Him in what He is doing.

I. The leaders in God's family are called to lead with their example and not merely

with their words.

a. Eliashib was the grandson of Joshua the high priest who returned to the land previously with Zerubbabel with the task of rebuilding and restoring the land.

b. The failure of previous generations to complete the work need not stop the currently living from picking it up and finishing it.

i. Many Christians today get bogged down in the failures of those who came before us, but their failures have not released us from the mandate we have in Christ nor have they diminished the authority Christ has and has sent us under.

ii. Rather than complaining about the problems we see in the church, let us speak to them prophetically, pick up our tools, and lead by example by getting to the gospel work.

II. In God's family, the calling on the leaders is actually a call to everyone.

a. The standard God has set for leaders is meant by God to be a call sign for us all.

i. Think of God's set of standards for elders in 1 Tim and Titus.

1. These qualifications sound a lot like basic Christian living by design.

2. Rather than merely looking up to our leaders, we are to live up to their standard.

b. The church is called a nation of priests by the Lord.

i. Remember that Christ is the true High Priest who has

offered Himself as the final sacrifice for our sins. Thus there are no more sacrifices to be made, but there is still much priestly work to be done. To be a priest under Christ means that we are tasked with at least four distinct works.

1. We live and work as a familial tribe under the headship of Christ.
2. We represent God to the world, making a constant appeal that they be reconciled to Him.
3. We represent the world before God, interceding and pleading for the Lord to work in their lives.
4. We carry the living sacrifice of Christ with us at all times, dispensing out the truth and power of the gospel which is Christ's and ours because we are in Him.

c. Any effort to rebuild what is broken in the world must be lead by God's people. We cannot wait for someone else to take the lead. We are the leaders everyone else is waiting for.

i. Who else could possibly begin the work other than God's people?

1. Restoring the world means a return to Christ, and in Adam the world is hell bent against such a return.
2. Only God's people could possess by His grace the wisdom, the power, the authority of the Son, and the redeemed desire to fill this Earth with God's glory.

a. Just as it was true for Nehemiah's people and the wall, if we do not take up this task, no one will and the world will continue to spiral out of control.

ii. Remember Daniel and his friends? What set them apart

was their commitment to follow God in the midst of a pagan world and the presence of the Holy Spirit in their lives.

1. People recognize the wisdom and the power of God in God's people when we are walking in His wisdom and truth.

III. When the priests of the Lord arise to rebuild, others tend to follow.

a. When Christians who are radically committed to living lives rooted in Christ rise up, many who are not Christians will often come with us.

i. Take a look at nations which have a strong Christian presence. Often the entire culture will take on Christian ethics and worldview elements even if most are not truly Christian themselves.

Gospel Application

1. Christ, our true and better High Priest has taken up the work of rebuilding and restoring this broken world.

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.”

Hebrews 4:14–16 NASB 2020

Therefore, since we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let's

hold firmly to our confession. For we do not have a high priest who cannot sympathize with our weaknesses, but One who has been tempted in all things just as *we are*, yet without sin. Therefore let's approach the throne of grace with confidence, so that we may receive mercy and find grace for help at the time of *our* need.

Hebrews 8:6 NASB 2020

But now He has obtained a more excellent ministry, to the extent that He is also the mediator of a better covenant, which has been enacted on better promises.

2. If Christ is our High Priest, and we are a nation of priests under Him, then His work is our work.

a. God is the great High Priest who has offered up Himself as the sacrifice to pay for the sins of the world. We are those who have been redeemed through Him and we join Him in His work to reconcile as many as possible to Him and to transform the world through bringing His kingdom to bear in every place throughout the world.

2 Corinthians 5:16-21 NASB 2020

Therefore from now on we recognize no one by the flesh; even though we have known Christ by the flesh, yet now we know *Him in this way* no longer. Therefore if anyone is in Christ, *this person is* a new creation; the old things passed away; behold, new things have come. Now all *these* things are from God, who reconciled us to Himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation, namely, that God was in Christ reconciling the world to Himself, not counting their wrongdoings against them, and He has

committed to us the word of reconciliation.

Therefore, we are ambassadors for Christ, as though God were making an appeal through us; we beg you on behalf of Christ, be reconciled to God. He made Him who knew no sin *to be* sin in our behalf, so that we might become the righteousness of God in Him.

Matthew 28:18–20 NASB 2020

And Jesus came up and spoke to them, saying, “All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to Me. Go, therefore, and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and the Son and the Holy Spirit, teaching them to follow all that I commanded you; and behold, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”

3. It is helpful for each of us to consider which aspects of our lives are in sync with the call of Christ, and which aspects are out of sync.

Challenge

What does rebuilding around us look like? What do we see Christ doing?

John 5:19 NASB 2020

Therefore Jesus answered and was saying to them, “Truly, truly, I say to you, the Son can do nothing of Himself, unless *it is* something He sees the Father doing; for whatever the Father does, these things the Son also does in the same way.

What are the tools Christ has given us as a community? Are we stewarding what God has given us in the best possible way?

The problem in most churches is not that we lack knowledge or gifting. Of course there is always room for growth, but the American church is very blessed. What we often lack is the motivation to do God's work in God's way and to dedicate ourselves to working with the church God has planted us in to accomplish His purposes rather than going at it like a bunch of Lone Ranger Christians.

Christ has ordained the local church as His plan for carrying out His work. We are only maximally effective when we take on this work together.

So what is God saying to you about this? How can you position your life so that you are doing God's work in God's way with God's people most effectively?

Big Idea: A true rebuilding work is a team effort, and everyone playing his or her role matters. In fact, in order for God's purposes to be worked out in our world, God's family must work together.

Our challenge is to unify around Christ like the people in Nehemiah's day unified around him. We must rise to the work right where we are, focusing on where we have opportunity and influence first.

1. What does God want to rebuild in you and your household?
2. What does God want to rebuild in our church?
3. What does God want to rebuild in our neighborhoods

through us?