

Let's rise up and build

Nehemiah 2:17-18 Then I gave them my report: "Face it: we're in a bad way here. Jerusalem is a wreck; its gates are burned up. Come—let's build the wall of Jerusalem and not live with this disgrace any longer." I told them how God was supporting me and how the king was backing me up.

They said, "We're with you. Let's get started." They rolled up their sleeves, ready for the good work.

Where God has placed us is our Jerusalem That's why Jesus said in Acts 1:8 *But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the ends of the earth.*

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Many people talk about politics and world affairs and problems in schools and in governments and make comments like, "If I were in power or if I were in that situation I would..." and we complain, debate and analyse problems in the world and even in the church. Talking about things gets us no where. WE need people who will do something about the situation and not just talk about it.

Today I want us as a Church to be doers not just talkers or takers.

In Nehemiah 1 we see a man who had an important role as the king's cup bearer talking with fellow Jews who reported that the wall of Jerusalem was in ruins - today in our society we see brokenness; broken homes, broken families, broken societies, communities.

We live in a broken humanity... The news was distressing to NEHEMIAH and he was determined to do something about the broken down walls. At the right time he approaches the King Artaxerxes and asks for permission to go to Jerusalem to rebuild its fallen walls and the King approves... and gives him letters of authority and he goes to Jerusalem.

When he arrived after a 3 month journey he saw a completed Temple but no protection for the city of Jerusalem. He found a defenceless city with no walls to protect it.

Before the exile Israel had its own language, king, army and identity. Now it had none of these. What was lacking most was leadership.

1. Nehemiah seeks God's face (Neh 1:4-11). Nehemiah fasted and prayed, he recognised God's sovereignty and holiness; he confessed the sins of the people of Israel and acknowledged their sin and his sin before the Lord.

Without prayer nothing happens. Prayer is the fuel that energises our faith to act in response to God's call and purpose in our lives. We all have a purpose and a call in God. God has positioned us here in New Malden with a mandate to reach our city and our community for Jesus. This is serious stuff and just talking about it ain't gonna cut it.

Something has to be done. It is time to come before the Lord in prayer and intercede for our city and our communities.

This is not a time for making God an addendum to our Christianity or for secret service Christianity or for covert operations, there are those who are coming out of the closet these days and we might as well come out for Jesus and declare who we are and what we stand for and not compromise the word of God.

At the beginning of this year the word I had for the church was from 1Tim 2:1-5 on 3 aspects of prayer:

- Prayer to be offered for everyone, to bless people, to express thanksgiving, to stand in the gap. Through prayer we can change circumstances. Prayer starts with all of us here. This year we will increase prayer for our church and for the community and our nation.
- Prayer must be offered for the nation, for those in authority, the prime minister, for the Queen, for the government, for parliament, etc. so that God can cause them to do good.
- Prayer must be offered so that people will be saved because God desires that all men will be saved and will come to the knowledge of the truth, which will set them free

2 Chron 7:13-14. "Suppose I close up the sky and there isn't any rain. Suppose I command locusts to eat up the crops. And I send a plague among my people. 14 But they make themselves humble in my sight. They pray and look to me. And they turn from their evil ways. Then I will listen to them from heaven. I will forgive their sin. And I will heal their land. After all, they are my people.

We are in a world that is broken - the family walls are broken, gender walls are breaking, walls of peoples identity are breaking down, humanity is slipping further and further into depravity (doing things that are contrary to natural design, contrary to moral ethics and values following the vulgarity of their emotions and feelings)

You and I are the Nehemiah's of our time. God has positioned us at this time to be the difference and bring in Gods righteousness and holiness to a dying world. It's time to take action. Its time to rebuild our community by changing the spiritual atmosphere.

In any organisation or church you have people who are committed to build and some others who are not committed. Nehemiah faced similar challenges from within his camp and outside.

Every one was involved in building the wall - in the church everyone is called to be involved. Nehemiah positioned them in families with swords and spears and bows (Neh4:13) and Neh 3 lists names of people who stood side by side and built the wall and gates.

There is a variety of tasks to do in the church and opportunities to contribute your skills and talents.

We often face opposition when things are going well. When you are building something for God and there is no opposition something isn't right because the devil always opposes what God is building.

Nehemiah had enemies who laughed at him and ridiculed the workers. What was Nehemiah's response? Neh 2:20 he spoke faith and acted in faith - *The God of heaven Himself will prosper us*; in Neh 4:3-5 he prayed and charged God to deal with them; when Sanballat (prime enemy) sent Nehemiah letters falsely accusing him of treason, saying the reason he wanted to rebuild the walls

was because he wanted to be king (Neh 6:9) - Nehemiah responds by asking God to strengthen his hands.

The enemy will use any tactic to distract and discourage people from serving in the house of God and accomplishing the vision and mission. Jenny and I faced all these when we decided to launch the married for life course in Sri Lanka and raise up leaders (I had gout, Jenny had knee pain and back pain, one key couples house was robbed a day before the start of the course).

Stay focussed. Don't retract or give up due to other circumstances and don't allow the enemy to rob you of God's best. Always persevere in the work of the Lord and never give up.

Jesus did not have it easy when he walked this earth. He had enemies and those who sought his life to kill him, yet Jesus endured taking on the shame and reproach of man by hanging on a cross and dying for the sin of man. He said Father forgive them. Today this same Jesus is able to remove the guilt the shame of sin in your life and forgive you of all sinful unrighteous deeds and wipe the slate of your life clean. Will you let Him do that?