

## Nehemiah 2:1-10 - Waiting on God

Last week we saw in Chapter 1 Nehemiah got news of how things were going in Jerusalem

A) Place he had never been - that was 1500 miles from where he was living in Persia

B) His heart was burdened - he began to fast and pray for Jerusalem and the people of Israel

C) I mentioned last week - that I know a burden is from the Lord when it doesn't go away -

1) It only builds in my heart.

Tonight we are going to see that this burden in Nehemiah's heart has been building for 4 months

A) Tonight we are going to talk about why - and gain some more insight about waiting on the Lord.

And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king.

Now this first verse gives us our time frame.

A) Nisan was the month of April - turn back to Ch. 1

B) V.1 It came to pass in the month of Chislev

C) Chislev is December

1) So 4 months have passed

Now I had never been sad in his presence before.

A) Now it was actually a dangerous thing to be sad in the King's presence -

B) He wanted his workers - happy and cheerful - wearing I love my Job and boss t-shirts ☺

C) I think this tells us something about Nehemiah and it wasn't that he was good at faking it

D) I think we learned from this that Nehemiah didn't let his burden - affect his job.

Some people their moods affect everything

A) Worship leader - Melancholy - JF  
Luke C

B) Nehemiah was able to give his burden to the Lord and go about his work

1) No one noticed his burden for 4 months

C) But this day was going to be different

2 Therefore the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart."

So I became dreadfully afraid, 3 and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?"

D) Being real and honest - burdened for my people.

Nehemiah has been praying for 4 months - but nothing has been happening. - Waiting

A) Remind you back in Chapter 1 - Nehemiah believed that the King was a part of the solution

<sup>11</sup> O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

B) Nehemiah has been praying for 4 months that God would move and work -

1) Give him mercy in the site of the King -

C) 4 months - Waiting and praying

D) That is hard - I don't like to wait -

1) the favorite American prayer is Lord give me patience and I want it NOW!!!

There is much teaching in Scripture that a delayed answer does not indicate an unwilling God.

A) We are taught again and again in Scripture to persevere in prayer -- to keep praying till the answer comes -- WHY?

B) God is working in that time of waiting -- Waiting is Prep time

1) Note 3 reasons why God has us wait - 3 things that God is preparing in seasons of waiting

#1 To Prepare us - God was Preparing Nehemiah

A) It is during this time that Nehemiah was learning to pray - learning to trust –

B) learning to give things to the Lord

1) **His Burden is going to turn into a Vision**

C) Too often we can be very impetuous - there is a need we get a burden -

1) But rather than waiting we take matters into our own hands - **MAKE A MESS OF THINGS**

**LEARN TO WAIT - Time of Preparation**

A) In 1989 God confirmed to my wife and I that we were to go and plant a church in Oregon

B) The Lord didn't let us go until 1991 - I thought I was ready in 89 - God knew I wasn't

C) There were some things I learned in those two years that were essential for going

D) God makes us wait to prepare us.

**#2 The Lord has us wait to prepare others - in this case the King**

A) Instead of being offended by Nehemiah's countenance he is concerned.

B) Over these 4 months - Nehemiah has been doing his job - faithful servant - King Loves him.

C) Notice V.4 Then the king said to me, "What do you request?"

**Artaxerxes's heart had been prepared to respond in this way – by the Lord**

A) It was odd for a king to show this type of Concern for one of his servants - **What do you request ?**

So I prayed to the God of heaven (A place for quick prayers)

. 5 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." 6 Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" catch that? - When return

**Nehemiah had faithfully done his job Nehemiah's attitude at work was positive.**

A) He was a diligent worker

B) When your heart is somewhere else, it is really difficult to perform the task at hand.

1) Short timers syndrome - already gone

C) Not the case with Nehemiah - for 4 months he has done his job well - faithful -

**D) The King isn't like finally a chance to get rid of this guy. Go to Jerusalem - don't delay**

1) He wants to know when he will be back

V.6b So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

7 Furthermore I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors of the region beyond the River, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, 8 and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which pertains to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy."

**Here we see the 3<sup>rd</sup> Reason for waiting: Gave Time for a Plan to be Developed**

A) Like a Child in the womb – grows & Develops –

B) Sometimes the VISION – needs time to grow & Develop – before birthed or shared

C) So Not only had Nehemiah *prayed* for this opportunity, but he had also *planned* for it

D) During those four months of waiting, he had thought the matter through.

1) God began to give him a vision of how this could unfold.

**E) Nehemiah's reply to the king can be summarized in two requests:**

"Send me!" (Neh. 2:4–6) and "Give me!" (vv. 7–10)

**Nehemiah couldn't leave his post without the approval of the king,**

A) Nor could he work in Jerusalem without the authority of the king.

B) Pressure from local officials had stopped the work once before (Ezra 4),

1) and Nehemiah didn't want history to repeat itself.

C) So Nehemiah had a Plan that involved a Time Frame & Provision needed

1) He needed letters of introduction that would guarantee safe travel and between Susa and Jerusalem.

**He also requested letters of authority that would provide the materials needed for the construction of buildings and walls.**

A) Nehemiah had done his research well.

B) He even knew the name of the keeper of the king's forest!) **Well thought Plan**

C) Listen my friends - **God honors a Plan:**

**Sometimes I meet people that want to go out and be used by the Lord - NO PLAN**

A) We are going to just step out in faith.

B) Going out in faith doesn't mean you're going out in a Haphazard disorderly manner

1) God is also a God of order

**C) When the children of Israel were in the wilderness he instructed them to camp in tribes**

D) Jesus fed the 5,000 - he had the people sit in groups of 50 - God is into order

**God commends those who think thru the project to count the cost**

A) Luke 9 Wise builder: Counts the Cost before he even starts the Project

B) Wise King - going to war - Counts the Cost - make sure he has enough fire power to make it

**Jesus commended that mentality - Wisdom - those who calculate the Cost -**

A) But Always factoring in the Lord who is the great Provider

B) I have seen many people launch out into ministry - not having counted the cost -

1) doesn't take long - before discouraged - stressed out

C) Some of the most disillusioned people I have ever known in ministry are those who are paying the price for not thinking thru their plans

**D) So the waiting gave time for this plan to be birthed in Nehemiah's heart**

1) Nehemiah lays it all out on the table

**And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.**

A) Nehemiah recognizes - the favor he received from the King was not because Nehemiah was awesome

B) But God was awesome. - the Good hand of the Lord was upon him

Isaiah 40:31 *But those who wait on the LORD Shall renew their strength; They shall mount up with wings like eagles, They shall run and not be weary, They shall walk and not faint.*

Psalm 27:14 *Wait on the LORD; Be of good courage, And He shall strengthen your heart; Wait, I say, on the LORD!*

**LISTEN: When you wait on the Lord in prayer, you are not wasting your time; you are investing it.**

A) God is preparing both you and your circumstances so that His purposes will be accomplished.

B) When we wait the Lord gives Strength - hope - Direction

1) We see our Problem in light of his Provision -

**C) We begin to see the possibilities of the "what might happen" - "what God can do"**

1) The Burden turns into Vision - That is what happens here with Nehemiah

**D) God's hand was moving behind the scenes as Nehemiah waited on the Lord -**

E) Nehemiah is able to step out in Confidence - being laser focused - God is in this.

9 Then I went to the governors in the region beyond the River, and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me.

**All of Nehemiah's needs were Supplied -**

A) Letters of endorsement FOR PASSAGE / Materials for PROVISION He needed

B)The King EVEN gives Nehemiah something he didn't even ask for

**C)V.9 tells us – he sent captains from his army for PROTECTION**

**1) Passage / Provision / Protection**

*Ephesians 3:20 Now to Him who is able to do exceedingly abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that works in us,*

**Quote: Swindoll**

“Praying and Waiting Go Hand in Hand. You have never really prayed until you've learned to wait, and to wait with release. Abandon yourself—let God change the king's heart.” Chuck Swindoll

**Notice: Just because God is moving doesn't mean there won't be opposition**

10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.

**These are some evil men - they are going to cause major problems for Nehemiah and the people of Israel.**

**A)Just like we have seen in the book of Acts - every time the Lord moves in a new place**

**B)Satan raises his ugly head - and tries to thwart the work that God is doing**