

## Nehemiah 2:10-20

### Moving Forward with Confidence in God!

I have a question for you to think about - which better describes you as a man - Are you a thermostat or a Thermometer

A) See a **Thermometer** - registers the temperature or a room - When my dad was alive - Big old round Thermometer - TV room

B) It is hot in here or it is cold in here

C) A Thermostat - regulates the temperature of a room

People who are Thermometer react to the situations around them

A) Hot - they get hot - cold - they get cold - tense - they react to the tenseness

B) People who are Thermostats are - regulating - the temperature - they are responding - to a tense situation to bring peace

C) They respond to a fearful situation by bring COURAGE

1) A HOPELESS situation by bringing hope

As Christ followers - one of the things that Jesus is seeking to do in our hearts is to make us people who are learning how to:

A) Respond to the leading of the Holy Spirit - rather than people who are always reacting in our flesh.

B) He wants us to be more of a Thermostat than a Thermometer

C) Nehemiah was that kind of man

When faced with a horrible situation - Israel attacked - Jerusalem walls down people were vulnerable from their enemies

A) He didn't react in his flesh - he responded in the spirit - fasting and prayer - seeking God

B) As a result God would lead him to bring about the restoration of the city of Jerusalem and the people of Israel.

C) God is looking for men today who will learn to be Thermostats instead of Thermometers -

1) Help rebuild what is broken in their lives - in families - in communities

D) Here is what we noted last week at the end of our study - anytime a Christian seeks to rise up and be a part of a rebuilding work

1) Satan will come against him -

*v.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.*

Nehemiah hasn't met these guys yet - his first encounter with them will be at the end of this Chapter

A) However at this moment - we are told that a storm is brewing the climate is changing

B) Things had been going well up to this point - *God's hand was upon him / King Artaxerxes. Was behind him*

1) He had safe passage for his travels - **he had provision**

C) But now he is letting us know that - there would be opposition - notice how he puts it - *they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel.*

Think about for a moment what's broken in your sphere of influence.

A) It could be a relationship with a spouse, a parent, a child, a friend.

It could be that something is broken in your **career or ministry.**

B) Know this the Devil is never happy - when you or others in your life decide it is **time to Change - time to rebuild** - time to work on this

1) Time to get serious about doing what God has called us to do -

C) Whenever we are seeking to see things Change in our lives for the better - Get on target with what God WANTS

1) The Devil is **always disturbed** - The troops of the enemy get riled up and ready to RESIST - that work of rebuilding

**D) Everything that God builds, Satan seeks to break. Everything that God creates, Satan tries to counterfeit**

1) Every time you are seeking to advance the cause of God - there is a force in this world seeking to stop you from advancing the cause of God

**But CONTRAST any time you are content with the Status quo – Any time you are thinking – this is never going to change – always be this way**

A) The enemy is content – he has you just where he wants you –

B) No hope no desire – no vision – Where there is no vision the people perish

C) We will see the various ways that the enemy seeks to come against us as we make our way through this book

1) But in the Beginning of this new section Nehemiah is letting us – Know the Clouds of warfare are rolling in.

*V.11 So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days.*

**BEEN SAID There are three kinds of people in the world:**

- \* People who watch what's happening!
- \* People who afterwards - wonder what happened.
- \* People who make things happen!

A) With the help of the Lord – Nehemiah is going to be in that last Category  
A THERMOSTAT

B) Now in this section – we gain some great insights into what is needed when planning to Build or rebuild in any situation

1) Any Area of our Lives that our broken down / Marriage / friendship / Parenting / Ministry.

C) Talk about Getting started - Notice 4 things that we can learn from what Nehemiah does here:

**1<sup>st</sup> thing: Don't be in a hurry**

A) V.11 tells us he didn't start anything for 3 days

B) Finally they reach Jerusalem after a 1,500 mile trip that took probably took close to 2 mths

C) Nehemiah comes in very low Profile & doesn't do anything for 3 days !!!

**Now, we are not given any details of what Nehemiah did during those 3 days**

A) But we do know this about the pattern of Nehemiah's life from the rest of the book.

B) Nehemiah's rule of action seems to have been: first pray, then act, then pray, then act, then pray again.

1) It's safe to say that he spent the time resting from the 2 month 1,000 mile trip and that he prayed.

“Charles Swindoll said this of Nehemiah.

*‘A Leader—From the Knees Up!’*”

**2<sup>nd</sup> thing we learn from Nehemiah is to Investigate before you Initiate {Rd v12-16**

<sup>12</sup> Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode. <sup>13</sup> And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. <sup>14</sup> Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but *there was* no room for the animal under me to pass. <sup>15</sup> So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. <sup>16</sup> And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.

A) A good leader doesn't rush into his work but patiently gathers the facts firsthand and then plans his strategy

B) Before Nehemiah began, he was determined to know the worst.

1) So he makes a careful probing examination of the whole situation

C) Sometimes, we don't do a very good job or rebuilding or getting the right kind of help because: we don't investigate the situation clearly.

**Not Nehemiah. He investigated the situation.**

A) While others slept, Nehemiah was wide-awake, burdened, conscious of desperate need and shame and ruin all around him.

B) He diagnosed the situation, surveyed the ruined walls, and thought about the magnitude of the task to which God had called him.

C) We have much to learn from Nehemiah

1) Do your walking before you do your talking. { Go to God – before others

D) Take inventory of the situation. Do some fact-finding. { Don't be afraid to see things as they really are!!

E) Don't let yourself be driven by the emotion of the moment. –

1) Good to see the whole picture – be aware of the details but not get lost in those details

### 3<sup>rd</sup> Thing we learn from Nehemiah: How to Motivate people to Cooperate:

A) This would be Nehemiah's greatest Challenge: Any leader's biggest challenge

B) For Nehemiah this was extremely difficult because the morale of the people was at an all time low –

1) Discouragement permeated the ranks of Israel.

C) His greatest challenge would be to convince the people to tackle this project & to stick with it – when the going got tough

1) Toughest Challenge for any leader – whether you are trying to rebuild your family / your business / or a ministry.

When you are seeking to rebuild something - there will be three type of people you will run into

A) #1 Those who are content with the Status quo – I am sure there were those in Israel who would have denied the need for the wall to be built

B) Might have said "You know, we have gotten along without those walls for a hundred years now! After all, we already have the temple!"

1) Question to that Mindset: DO you really only want to "get along"?

C) Doesn't God have more for you, and isn't now the time to enter in?

So #1 There will always be those who are content with the Status quo

#2 Those who are skeptical –

A) Those who will say: That is never going to work we already tried that - & it didn't work last time not this time either

B) The skeptics will say: Too big / too hard / never happen / never be done

1) Those type of people are always a challenge

C) Now it is Important to learn from History but just because something didn't work the first time doesn't mean that it wasn't God

D) History is on our side - Believe God to do BIG THINGS

The hardest group of people to get behind a rebuilding effort are the self-absorbed

A) So focused on their own world - their problems - or what they are passionate about - nothing else matters

B) The Challenge of any leader: My Biggest Challenge – is getting people to see the big Picture  
1) whole perspective – not just from their isolated viewpoint

C) Those 3 things are challenges that any leader is going to have to deal with when trying to do something new / something fresh

So what did Nehemiah do to get the people to rally behind the vision?

Note 3 things

A) 1<sup>st</sup> the Problem must be clearly defined: V.17a  
*Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire*

B) The fact that the city which had once been the center of God's dealings with His people lay in ruins was not merely a reproach to them,

1) it was a reproach to the honor and to the name of their God.

C) Jesus was also good at Clearly defining the problem:

*<sup>37</sup> Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest truly is plentiful, but the laborers are few. Matthew 9:37*

D)The Problem: There are a lot of unsaved people in the world - the harvest great - but the Laborers are few.

**Then Jesus gives the Solution:** <sup>38</sup> **Therefore pray the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into His harvest.” Matthew 9:38**

A)What Jesus does next is amazing - Ok you are praying for more laborers guess what you are going to be an answer to that prayer

B)Jesus called others to be a part of the solution Ch.10 V.1 **And when He had called His twelve disciples to Him, He gave them power over unclean spirits, to cast them out, and to heal all kinds of sickness and all kinds of disease. These 12 he sent out....Matthew 10:1,5**

C)Jesus clearly defines the problem - he gives the solution and then he invites them to be a part of the solution

**Nehemiah does the exact same thing here:**

**2<sup>nd</sup> The solution must be simply stated v.17b**  
***Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach.***

A) Nehemiah figured if God could move upon the heart of a pagan king to partner in this work,

B) He certainly could move upon the hearts of His own people to join in!

C)Nehemiah wasn't there to do it *for* them, but to partner *with* them in the job of restoring Jerusalem and its people.

*“Cooperation increases efficiency in amazing proportions – Two working together in perfect agreement have fivefold the efficiency of the same two working separately- a united Church is an unconquerable Church but the moment that cooperation is sacrificed as an essential, real power is at the disappearing point.” SD Gordon*

D) In looking to motivate them to cooperate – Nehemiah states the solution simply – we need to rise & build – we need to do this –

1) So God is no longer DISGRACED !!!

E)See later in Chapter 3 how the Work was evenly shared – everyone pitched in: Priest / Levites / leaders / goldsmiths/ blacksmiths / merchants

1)Amazing group effort

**EVERYONE ALL BACKGROUNDS  
PITCHED IN**

**3<sup>rd</sup> The Lord must be Clearly Seen - The means for doing the work: V.18 And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me.**

A)This was the biggest thing: Nehemiah told them all that God did to get him there -

B)I love this phrase: **I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me,**

C)God's hand was clearly behind this - Favor of the King - Protection in travels - Provision to build

**He says, we got these miracles because God does miracles.**

A)How many of you are dads? What does your hand do for your child? Does your hand protect your child? Oh, don't go over there.

B)Don't go into the road. Come here, protect you.

C)Does your hand provide for your child? Here you need this. Eat this, you know, I'd love you to take care of you.

D)Does your hand direct your child? Hey, just take my hand. Just follow me.

1)Does your hand bless your child? Let me bless you.

**You know who represents the Hand of God in our lives? The Holy Spirit**

A)When he says that the hand of God is upon him, that's the person, the presence, the power of the Holy Spirit. This is the anointing of God.

B)The Holy Spirit in our hearts convicts us to keep us out of harm's way.

1)The Holy Spirit guides us into all truth - gives us direction

C)The Holy Spirit provides for our needs

**Nehemiah is able to move in confidence and courage because he knows the Lord has called him - and his good hand is upon him**

A) Guys we can move in courage and confidence as well - knowing that God has called us to lead our homes

B) God has called us to serve our wives and children - God has called us to be lights in a dark world

1) God has called us to be his ambassadors

C) And the Hand of the Lord is good upon us because he has given us his Holy Spirit to live in our hearts

**So Nehemiah states the Problem: The people are in distress - the walls are down - The Solution - we need to rise and build.**

A) The Means for doing this: The Lord is with us!

B) Note the response: **The Response of the leaders: V. 18b** *So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good work*

C) There was a Willingness to go for it – They saw the big picture – they caught the vision & set their hands to do this great work

D) Note: For God to be able to do the Rebuilding that He wants to in your life – in your home / in your marriage / in a relationship / w/ this Church

1) There has to be a Willingness on your part to Partner with Him in the work – You have to be Willing { Not Force it !!!!

**What if someone took a tour of your life the same way Nehemiah took a tour of Jerusalem? What would they find?**

Proverbs 25:28: *Whoever has no rule over his own spirit is like a city broken down, without walls.*

A) Would your life be like a city with broken walls - making you live with a constant sense of fear, poverty, and insecurity?

B) Don't hide your eyes from the broken down places; God wants to change them – But you need to be willing

1) You need to admit – where the problems lie and allow the Lord to work

C) Admit the areas that are broken down and look to partner with the Lord today in seeing that work rebuilt

1) if you take that step and are willing to let Him work He will do amazing things !

**We learn from Nehemiah is how to deal with the Opposition**

*19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?"*

A) As soon as the people say let's rise up and build – the enemy says let's rise up and oppose – ALWAYS THE CASE .....

B) The first form of opposition here is Mockery & Slander

1) They laughed at us – accused us of rebelling against the king

C) 2 Cor 5:18 – *Given to us the ministry of Reconciliation* –

1) When you set about to be used by the Lord in the work of REBUILDING broken lives, the enemy will FIRST LAUGH at you

D) "YOU witness to your boss?"- "YOU lead a Bible study?" – "YOU pray for the sick?"

1) The enemy LAUGHS at us hoping that we will back away out of fear of looking foolish

**Notice 3 important things we see about how Nehemiah dealt with opposition:**

**#1 The Daring of Nehemiah - 20** *So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us - We can count on God*

A) The God of heaven will give us Success

B) Nehemiah understood – that if God was in it – if He was behind it there was nothing they could do to stop the work { God's work would succeed

C) These guys were not fighting against the people of Israel - they were fighting against God.

D) Great thing to remember in this current War - God is ultimately going to have Israel prosper.

**God's heart is forever with the People of Israel**

A) He allows things like this - to get their attention  
- Israel by and large is not a nation seeking God.

B) His ultimate plan is to draw the people of Israel  
to himself -

C) But whether this battle is heading in the  
direction of Ezekiel 38 or a precursor - Iran,  
Arabs - Russia -

1) God stands for Israel -

D) I don't think it is - Because much the World is  
standing behind Israel tonight - Ezekiel 38 - they  
stand alone

**Whoever comes against Israel is fighting with God  
- well the same thing can be said about your life**

A) Whoever comes against you is fighting with  
God - You are his child

B) Nehemiah said - we can count on God - and  
Paul said this about us Romans 8 - More than  
conquerors thru Him who loves us.

**#2 The Determination of Nehemiah** God can count  
on us ! V.20b *therefore we His servants will arise  
and build,*

A) Nehemiah didn't put the work on hold while a  
crisis response team could figure out the best way  
to answer Sanballat and Tobiah.

B) He wasn't going to let them sidetrack them -

C) There was a work to be done and they were  
going to do it - Because they were serving God

D) Nehemiah proclaims *who they are* and *what  
they should do: we His  
servants . . . will arise and build. .*

**First We can count on God / 2<sup>nd</sup> God can count on  
us - #3 The Determination of Nehemiah - He tells  
the enemy to Get lost !!!**

A) Wait a minute PR I don't see that in the text-  
Note V.20c *but you have no heritage or right or  
memorial in Jerusalem."*

B) This is what Nehemiah is Declaring: You have  
no say in this at all - You have no part with us -

C) This city doesn't belong to you - this belongs to  
God- and we are God's people.

D) We can say the same to our spiritual enemies:  
"You have no heritage or right or memorial in me.

1) I belong to Jesus Christ. You don't belong here.  
You may as well move on because I'm not going  
anywhere!"

**E) So IN Jesus name take a Hike -**

<sup>7</sup> Therefore submit to God. Resist the devil and he  
will flee from you? James 4:7