

The Spirit of Nehemiah

by Denny Kenaston

God is always working towards recovery, and He will have a people who will represent Him rightly, as seen in the story of Nehemiah's rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem.

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:17, Psalm 51:18, Proverbs 24:3, Isaiah 26:1, Ezekiel 22:30, 1 Corinthians 3:9, Ephesians 2:20, Hebrews 3:4, 1 Peter 2:5

Topics: "Prayer And Work", "Gods Protection"

Description

Denny Kenaston preaches on the story of Nehemiah, highlighting the importance of prayer, courage, and sacrifice in rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem as a testimony of God's strength, protection, and glory. Nehemiah's fervent prayer for 120 days preceded 52 days of labor, emphasizing the balance of prayer and work in God's kingdom. The walls of Jerusalem symbolize God's protection, strength, and the peaceful habitation of His people, calling for a revival of God's testimony in the church today.

Transcript

What do these feeble Jews? Will they fortify themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they make an end in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish?

I pray that the enemy is saying this about us in these last days.

The heathen spoke these words with an element of fear as they saw the Jews happily rebuilding the walls around Jerusalem. That which they feared came upon them. Those feeble Jews and the God of heaven revived the stones into walls round about the city. These walls became walls of protection from the world around them and their enemies. They became walls of testimony, verifying their presence among the heathen. They became walls of glory, proclaiming the power and mercy of the God of Israel. My heart stirs within me at the thought of what all of this meant to God and His people in that day.

Nehemiah was the initiator of this beautiful work. I love the determined, broken heart revealed in Nehemiah. In chapters one and two, we see the burden expressed in a colorful display of courage and tears. Nehemiah received brethren from Jerusalem and asked the normal kind of questions as they visited. He asked about the brethren and the beloved city. As they shared about the affliction of the people and the condition of the city, he was astonished and greatly burdened. He sat down and wept many days, with fasting and prayer. The burden increased and became a prayer that he prayed night and day for four months. Imagine this exercise before the Lord. He was weeping and confessing his sins and Israel's sins

for a full 120 days. During this time, God infused a vision in Nehemiah to rebuild the walls and repair the gates of His beloved Jerusalem. Nehemiah was so grieved. His people were afflicted. The walls of the city were broken down.

They say that it took fifty-two days to rebuild the walls, but this is not quite accurate. It took 120 days of fervent prayer and fifty-two days of labor to rebuild the testimony of Jerusalem and the people of God. This is a good balance for us to follow as we do the work of God. For every day of labor in the kingdom, let there be two days of fervent prayer. I wonder how this would affect our labors for the Lord! It proves to us again that God's will happens as men and women pray it into being.

Then Nehemiah did something more astounding than 120 days of prayer. He brought the burden of his heart before a heathen dictator. This is not a simple task. In those days, a king had the power to have you killed on the spot if he didn't like what you did or said. Nehemiah came before the king with a sad countenance. No one dared to present himself in this manner. Everyone knew that the king wanted happy servants in his presence. The king saw this sadness and inquired of Nehemiah, "Why is thy countenance sad?" I like Nehemiah's next move. He prayed to the God of heaven and spoke to the king. Such a beautiful combination guarantees success. He appealed to the king from the burden of his heart and asked for permission to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the walls. The king granted him his request and even provided the money to do the work. What an exciting example of what 120 days of prayer can do.

God is Jealous for His Testimony

Why would anyone spend 120 days in prayer and risk his life just to build a stone wall? This is no regular stone wall. We must consider what this wall stands for if we are to understand Nehemiah's sacrifice. The walls of Jerusalem represent several very significant things in God's economy:

Â· They offer protection for God's people from the many enemies in a hostile world. The walls of Jerusalem were so strong that the armies of Babylon had to starve the people out. No enemy can sneak into a city where there is a wall and gates. They have to pass through a gate and pass by a watchman.

Â· They give a powerful advantage when fighting against an enemy. When the wall is strong and high, your advantage is about five times better. An advancing army does not stand a chance if they have a wall to deal with.

Â· They represent the strength and stability of the people of God. They say to the world around them, "We have been here a long time." Jerusalem today still speaks this same message to all who visit her.

Â· The wall represents the God of the people who live inside the city. The glory and strength of the city of Jerusalem brought glory to God. They spoke of His majesty to heathen nations for centuries before the captivity.

Â· The walls of the city provided a peaceful habitation for God's people. The next generation could be guided in His ways and prosper.

These issues caused Nehemiah to grieve, mourn and fast when he heard the report from the visitors. The people of God were a reproach among the heathen, and God's name was profaned by the state of the city. He longed for the day when God's people could sing the song recorded in Isaiah:

"We have a strong city; salvation will God appoint for walls and bulwarks. Open ye the gates, that a righteous nation which keepeth the truth may enter in. Thou wilt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed on thee: because he trusteth in thee." Isaiah 26:1-3

What About Today?

This story is more than just a story of a man's courage and his loyalty to his God. It has many implications that touch us in our modern world. We are now in the age of the New Testament. Christ has come. He was crucified, buried and raised from the dead. God established His church and His individual people as His testimony upon the earth. The testimony of God on the earth is no longer a city, though He still uses Jerusalem to catch the attention of the heathen today. God longs for a people who walk in His ways and testify of His grace by the way they live and the message they preach. He desires to scatter His testimony all over the earth. The New Testament reveals holy churches filled with holy people, redeemed by the blood of the Lamb to be living testimonies of God's glory and power. Where is the church today and where is her testimony?

The church has gone into captivity. Her walls are broken down, and her gates are sunken into the ground. The enemy goes in and out as he pleases. The unconverted have found a comfortable home within her. The heathen look on and say, "Where is their God?" The saddest part of our modern day story is that she does not even know that she is in captivity. We live in a Laodicean age where the people of God say, "I am rich and increased with goods and have need of nothing." The people name the name of Christ and live like the world lives. They go to church on Sunday morning and go to the beach on Sunday afternoon. The church's divorce rate is near fifty percent, and the youth in the church wear rings in their noses like the heathens did a century ago.

God is Always Working Towards Recovery

This is very important to remember. No matter how low things get-no matter how distorted the testimony becomes-God is always working toward recovery. He will have a people who will represent Him rightly. He broods over peoples searching for those who will walk uprightly before Him. He goes to and fro looking for men to stand in the gap and make up the hedge. He is looking for men who will revive the stones out of the heaps, and rebuild the walls of His testimony.

He always finds some. There has never been a time when He had no one anywhere to be jealous for His cause. Men often felt as if they were the only one left, but it was not so. There will always be men and women with the spirit of Nehemiah. They will be burdened about the state of things and rise up to do something to change it. Are you one of them? God bless you if you are. My heart goes out to you.

There are many holes in the walls of the church. The pillar and ground of the truth is not standing very tall these days. In Nehemiah's day a few leaders and a bunch of willing workers made a big difference in a short amount of time. Let us cast off discouragement, get our eyes off of the enemy and look unto Jesus in these last days. Nehemiah made a survey of the damage early in the morning and then presented his dream to the people. The Bible says, "The people had a mind to work." Fifty-two days later the wall was complete, and the plans of the enemy were thwarted. Hallelujah!

Repair the Breaches

There are many breaches in the testimony of the church of America. We are a reproach among the heathen. Many of us have already begun to rebuild, and others are rising up to help. Where are the holes?

Â· The testimony of a happy, unified Christian marriage is hard to find. This is one of the most powerful messages we can bring to a hurting world. With a divorce rate of fifty percent within the church, I would say the walls are broken down. Worse still is that the remarriage rate in the church is about the same. This boils down to nothing less than "sanctified wife swapping."

Â· Raise up a godly seed as a testimony of God's saving grace. For two generations the church has lost her youth to the world. This is a great reproach upon God and His people. The beauty of holiness is clearly seen in a generation of young people on fire for God.

Â· What is separation from the world? The answer to this question must be redefined in this generation, before we lose everything. The church and the world walk hand in hand, laughing as they go, not knowing what destruction awaits them. Many of us have picked up the trowel and started to make changes that speak clearly to those around us. We are God's people, and we are different.

Â· Where are the men free from immorality? There is a big hole in the wall of moral purity. Men and even pastors are falling everyday. Oh, what a sad testimony this is, and how the heathen laugh at this one while they justify their own wicked hearts. We must overcome the lust of our hearts at all cost. God's name is at stake, and our families are being destroyed while we procrastinate.

Â· Joyful keepers at home speak to a generation of women who have cast off their first purpose for lesser things. Wives and mothers, arise. Here is a part of the wall that only you can build. The women of the world look on in wonderment as they watch you build with joy in your heart, and a smile on your face.

Â· A vibrant walk with a holy God is the need of the hour in America. We live in a day when everyone is a Christian, but few really walk with God. It is popular to go to church and to wear a cross around your neck. Where, oh where are the people who will walk with God in spirit and in truth? Where are the people who will live with a clear conscience under an open heaven? We need a revival.

There are many more stones that need to be revived and placed back into the wall, but these are a few to help us get an idea of where God wants to go with us. He is always about the business of restoration and recovery. He will never stop. He will always have His people. The question is, who will that be? Are you one of those who sigh and cry over the condition of the church today? Don't throw the stones; pick them up and repair a breach in the wall of God's testimony.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/denny-kenaston/the-spirit-of-nehemiah/>

Grow in Your Walk with Christ

Listen and read messages that will stir your heart for Christ and point you to deeper repentance and devotion.

- 50,000+ Sermons from speakers past and present
- 3,900+ Classic Christian Books freely readable online
- 1,200+ Bible Translations and Commentaries
- Over 450k forum posts — Join our vibrant online Christian forum

www.sermonindex.net