

“From Dream to Reality”

Sticks & Stones week #3

INTRODUCTION

In the first two weeks in our study of Nehemiah we saw God’s call on Nehemiah to rebuild the wall at Jerusalem. Nehemiah moved from just wanting to do something to making plans and moving forward. He went to Jerusalem and enlisted others to join in his mission. But there was work to be done and it was not an easy task. How did Nehemiah move from his dream of seeing the wall rebuilt to the reality of a completed work? This weekend our church went into the community through Affect the 5 projects. In a way, God’s call for New Life to reach the 5 cities was taken from dream to reality. How do we apply this same principal in our own personal call from God? How do we move from knowing God has called us to do his work to seeing it come to completion?

Ice Breaker (Optional):

What is the biggest project that you have seen through from start to finish?

Study Questions (45 MIN)

Identifying the call God has for you

Q1. Read Nehemiah 1:2-4; Psalm 69:9-10; John 2:14-17

The first thing we see in the book of Nehemiah is that he was concerned about the Jews in Jerusalem. Others may have known their condition but were unaffected. However, in Ne 1:4 we see Nehemiah’s immediate response to the news. How does Psalm 69:9-10 explain this response? How did we see Psalm 69:9 expressed by Jesus in John 2:14-17? In both instances the things that break God’s heart stirred them. Can you identify something that breaks God’s heart that you feel a special reaction to? Perhaps you react more passionately about this than others. That is one indication of a call God has placed on you. Discuss with your group an area you think may be God’s stirring in your heart.

A Project too Big to do Alone

Q2. Read Nehemiah 2:5-8; Nehemiah 1:5-11; Ephesians 3:20-21

After he had wept, mourned, fasted and prayed, Nehemiah made his request to the king. What did he tell the king he wanted to do in verse 7? It does not appear that his position as cupbearer prepared him to do the construction required, especially at the scale of the project he was undertaking. Once the king agreed to support his mission, what else did Nehemiah request? How do you think his view of God’s power and nature in his prayer influenced his boldness to make such a request (Ne 1:5-11)? Paul’s calling was to bring the Gospel to the Gentiles. What similarly encouraging view of God’s ability did Paul express in Ephesians 3:20-21?

Eyes Wide Open

Q3. Read Nehemiah 2:12-18; Nehemiah 4:14-17; 2 Corinthians 10:4-5

For three days Nehemiah surveyed the extent of the damage to the wall. He knew exactly what he was undertaking when he spoke to the people of Jerusalem to enlist them. When he invited them to join him, how did he encourage them that such a massive task was possible (Ne 2:18)? What was their response? As the work progressed there was opposition on all sides, but Nehemiah reminded them that the power of God was for them. In addition to doing the work of construction, what else did they have to do? We may not have to take up a sword to do the work God has called us to, but what does Paul tell the Corinthians about the warfare we face (2Cor 10:4)?

Endurance

Q4. Read Nehemiah 6:15; Nehemiah 13:6, 11, 17, 23, 27; Hebrews 10:36; Hebrews 12:1

As we read in Nehemiah 6:15 we find that the wall was finished in record time; 52 days! This was cause for great celebration. However in chapter 13 we find that Nehemiah had left after 12 years going back to Babylon. (Ne 13:6) When he returned to Jerusalem, what did he find? Our spiritual journey is not a sprint but a marathon, and we need endurance to complete the race. Is there an area you can identify where you need encouragement to endure? Pray with your group that God will strengthen you to fulfill His calling in your life.

Wrap-Up

Nehemiah was able to move from his dream of seeing the wall rebuilt in Jerusalem to the reality of seeing it completed. He is an example to us of how we can pursue God’s call in our own lives. He did this by identifying God’s call, believing that God was able to empower him to do it and sharing that conviction with others who joined him. Nehemiah was aware of the magnitude of his undertaking and that he was enabled by God to defend it against fierce opposition. And when the project was complete, he endured vigilantly to maintain what he had worked so diligently to attain.

Memory Verse

20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.
Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV

Prayer (20 MIN)

Ask your group to pray for you regarding one area where you can apply this study in your life:

Challenge: Take the next step, whatever it is, to follow God’s call in your life.

Q1

Nehemiah 1:2-4 ESV - 2 that Hanani, one of my brothers, came with certain men from Judah. And I asked them concerning the Jews who escaped, who had survived the exile, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said to me, "The remnant there in the province who had survived the exile is in great trouble and shame. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates are destroyed by fire." 4 As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Psalm 69:9-10 ESV - 9 For zeal for your house has consumed me, and the reproaches of those who reproach you have fallen on me. 10 When I wept and humbled my soul with fasting, it became my reproach.

John 2:14-17 ESV - 14 In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons, and the money-changers sitting there. 15 And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple, with the sheep and oxen. And he poured out the coins of the money-changers and overturned their tables. 16 And he told those who sold the pigeons, "Take these things away; do not make my Father's house a house of trade." 17 His disciples remembered that it was written, "Zeal for your house will consume me."

Q2

Nehemiah 2:5-8 ESV - 5 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it." 6 And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time. 7 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, 8 and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy." And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Read Nehemiah 1:5-11 in your Bible

Ephesians 3:20-21 NIV - 20 Now to him who is able to do immeasurably more than all we ask or imagine, according to his power that is at work within us, 21 to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, for ever and ever! Amen.

Q3

Read Nehemiah 2:12-18 in your Bible

Nehemiah 4:14-17 ESV - 14 And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes." 15 When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work. 16 From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, 17 who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other.

2 Corinthians 10:4-5 ESV - 4 For the weapons of our warfare are not of the flesh but have divine power to destroy strongholds. 5 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

Q4

Nehemiah 6:15 ESV - 15 So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.

Nehemiah 13:11, 17, 23, 27 ESV - 11 So I confronted the officials and said, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. ... 17 Then I confronted the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this evil thing that you are doing, profaning the Sabbath day? ... 23 In those days also I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. ... 27 Shall we then listen to you and do all this great evil and act treacherously against our God by marrying foreign women?"

Hebrews 10:36 ESV - 36 For you have need of endurance, so that when you have done the will of God you may receive what is promised.

Hebrews 12:1 ESV - 1 Therefore, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us also lay aside every weight, and sin which clings so closely, and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us,

Prayer Notes cont.
