

Nehemiah

1. Nehemiah is a wonderful picture of the Holy Spirit as He comes to the brokenness of people's lives to oversee the rebuilding & restoring process.

Nehemiah's Heart Stirred

1. Nehemiah's Concern

- The Condition of the People and Jerusalem - *They are in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire. ~ Nehemiah 1:3*
- Nehemiah prayed to God and fasted – for many days -
- Nehemiah asked King Artaxerxes for permission to go and rebuild Jerusalem. He was granted passage and provision. ~ *Nehemiah 2*

2. So I came to Jerusalem. . . (Nehemiah 2:11)

- Nehemiah came quietly and surveyed the damage and ruin (v.11-16)
- He exhorted the people and called them to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem (v.17-18).
- *Then they set their hands to this good work.* (v.18)

3. Chapter 3 describes how families partnered together to rebuild the wall and gates.

Opposition to God's 'Good Work' - Sanballat and Tobiah (picture of the devil and his cohorts)

1. The Enemy's Attitude, Tactics & Nehemiah's Response

- Attitude ~ Similar to character described in John 10:10: - Enemy comes to steal, kill & destroy.
 - *When Sanballat and Tobiah heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel. ~ Nehemiah 2:10*
- Tactic ~ Ridicule, mock, intimidate, scoff...
 - *But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem 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?" (2:19)*
- Nehemiah's Response ~ Affirming God's presence and purpose, as well as pointing out the void in the enemy's authority. (v.20)
- Sanballat and Tobiah increased in their attitude and actions against the rebuilding process (4:1-3)
 - Furious, indignant, mocking...
 - Insinuating weakness, inability, ineffectiveness, incompetence, ineptness...
- Nehemiah's response was **prayer**... calling on God to turn their evil on themselves... (4:4-5)
- Attitude continues to escalate to the point of planning to attack and 'stir up trouble'. (4:8)
- Response ~ *But we **prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night** to meet this threat.* (4:9)
- The threat of an ambush became very real, so Nehemiah responded wisely:
 - Set an armed guard at points of potential attack (4:13)
 - Encouraged the leaders, and the rest of the people, to **remember the greatness of God** and fight against for their brethren and families (v.14)
 - *Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. ~ Nehemiah 4:17*
 - *Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. **Our God will fight for us!*** (4:20)

Personal Applications

1. We also face a very real enemy who is opposed to God's process of restoration in our lives (John 10:10)
2. *Being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus. ~ Philippians 1:6*
3. *Be sober, be vigilant; because your adversary the devil walks about like a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour. ~ 1Peter 5:8*

Today you are going into battle against your enemies. Do not be fainthearted or afraid; do not panic or be terrified by them. For the Lord your God is the one who goes with you to fight for you against your enemies to give you victory. ~ Deuteronomy 20:3-4