

## Nehemiah 1

- Imagine walking through a city that is in shambles...the walls are crumbling, stones scattered, and gates burned.
- The Story of Nehemiah, in the OT was exactly that.
  - Crumbling Walls, Gates burned with Fire – A once magnificent structure, Solomon's Temple, now lie in ruins
  - Jerusalem's broken walls were more than a physical problem—they were a symbol of vulnerability, shame, and lost identity. The people felt exposed, defeated, and hopeless.
- The Story of Nehemiah opens as word gets to Nehemiah about the situation in Jerusalem.
- God gave Nehemiah a vision to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem for the glory and renown of His name!

It's not so different from our lives today – We see the brokenness everywhere we look

- Broken Lives, families in shambles – heartache, heartbreak, pain and agony abound

But just as Nehemiah saw the ruins and was moved to rebuild, God calls us not to ignore the brokenness, but to face it with hope.

- Just as Nehemiah rallied people, praying and trusted God's provision, In the same way, God invites us to carry the hope giving gospel to all those around us.

We are drawing our sermon series – Unstoppable Force to a close – We begin Matthew.

- We have laid out framework for how God has called us to be a people of hope for the world.
- There are several things I want you so see from this story – Particularly as it relates to Vision.
- With the help of the Holy Spirit, we will draw application from this passage of Scripture and close with a call to action!

The story of Nehemiah happens as the Nation of Israel was...

- Under the control of King Artaxerxes of Persia
- Jerusalem had been besieged; the Temple had been destroyed; the walls were broken down by the King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon – Babylonians conquered by Persians.
- Nehemiah is the Cup Bearer of this Persian King – gets word about how things are at home...

**Nehemiah 1:3-4** - And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province *are* there in **great distress and reproach**. The wall of Jerusalem *is* also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."

**Nehemiah 1:4** - <sup>4</sup> So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned *for many* days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

**Fast – forward a bit...**

**Nehemiah 6:15-16** - So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth *day* of Elul, in fifty-two days. <sup>16</sup> And it happened, when all our enemies heard *of it*, and all the nations around us saw *these things*, that

they were very disheartened in their own eyes; for they perceived that this work was done by our God.

## **Nehemiah Confronted the Challenge** - Confronted the Brutal Facts

### **Persevere with your Plan**

### **Move when you have Momentum**

### **Focus on the Future**

## **Nehemiah Confronted the Challenge** - Confronted the Brutal Facts – He Prayed!

- **Notice He starts with Prayer...verse 5**

**Nehemiah 1:5** - And I said: "I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, *You* who keep *Your* covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, <sup>6</sup> please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned.

**Nehemiah 1:7** - <sup>7</sup> We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. <sup>8</sup> Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, '*If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations;* <sup>9</sup> but *if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.*' <sup>10</sup> Now these *are* Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. <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.***"

For I was the king's cupbearer.

It was a prayer of Praise, Repentance, Asking God to Work, Yielding

## **Vision always begins with Prayer!**

- Two Weeks ago I challenged us to Pray for 21 Days – If you have not joined in, let me encourage you to begin today.
- A Mighty move of God always, always, always begins with Prayer!
- The Early Church that filled Jerusalem with the doctrine of Christ were devoted to prayer – Acts 2:42
- Beginning in Jan., we will set aside the 25<sup>th</sup> of Every Month to Fast and Pray for the Lord to do a great work in us and through us for the glory of Jesus' name.

## **Persevere with your Plan**

**If you go back to Nehemiah 2, you see the Plan Starts with Prayer, God-Given Strategy**

## Nehemiah 2:1 Chronicles God's Answer to Nehemiah's Prayer –

**Nehemiah 1:11** - 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."

**Lord if you don't work, this is not going to be done** – We desire to glorify your name.

**Nehemiah 2** – 4 Months later, Nehemiah is going about his business serving the King

- Nehemiah is going about his duties as cupbearer – King notices something is off
- King Artty says, Nehemiah, why are you sad
- Nehemiah says, King, the situation in my homeland is not good – I want to go back and rebuild it ( Nehemiah 2:4)
- **King Art, says What do you need? Nehemiah responds**

**Nehemiah 2:7-8** - 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, <sup>8</sup> 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." And the king granted *them* to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.

**One Author said, when faced with adversity, Nehemiah did not run to the king, he took 4 months to pray and plan.**

- Through the Gentile King Artaxerxes, He provides everything needed to accomplish the task.
- Nehemiah Formulated A Plan – He began with Prayer, then a Plan
- Spiritual Principle – When God calls you to do something, He always supplies.
- God has given Thorsby First Baptist all the resources we need to accomplish the task that he has given us.
- The question is, are we living open handed?

## **We have been given a Mission to Accomplish**

- To equip people to relentlessly pursue God's Design.
- We do this by helping people live out our Values
  - We Value God's Word – So we help people Abide in Christ,
  - We Value People – We help people Connect in Biblical / Meaningful Relationships,
  - We Value the Gospel – We train you to share their time, talent and treasure to build up the body to reach others with the Gospel of Christ.
- How do I know if I am living this out?
  - How's Your **God** Time? There is a significant spiritual, emotionally and psychological benefit to those spending 4 or more days in God's Word.

- How's Your **Gather** Time? Is Church a priority – Again, research show the value of weekly worship
- How's Your **Group** Time? Stop me if you have heard this before, but research shows the benefit of being connected in a group for mutual encouragement and edification.
- How's Your **Give** Time? Research shows, generous people are cheerful people
- How's Your **Go** Time? Are you sharing what God is doing in your life with others.
- These are handles, if you will to know if you are living out the Values
- This is our Plan and we are sticking to it

### Move when you have Momentum

**Nehemiah 6:1-9** - Now it happened when Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and *that* there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), <sup>2</sup> that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

<sup>3</sup> So I sent messengers to them, saying, **"I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down.** Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?"

<sup>4</sup> But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner.

The scripture we read today you can see how the momentum didn't mean ...

- that there were no haters; the momentum didn't mean that there were no obstacles
- The momentum didn't mean that there were no critics in fact it's the opposite people were always trying to derail the momentum that Nehemiah had,
- but Nehemiah never stopped!
- Nehemiah refused to press pause! Nehemiah just kept going he persevered with his plan and he finished his work.
- At First Baptist, by God's Graces, we have good momentum.
- Now is not the time to rest on our laurels – Sit Back, Relax, Take it Easy, Put things on Cruise Control and be content with the status quo.
- Status Quo never changed the World
- This is the time to persevere with our plan – Obstacles? Sure! Naysayers and haters, absolutely.
- But when you have God's momentum you don't let anything stop you!

### We have seen God do amazing things at First Baptist.

- To God Be the Glory, Great Things He has done!
- Over the past 14 years, we have seen God do amazing things.
  - We have grown numerically, financially, but most of all spiritually
- People have been saved and Baptized – May 2021 we set aside the first Sunday of every month for Baptism Sunday – We had no one scheduled when we planned that

- That first Sunday, We had 2 – By God's Grace we have seen 82 baptized
- As we mentioned a few moments ago, we have raised over \$1 Million above and beyond regular general fund giving – While fully funding all ministries as well as maintaining Cooperative Program 10% 1.5% to Chilton Baptist Association.
- Believers have been equipped and encouraged to relentlessly pursue God's Design.
- Through Group Life, men and women, boys and girls have been taught the Word of God.
- I praise the Lord for what He has done
- But there is more work to be done
  - We look at our Country, our State, our Community and we see unrest. We see brokenness. We see the breakdown of the family. We see the generational sin continue to ravage our communities.
  - We have the Hope – We must seize the day – Run into the darkness with the Hope of the Gospel
  - We are on a vision is to bring hope and renewal to every person and every place
    - By Spiritually forming believers – By raising up leaders in our homes, communities and churches – by saturating Thorsby and Beyond with the Gospel of Jesus

### **I love what Paul said in I Corinthians 3:**

***I Corinthians 3:6-8*** - I planted, Apollos watered, but God gave the increase. <sup>7</sup> So then neither he who plants is anything, nor he who waters, but God who gives the increase. <sup>8</sup> Now he who plants and he who waters are one, and each one will receive his own reward according to his own labor.

### **Focus on the Future**

***Nehemiah 6:15*** - <sup>15</sup> So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth *day* of Elul, in fifty-two days. <sup>16</sup> And it happened, when all our enemies heard *of it*, and all the nations around us saw *these things*, that they were very disheartened in their own eyes; ***for they perceived that this work was done by our God.***

- Nehemiah build that wall and made those sacrifices and worked hard because he want to build something for the next generation.
- the late Michael Catt, long-time pastor of Sherwood Baptist in Albany, Ga., say many times, "Whoever wants the next generation the most will get them."
- **Travel and school sports are reaching them. Social media is certainly reaching them. All types of entertainment are reaching them. Iconic celebrities and stars are reaching them. The list goes on.**
- **Whoever will prioritize and intentionally pursue reaching them will get them. The world is doing it. Are we?**

### **Focus on the Future**

2026 Goal – **25% increase in 5G-Life Engagement within 1 year.**

- God Time – Measure in D-Groups ( 4 or more ) / Bible Recap (Track using Google Form)
- Gather Time ( Aug. 3: 218 / Aug. 10: 242 – Ave. 230 ) 25 % increase 287
- Group Time – 158 Members – Need to track attendance / engagement - 197
- Give Time – Measure by serving units / giving units – Ave. Giving Unit (160 households / 78)
- Go Time – Gospel Conversation – Track using Google Form

2026 Goal – See 50 people Baptized.

- Preacher, That's impossible!
- **Ephesians 3:19-20** - 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, <sup>21</sup> to Him *be* glory in the church by Christ Jesus to all generations, forever and ever. Amen.
- With God all things are possible.
- I heard it said not long ago that God wants do something cosmically significant and locally specific through our church.

We have a Vision to Get the Gospel to Every Person and Every Place in Thorsby and Beyond

- To Do that, we must equip people to relentlessly pursue God's Design for their lives.

Call to Action: We like to talk Next Steps

Not a Believer:

- What is holding you back from repenting of sin, trusting in Jesus, and calling on him for salvation.

Not a Church Member:

- What is your next step? Love to have a conversation about Church Membership.

If you are Member:

- Are you living fully devoted? How's your God Time, (Gather, Group, Give, Go)
- Where is your next step – Commit to **gather** faithfully, join a **group**, **give** consistently and cheerfully, **Go** willingly

I used to tell Justin all the time, **Rome wasn't built in a day**. But recently I added... **"...but there but there was never a day that they weren't laying bricks!**

We are not going to bring Hope and Renewal to every person in every place in **one day**, but let there not be a day that goes by that **we are not laying bricks...for the glory of Jesus name!**

---

## **The family has been ordained by God as the foundational place for faith to take root and grow.**

The decline in a healthy home life is a crisis with far-reaching implications that must not be taken lightly. This cultural decline of a healthy home life is a problem too great for political or educational efforts to change. We must turn instead to a spiritual revival, and we are convinced that God has prepared Thorsby First Baptist Church for this important moment in history. We believe that the only hope for family restoration is the power of the gospel of Jesus Christ. God has uniquely positioned TFBC with the passion, resources, and leadership to make a significant impact on home life in the next decade.

- Use Statistics to demonstrate the darkness and lostness
- God wants to do something cosmically significant and locally specific through our church.
- **Sample Horizon Storyline Script** can be found Figure 17:6 p. 216
- **Geographic Saturation: “Every man, woman, and child the opportunity to hear and understand the Gospel and be reconciled to God through Christ. p. 79**
- The conversation is the win

### **Article about Texas Church ... [Link](#)**

**After pressing through some transitional challenges** during the first two years, Patterson began to see fruit, he said. At the beginning of 2020, the church set a 10-year-goal of giving away \$1 million, baptizing 500 people, and launching 25 community groups in local neighborhoods.

### **Intro: How Might we **Solve a Problem**? What dilemmas will we address?**

**How Might we stir the heart? What makes the vision attractive, beautiful, desirable, and wonderful? Think about our typical church attender.**

- *In the next five years, we will provide our community with gospel-centered, family-friendly, and application-driven programs matched by welcoming, clean, and state-of-the-art facilities. We will be a safe harbor for families to rest at port, as they will find restoration, supplies, and training needed to set sail again. We see an upstate armada of strong parents navigating together through the rough seas of daily living. We envision this fleet of Christ-centered families carrying a gospel banner that will introduce even more misguided men, women, boys, and girls to the good news of Jesus. (Example 4 – “Christ-Centered Parenting, App. A)*

Markers of Multiplication ( See Scroggins, *Everyday Conversations* )

**Focused Prayer - Pray Fervently – Col 4:2, 12, Luke 10:2**

**Radical Generosity - Give Cheerfully – 2 Cor. 9:6-7**

**Go Faithfully – Matthew 28:19**

Multiplying Units  
Rapid Obedience  
Loving Accountability

Communication Truths to Remember:

- Vision dripping is more important than vision casting
- "Most of the water runs off within 30 minutes...***It doesn't become reality—it doesn't saturate—until it's talked about in the unexpectedness of small talk. The hallway vision moment is like the sprinkling from the water bucket of a careful Gardner.***