

Before we get started
can I give you a **perfect example**

of why I like to **“AT TIMES”** use the **NLT** Bible Translation
the **New Living Translation**

I use the **ESV** for a good **word-for-word** **Literal** Translation

& **I spent** over **2 years** **examining & testing** the **ESV**
before switching to it for my primary **Literal** Teaching Translation

But **there’s something** about the **NLT**
that really **shines** in our passage today

The NLT is an **ACCURATE** **thought-for-thought** translation,

which **means** it has the liberty to **EXPAND** the original language
in order to get the **ACCURATE** **thought** across

Now - **because of this** - you **can’t** use the **NLT**
to study **each** & **every** word

but it is a **GREAT** **general reading** Bible - & I’ll **show you** why

Last week we left **Nehemiah** carrying a **GREAT BURDEN**
of **Intercession** for the people of God
as he was **FASTING** & **PRAYING** for them

The question we start with **today** is

HOW LONG did God **leave Nehemiah** in this state
of **Heavy Intercession** for the people ??

Well – if you **look** in your **ESV** (or **NKJ**) Literal Translation

Neh 1:1 says - ***Now it happened in the month of Chislev***
That's when he started praying

Neh 2:1 says - ***In the month of Nisan***
That's when God answered his prayers

Now – **unless** you're **Hebrew**
or **only read** your Bible with a good **Bible Teacher** in the room

you would **have no way** of knowing
how long it was from **CHISLEV** to **NISAN** – right?

But **Now** – Look at the **NLT**

Neh 1:1 says - ***In late autumn, in the month of Kislev***
Late Autumn is NOV - DEC

Neh 2:1 says - ***Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan***
Early Spring is MAR – APR

SO – **JUST** by reading the **NLT** – with **NO** Bible Scholars needed
you can know **HOW LONG** Nehemiah prayed, right ?

He prayed from **LATE AUTUMN** – to **EARLY SPRING**
which is about **4 months**

which is an **important bit of information**
that the **NLT** just **GIVES** you

without you having to **rely** on **somebody else**
to **explain** to you how long it is from **KISLEV** to **NISAN**

Isn't that **COOL** ??

That is a **GREAT EXAMPLE** of why I “***AT TIMES***” use the **NLT** like **I’m using** today – & **may** use thru-out Nehemiah

Now – there are **some people** who think I have a very **LOW OPINION** of scripture

because I don’t **DEFEND** & **PROTECT** the “***Authorized King James Version***”

But **pls listen** to me – Me using the **ESV** – or the **NLT** **doesn’t** mean I have a **Low Opinion** of Scripture

it means I have a very **HIGH opinion** of scripture

It means I have such a **HIGH opinion** of scripture that I **want**, more than anything,

for **you** to be able to actually **READ** & **UNDERSTAND** God’s Word, **on your own** - & thereby, be **changed** by it

There are still **plenty** of churches who use the **King James Version**

& so, if you **get anybody** trying to **sow criticism** & **dissent** into your life on this subject

Pls strongly encourage them to **GO** to a “**King James Only**” church, **& be happy**

& allow us **to be happy** with a Bible **Version** that is both **Accurate**, **AND** that we can **actually understand**

Does that make sense ?

OK – want to have a **Bible study** now?

2:1 - NLT

1 Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan . . .

Again using **JUST** the **NLT** we **KNOW**
about **4 MONTHS** had passed

Between last week's **PRAYER** & this week's **ANSWER**

& **THAT** is really **important**

Because some of us think to **wait 4 MONTHS** for God
is like **400 years**

It is **possible** – that after **just 4 MONTHS** of praying
some of us would even begin to **QUESTION** God

But **guys** - **every day** for those four months
God had been **preparing Nehemiah**

THRU the process of his **intercession**
& **through** his **BURDEN** for the people of God

& Nehemiah **HAD** to have that **time of Preparation**
BEFORE he ever **approached** the **KING**

& **IN FACT** – we'll **see** today
Nehemiah **never REALLY** did **approach** the King

He **waited** for the **KING** to Approach **HIM**

He **PRAYED**, & he **waited**, & he **trusted** God
to **orchestrate** the **time** & the **place**,

Which **God did**

Neh 2:1 - NLT

1 Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence.

WHY had Nehemiah **never before** appeared **SAD**
in the **presence** of the King?

Because it was a **CRIME** to be sad in the King's Presence
A **CRIME** punishable by **DEATH** !

So – **after Interceding** for God's people **FOR 4 months**
Nehemiah showed up in the King's presence - **SAD**

Neh 2:2 - NLT

2 So the king asked me, "Why are you looking so sad? You don't look sick to me. You must be deeply troubled." (& Nehemiah says) Then I was terrified,

The burden for God's people
had become **too much** for Nehemiah

The **King** Saw it in him - & **Nehemiah was Terrified**
Because the King could have dealt **VERY HARSHLY** with him

But **here's the deal** - Nehemiah **WAS READY** for this moment
which is a KEY LESSON here today

& so he simply **shares the burden**
of his heart **with the King**

Neh 2:3 - NLT

3 but I replied, "Long live the king! How can I not be sad? For the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins, and the gates have been destroyed by fire."

Guys - **Right HERE** is the *turning point*

Things **could** go **EITHER WAY** for Nehemiah
right at this moment

The King **could possibly** send Nehemiah away
even to be **executed**

But thru his **Prayer, Fasting, & Intercession**
the burden had grown **SO MUCH** in Nehemiah
that he **couldn't contain it** any more

& **now** comes - the real **DECIDING moment**

Neh 2:4(A) – NLT

4 The king asked, "Well, how can I help you?" . . .

Alright – now **THIS** is what we call - **an OPEN DOOR of Opportunity**

The King – Who could have had **Nehemiah** executed
instead says to him – ***"Well, how can I help"***

It reminds me **SO MUCH**
of **when** this church **started here 8 years** ago

Interestingly – we had been **praying together**
for **about 4 Months**

When I found myself **sitting** outside
the **Nuevo Unified School District** Office

The **only buildings** in Nuevo that could **house** our church
were the **school** buildings

& I had **no idea**
whether they would **even consider** renting to us

There was **only one other church** in town
& they had been in **their** own **building** for many **generations**

So – **I sat in** the District Office parking lot
made a couple **phone calls** for **prayer**

& then **I walked into** the office with a **great burden** on my heart
for **the people** of this community

At **that point** – it **could've** gone either way for **US TOO**

But **here's** how it **DID** go

The girl at the front desk **asked** if she could help me
& as I was **explaining** why I was there

“Just By Chance” a **distinguished** looking gentleman
happened to be **walking by** & paused to **listen** in for a moment

That distinguished looking gentleman was **Dr. Jay Hoffman**
The **Superintendant** of the School District

& **as soon as** he heard me say **why** I was there
He **immediately** said to me

Please **come into** my **office** right now

& then he said **THESE** exact words to me
“Well, how can I help you?”

& **that’s** what we call – an **OPEN door**
for the **work of God** to go **forward** in a community

& **8 years later** we still have a **wonderful relationship**
with the **school district** here

We’re **active** in **serving** the kids
on **THESE** school campuses **EVERY** week

& we’ve **been privileged** to be **called in** to help
in **times of crisis** - when the district needs us

& **SO IT WAS** (tho maybe on a grander scale)
But - so it was, **with Nehemiah**

- His **burden** for the people had grown until he couldn’t contain it
- He went to work with his **burden** on his sleeve
- The **King** sees it, but **instead** of punishing Nehemiah
he says to him *“how can I help you?”*

& **now** – **NOW** – Nehemiah stands - at **THE THRESHOLD**
of **the next TEST**, in God’s call on his life

When the **most powerful King** in the world asks you
“how can I help you?”

It’d be a **GOOD IDEA** for you to have
something **clear** & **specific** to say - in response

Have you ever had someone
try to ask you for something

but when they **leave** you're **not** really sure
what it was they were asking for ??

I have **definitely been guilty** of doing that myself

But listen guys;

If God has given us a **great burden** for His work
& we've **carried it** until it's just over-flowing out of you
& God's **put someone** in our path who really **CAN** help us
& **that person** says to us ***"Hey, how can I help?"***

We **need to be ready** to say - **exactly** what it is we need
in order to move God's work **FORWARD**

& I **believe** Nehemiah was **Definitely READY** for this moment

Now – We're **going to see** here
that **FIRST** - Nehemiah shoots up a **PRAYER FLARE** to God

& **some people** believe Nehemiah was **ASKING** God
what **he should say** to the King – I definitely **DON'T** think so

I **believe** Nehemiah knew **EXACTLY**
WHAT he was going to say

I believe the **QUICK PRAYER**
was for the **King's** heart to **remain open**
to **what** Nehemiah **knew** God was **calling him** to **DO**

Neh 2:4-5 – NLT

4 The king asked, “Well, how can I help you?” With a prayer to the God of heaven,

5 I replied, “If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried.”

Nehemiah, WHAT’S the BURDEN I see in you?

Answer – Please SEND ME to God’s people, to help them!

There’s a great Audio Adrenalin Song – Hands & Feet

I want to be your HANDS, I want to be your FEET . . .

& then it says – *I want to **GO** where You **SEND ME***

Nehemiah KNEW – this was a “GO” burden

God needed Nehemiah’s HANDS, & his FEET
to GO where God was sending him

& for FOUR MONTHS – Nehemiah had been saying to God
I WILL GO – I WILL GO WHERE YOU SEND ME !

& EVERY TIME Nehemiah said “*I will GO*”
God was preparing him to go

& then – at the very RIGHT TIME
God opened the Door of Opportunity

& Nehemiah knew exactly what he was called to say
Please SEND ME to God’s people – to help them

4 MONTHS of prayerful preparation
comes down to a conversation
that may have lasted only a few moments

GUYS – If God has given us a SPECIFIC BURDEN

We **MUST** be Prepared to ACT
when He opens the Door of Opportunity

We have to Got to know WHAT God has called us to
& we have got to be READY to express it – in a moment's notice

& then we must be willing to RESPOND
when God opens the door

You know – it's funny – but that reminds me
of another very similar story about the Birth of this church

10 months BEFORE that previous story

My family & I were driving back
from one of the many trips we used to take together
(trips that basically ENDED when we started this church)

& the kids were sleeping in the back of the car
& we were driving across the desert - in Aug 2000

& I said to Pam – I believe someone is going to ask us
to start another Calvary Chapel

& with a heavy sigh, I told her
if that happens, I think we have to say YES!

& we **didn't** talk too much more about it, until **Jan 2001**,
when I got a **call** out of the blue

from a person who lived in **Nuevo**
but was **going to church** with us at our previous church

& they **said to** me – we've been **praying** for you **BY NAME**
Since **AUG of 2000**

that God would **SEND YOU**
to come & **start** a Calvary Chapel in **Nuevo**

Really – **AUG of 2000**
because that's **the same time** I told my wife

that if ***someone asked us*** to start another Calvary
that we would ***have to say YES***

& ***5 mo's later*** - that "***Door of Opportunity***" opened

& I **immediately** said – I won't even consider it
unless my current **Senior Pastor** fully supports it
(& **honestly**, I was kind of **looking** for a way out)

So I called my **Senior Pastor** – who was **IMMEDIATELY**
very supportive of the whole idea

& so I **gathered the family** around the table
& one-by-one we **voted** . . .

Were we ready – to leave a life of relative **EASE**
& **pay the price** that we already **knew** was required,
to start **another** church

& **not one** member of my family,
ever even **CONSIDERED** saying NO

God had **prepared us**
then He opened **the Door of Opportunity**

then **WE** had to decide – what we would **DO** at that point

& I **want you** to know – from that **FIRST day**
God **PLACED PEOPLE** around us

Good Strong People – to **strengthen & support** us
Some of whom are still **Standing** with us today

& from that **FIRST DAY** God has **MADE** things happen
to insure that this Work of His continues

in spite of the *constant & persistent* opposition
we have **faced** from DAY ONE - ***mostly from inside the church***

& I **believe** it's really **NO different** with **YOU**
In any **Work** or **Purpose** that God is calling **YOU TO**

FIRST - God **prepares** you with a burden
which you **MUST** *Continually Bathe*
in **Prayer** & **Intercession**, for some time

THEN – He gives you an **OPEN DOOR of opportunity**
BY WHICH He is *Directing your Path*
for the Work He's calling you to

& **THEN** – ALL your **preparation** – & ALL your **intercession**
Must **BECOME** - Faithful **ACTION**

Nehemiah's Open Door – **came** with the **King's** question

& with a **Quick Prayer** – Nehemiah **acted in FAITH**
& he said **I MUST GO – PLEASE SEND ME**

& then we **pick it up** in V.6

Neh 2:6 - NLT

6 The king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked, “How long will you be gone? When will you return?” After I told him how long I would be gone, the king agreed to my request.

& so **the King** – with the Queen sitting beside him - **asks** Nehemiah,
“how long will you be gone?”

& **listen** – Nehemiah **didn't** say ***“O gosh, I don't know, we'll have to see how the Lord leads . . .”***

NO – that is **NOT** how Nehemiah
approached the work of God

Nehemiah told the King **HOW LONG** he would be gone
& we'll see later – **he STICKS** to his word

& so

The King **ASKS** how long

Nehemiah is **READY** with an answer

The King **AGREES**

& Nehemiah is **off & running** . . . ***OR is He?***

One of the **hardest things** for a Minister of God to learn
Is that it takes **RESOURCES** to do God's Work

& **VERY SELDOM** – does the person who is called to **GO**
actually have the **resources** to Go

ALMOST ALWAYS – God calls **One to GO** - & **One to SEND**
Because the **GOERS** – **very seldom** have the resources to go

When we came here
just like when we started the church before this one

we had **NO** resources – **ZERO** - **NO** financial Support

Every DOLLAR needed - had to be **given** by someone else
In order for the work of God to begin here

& it is still the **SAME** today – for this work to **continue** here

EVERY single month – we **RELY** on the resources that **YOU** give

& this ministry runs in **DIRECT PROPORTION**
to the **resources** that are given

But **HERE's** the **REAL POINT**

If God has called us to a work
then He has **ALREADY** earmarked the resources **FOR** that work

& this text - & many, many others – make it perfectly clear

It is **OK to ASK** for the resources we **NEED**
to accomplish God's Work
for the benefit of His people – **AMEN ?**

Look at how **Nehemiah** does it

Notice – the King **DOESN'T** ask Nehemiah if he needs anything

& Nehemiah **doesn't wait** for the King to ask

He knows the Kings **has** the **resources**

So **Nehemiah** asks for them

He asks for **Resources**

for his **SAFETY** - - **AND** - - his **FINANCES**

Neh 2:7-8 - NLT

7 I also said to the king, "If it please the king, let me have letters addressed to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, instructing them to let me travel safely through their territories on my way to Judah. (resources for SAFETY)

8 And please give me a letter addressed to Asaph, the manager of the king's forest, instructing him to give me timber. I will need it to make beams for the gates of the Temple fortress, for the city walls, and for a house for myself." ***And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.***

Many of you **know** – I've spent **YEARS**

never ASKING for resources for God's work

But HERE – Like almost everywhere **ELSE** in the Bible

Nehemiah **TRUSTS** God - **AND**

he **ASKS** for the Resources he needs - to do God's work

& let me **just say** something

about the **Faithful Givers** both **here** & in **Word-By-Mail**

I'm **NOT Kidding** – **they** are the **silent heroes**

who **keep** these ministries going

& we **constantly THANK GOD**

for those who **supply the resources** we need

Certainly – Asking for money
has been **ABUSED** by some churches

But let me tell you the simple truth
NO GIVING – NO MINISTRY

That is **REALLY** how it works

So – Nehemiah **KNEW ENOUGH**
to ASK for the Resources he needed

& then - **Look Carefully**
He gives **ALL THE CREDIT** to God

At the end of V.8
And the king granted these requests, because the gracious hand of God was on me.

It **wasn't** cause **Nehemiah** was great
It **wasn't** cause **the King** was great
It **was** because **GOD WAS GREAT**
& **HIS** Gracious Hand was upon Nehemiah

& so – **NOT ONLY** was Nehemiah **READY to RESPOND**
when **God** opened the **Door of Opportunity**

But he also **KNEW** what **resources** he would **NEED**

& he **TRUSTED GOD** enough
to **ASK the KING** for those Resources !!!
BUT WAIT – There's **MORE**

WE DO serve an **Abundant** God – Don't we ??

& **altho** that truth has **ALSO** been **misused** – *it's still true*

Sometimes – God allows us to get by on **JUST ENOUGH**

Sometimes – God gives us **MORE than we ask for**, doesn't he?

Look at **how this worked** for Nehemiah

Neh 2:9 - NLT

9 When I came to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, I delivered the king's letters to them. The king, I should add, had sent along army officers and horsemen to protect me.

Man – that is **SO COOL !!**

Nehemiah Didn't ask for **Army Officers** & **Horsemen** (LIT Chariots)

But **God said** - Nehemiah,

I'm just **going to make sure** everything's good

so **I'm going to send** some people

with you – for your **safety**

We **need people** to go with us – don't we ?

to **stand** with us – & to **hold us up** in the work

& I **thank God** that he has **firmly placed**

STRONG people in my life – because we **cannot stand** alone

we **NEED** each other – for **SAFETY** & **STRENGTH**

as we **press ahead** in God's work

& God has **ALWAYS** provided

the **PEOPLE** & the **RESOURCES** required

for this ministry to press on
in spite of all the challenges - - Praise the Lord !!

OK - One last thing before we go today

Remember we quoted Alan Redpath in our 1st Nehemiah Msg

Alan Redpath:

*. . . there is no winning without warfare;
there is no opportunity without opposition;
there is no victory without vigilance.
For whenever the people of God say, "Let us arise and build,"
Satan says, "Let me arise and oppose."*

Remember THAT truth – as read our last V. today

Neh 2:10 - NLT

10 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of my arrival, they were very displeased that someone had come to help the people of Israel.

ALL the Preparation of Nehemiah's heart,
ALL the Opening of the Door of Opportunity
ALL the Provision of the Resources needed

ALL of that – STILL did not REMOVE
the opposition to the work of God

For whenever the People of God say
"*Let us Arise & build*"

there will ALWAYS be SOMEBODY that says
"*Let me Arise & Oppose*" – - Same THEN, Same NOW

But **HERE** is some **Really Good News** to close

Listen to this quote by Chuck Swindoll

Opposition often reinforces the will of God, rather than hindering it. It is doubtful that you can really be assured of being in the will of God unless someone is vehemently opposing you.

& **guys** – as we **recommit** in this ministry
to making **full-time followers** of Jesus Christ

we **have people**, both **OUTSIDE**, & **INSIDE** this church,
who are **definitely opposing** us.

& at first I was **shocked** by their attacks,

but **their opposition** - is actually **Re-Assurance**
that **we are** right in **the middle** of the *will of God*

But **Please** – don't be a **victim** to their **subtly schemes**
to sow **division** & **dissention** & **discord** into the body of Christ

There will **ALWAYS** be people **opposed** to the Work of God
please don't become their victims

GOD PREPARED Nehemiah

GOD opened the **Door of OPPORTUNITY**

Nehemiah was **READY** to Step thru it

GOD provided the **RESOURCES**

& **NEXT WEEK** – Nehemiah's **OFF to Face the Battle**

Let's Pray