

Neh 04 – **The Work Begins – Neh 2:11-20**

Pastor Dave Shepardson, Calvary Chapel Nuevo, www.wordbymail.com

When we **first met** Nehemiah in Ch 1
he was the **cupbearer** to the King – his **confidant**, **advisor**

But remember we said - Nehemiah goes
from **Cupbearer**,
to **Engineer & Builder**
& finally, to **Governor**

& today – we **see Nehemiah** begin his work
as **Engineer** & **Builder**

We're going to see the **massive project**
of **Re-Building** the **Wall of testimony** around Jerusalem - **BEGIN**

Remember – it's **been 90 years**,
since God's people had **returned** to Jerusalem

& the **Wall of Testimony** was still in **RUINS**

& today – Nehemiah is going to **BEGIN** the work
of Rebuilding the Wall

Let's Pray - & we'll dig in

here's our 1st **important point**

This **critical period** of Nehemiah's life - begins **very simply** -
with **no fanfare** or **excitement**

The **most important part** – of the work God
is always done - **Alone** with God

It is **THERE** – that God **Prepares** you, & **Equips** you for **the task** he's calling you to

For **Moses** – his 40 yrs of **leadership** - was **PRECEDED** by 40 yrs in the **wilderness**, leading (real) sheep

& in those **40 yrs** of silence, God Prepared **Moses** for **40 yrs** of leading the flock of God

King David also began his service to God – **ALONE**, with just the sheep of his father

& then **Alone** & **running** for his life from King **Saul** - in the wilderness

Paul – the greatest Apostle – didn't **begin** his **Apostleship** with a great **missionary journey** & church planting

He **began** his Apostleship **ALONE** – in **Arabia** for 3 years

Even **Jesus** was prepared this same way

Immediately after His baptism
He fasted **ALONE** for 40 days

& then faced Satan – **ALONE**
in preparation for **the Great Work** He had come to accomplish

God most often - prepares us **ALONE** (in the desert)
for the work he has for us - in our Jerusalem

After months of **fervent prayer** in Ch 1

After God opening the **Door of Opportunity** in Ch 2 . . .

Now - Nehemiah spends over **3 months**
traveling the **800 mi** from Susa to Jerusalem

& we can be sure **every day** he spent time **alone** with God
being preparing for the task that lay before him

& so we come – to **Neh 2:11-12 – NLT** (*might stay w/ NLT*)
11 So I arrived in Jerusalem (after 800 mi's). **Three days later,**
12 I slipped out during the night, taking only a few others with me.
I had not told anyone about the plans God had put in my heart for Jerusalem. We took no pack animals with us except the donkey I was riding.

After **3 months** traveling
& after **3 days** in Jerusalem (probably resting)

Nehemiah - **FINALLY**
was about to begin **investigating** the wall

& he **slipped out** at night
taking only a **few others** with him

& he had **told no one**
about **the plans** God had put in his heart

WHY? – Because he was allowing God to **CONFIRM** the plan
& to **SPELL OUT** the **DETAILS**

before he spoke to even one person about it

& so he **carried the burden**
that God had given him, **around the wall**

& he carried the shame
of this testimony of God - *that had been torn down*

& He was LOOKING closely, & carefully – at the task
to try to grasp the magnitude of what God had called him to

Last week – I mentioned - when We came here to Nuevo,
I drove up & down every street of this community – Alone
Praying for every house, more than once

& we tried our best to come to grips with the reality,
& the magnitude, of the spiritual condition, of this community

A great deal, of the wall of testimony of this community
had been torn down by the enemy

there was only one church in town, & praise God for them
& there was the Grejada family's food bank & ministry building

but every new church that had been started in this community
for many years

had been torn down by the enemy - & run out of town

During that same time - there were thousands of new homes
being built 20 miles south of here - in French Valley

& thousands of new homes usually means
INSTANT church growth

& I have to be honest with you . . . I drove around down there also,
& I dealt with God – ALONE - there

& I **knew** – that God **hadn't called us**
to the place with **thousands** of new homes

God **called us** to **Nuevo**
to help build the **wall of testimony** – **HERE**, In this community

& most of our ministry team – had also **carefully & solemnly**
counted the cost - & measured the **magnitude of the task**

one member had a dream in which
the enemy told them

that he would do them **great harm**
if they **DARED** come to **Nuevo** to begin this work

We **surveyed** the Wall of Testimony
we **acknowledged** the damage the enemy had done
we **counted** the cost . . .

& we **set out to REBUILD** the wall of testimony to God
in this community

& if **you** consider yourself
a **permanent part** of this body

Then **God** has also called **YOU**
to help **REBUILD** the wall of Testimony **HERE** – ***Amen ?***

Let's **rejoin Nehemiah** – as he carefully **investigates**
the **condition** of the Wall

In **Vs's 13-15** – Nehemiah takes his **Nighttime TOUR**
to closely **INSPECT** the ruins of the wall

Neh 2:13-15 – NLT

13 After dark I went out through the Valley Gate, past the Jackal's Well, and over to the Dung Gate to inspect the broken walls and burned gates.

14 Then I went to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but my donkey couldn't get through the rubble.

15 So, though it was still dark, I went up the Kidron Valley instead, inspecting the wall before I turned back and entered again at the Valley Gate.

Nehemiah **INSPECTED** the wall

The word "inspect" is a medical term

It means to **examine** something very **carefully**
to **determine** the **details** of it

Nehemiah was **thinking** thru every **detail** of the work

He's **planning** - he's **thinking**

who will he need to build with him
& **what** would they need to be **gifted** at

& that's **exactly** what is required
for **ANY** Wall of testimony to be built by the people of God

EACH person comes with different **giftings**
& different **weaknesses**

& we **Must EACH work**, within our **Gifting**
allowing others to **support** us – in our **weaknesses**
does that make sense?

The only **GIFT** that God has **NOT** given **ANYONE**
is the **GIFT** of **TEARING** down **the wall** that others are building

God creates us **to build** a WALL of Testimony

The **enemy** inspires us
to **TEAR down** the **wall** that others are building

So here's how it's gone for Nehemiah so far:

- 1) He **received the burden** from God
- 2) He **prayed** & **fasted**, even mourned, carrying that burden
- 3) He watched for the **Door of Opportunity**
- 4) HE was **ready with a plan** when God opened the door
- 5) HE carefully **inspected** the work & **counted** the cost

THIS is the process that will **PREPARE us** - to *not look back*
once we have **put our hand** to the plow

This is the process where God will **INSTILL strength** in us
To **see us** all the way thru

right up to that day - when **we** stand before Him,
& He says ***“Well done My good & faithful servant”***

& guys - this applies to EVERY work of God

whether raising **children**,
working to earn a living,
or serving in the **ministry** - - - **THESE** same truths **APPLY**

& **notice** again – Nehemiah did this **ALL Alone** with God
before he ever **spoke** to One person about his **plans**

Look at Neh 2:16 - NLT

16 The city officials did not know I had been out there or what I was doing, for I had not yet said anything to anyone about my plans. I had not yet spoken to the Jewish leaders—the priests, the nobles, the officials, or anyone else in the administration.

He had **NOT YET** spoken to anyone . . .

But Nehemiah also **knew**
he **could NOT** build this wall alone

He KNEW - he would need EACH of God's people
to build **THEIR OWN wall** of testimony
around their own lives

in order for the entire wall to be built – **to the Glory of God**
& we'll **see that** SPECIFICALLY next week

But **for today** – let's **look closely** at how God used Nehemiah
to **call the people** - to **the task** that was before them

Neh 2:17 – NLT

17 But now (finally) I said to them, “You know very well what trouble we are in. Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire. Let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and (that we may-esv) end this disgrace!”

When Nehemiah **finally spoke** to the city officials -
Look very carefully at the words - **WE** - **US** - **WE**

Nehemiah never said ***“Man, you guys have really blown it, your testimony is a mess”***

***“You guys have done so many things wrong I can’t believe it
In fact – let me LIST ALL the things you’ve done wrong”***

We **have people** in the church
that really believe – **THAT** is their job

But see, that is not **building** the wall of testimony,
that’s **tearing down** whatever testimony may have existed

& there will **always people** – in every church
who specialize in **tearing down** whatever good may exist

But Nehemiah does none of that – He says
look at the trouble WE are in
Let US rebuild together
that WE may end this disgrace

The language of a **BUILDER** – Has **No** finger pointing,
No criticism, **No** dissention

Nehemiah is there – not only to **ReBuild** the Wall
he’s there to **ReBuild** the People

& so after months of agony in prayer
after **sharing his burden** with the King
after **traveling** to Jerusalem
after **inspecting** the details of the work

After **ALL THIS** – **the first thing** he says
to the **LEADERS** of Jerusalem is

“Hey guys, ***I am IN THIS WITH YOU,***
this is a ***OUR wall of testimony*** - that must be rebuilt”

WE together - are in **TROUBLE**
WE together - can **REBUILD**
& **WE** together - can **END** - **OUR** disgrace

Nehemiah came - to **BUILD UP**, not **TEAR DOWN**
& **EVERY SINGLE** one of us must make this choice

Have we been **CALLED** by God **to BUILD UP**
or have we been **CAPTURED** by the Enemy **to TEAR DOWN**

& **to know** which **BOAT** you're in – **all** you have **to do**
is **LOOK at your actions**

Are you *Building up* the **people** & the **work** of God
Or are you *Tearing down* the **people** & the **work** of God

Please – if you are part of **ANY ministry** of God – **PLEASE**

be One who **BUILDS UP** God's **People** & God's **Work**

DO NOT be one – that the Enemy uses
to **TEAR DOWN** God's **People** - & God's **Work**

Nehemiah says – **WE** – We're in this together
for **OUR GOOD** - & for **God's GLORY**

Now - There's **something else** here that is **SO COOL**

Nehemiah **DOES NOT** use External **MOTIVATION**
to **call the people** to the work of God

External Motivation in what we use on small children –
if you be good I'll give you a piece of candy –

We never see Nehemiah use - that type of Motivation

HE NEVER says – Hey, the first one done
gets an all expense paid trip to Disneyland (or Babylon)

He doesn't promise a prize or a material reward
he uses something much more powerful than that

He makes his case at a much deeper level

he says guys, Our testimony for God is in ruins

& We CAN - REBUILD our Testimony for God

& We CAN - NO LONGER be a Disgrace

But we MUST JOIN TOGETHER – to rebuild the Wall of Testimony
to the GLORY of GOD – AMEN ?

& next week we will see – that this work of God
was divided among 42 groups

FORTY TWO separate groups of people - ALL joined together
to rebuild the Wall around the City of God

42 groups – Each one determined to DO the work
that God had PUT before THEM

Knowing that they were working in HARMONY
with 41 other groups

All working together for a CAUSE
larger than ANY single group individually

& they each one - worried ONLY about doing the job
that THEY - had been given

& they each knew
that if they would focus on their own job

that God would ORCHESTRATE all the groups together
into One Giant SYMPHONY

GOD is the Conductor, and each group plays it's part
trusting the Conductor – to put it all together

DO YOU SEE IT ?

Alan Redpath quotes S.D. Gordon at this point
who was a Preacher & wrote 25 books in the early 1900's

S.D. Gordon;
***Cooperation increases efficiency in amazing proportions. Two
working together in perfect agreement have five-fold the
efficiency of the same two working separately . . . A united
church, would be an unconquerable church.***

Let me just ask you – **Why** do you think the **enemy inspires** people to **start division** in the church?

BECAUSE - A united church, would be an unconquerable church

THAT'S why the enemy constantly **stirs up division**
& that is why he's **stirring** it up **in this church**, right now

BECAUSE - A united church, would be an unconquerable church

Alan Repath follows up **S.D. Gordon's** quote
with **one of his own** on this same subject

Alan Redpath:

The greatest menace to revival is the Christian who refuses to work with other people because his views differ on certain matters of Biblical interpretation which are nonessential in relation to evangelism

A united church, would be an unconquerable church
A divided church, is already in the process of being conquered

& **THAT** is why – the enemy will **ALWAYS** be inspiring someone to **bring division** into the church

So – **Nehemiah** calls the people to a **Higher Calling**
to a **GOD-SIZED** purpose

& **THEN** – **HE** gives them his **personal testimony**
of the **HAND of GOD** upon his life

& then we'll see them **IMMEDIATELY Stand**
to **JOIN** the work of God

Neh 2:18 – NLT

18 Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king. They replied at once, “Yes, let’s rebuild the wall!” So they began the good work.

they **replied** at once ***“YES! let’s rebuild the wall”***
& ***So they began the good work.***

& next week we’ll see
the **AMAZING BEGINNING** of the work

an incredible **LAUNCH** of the work of God
with **God’s supernatural force** - **driving it** the entire way

But . . . that’s for **next week**

For today – we close with **Vs’s 19-20** of Ch 2
& notice please . . .

As soon as Nehemiah calls the people to **Rebuild**
Right Away strong **opposition** comes against them

Last Week our text ended with **OPPOSITION**
from **Sanballat & Tobiah** - back in **V.10**

Neh 2:10 – NLT

10 . . . they were very displeased that someone had come to help the people of Israel.

Opposition **LAST** week – Opposition **THIS** week

& we’ll **continue to see Opposition**
thru-out **the rebuilding** of the Wall of Testimony

For when the people of God say “Let us arise and BUILD” the enemies of God say “Let us arise and OPPOSE”

Same **THEN** – Same **NOW**

Now – for **V.19** I need to go back to the **ESV**

because I need to point out 2 specific **words**

NLT = thought-for-thought - - **ESV (NKJ)** = word-for-word

Neh 2:19 - ESV

19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” they asked.

He says the “**OPPOSERS**” were

“**Jeering**” at them - & “**Despising**” them

JEERED = To Mock, to repeatedly speak words of ridicule & scorn

DESPISED = To raise the head loftily, and look down the nose

& so the **trouble makers**

held their heads high in **false superiority** – with **noses** in the air

& they **mocked** the people of God with **ridicule** & **scorn** . . .

MAN – **I have BEEN to that church** - & it is **ugly**

But there's something else very **CRITICAL** in **V.19**

Look **at the list** of those **opposing** God's work

Back up in V.10 – there were only Two Names
now how many trouble makers do we count in V.19 (3) . . .

The opposition has grown, hasn't it?

& here's what we're going to see as we continue:

Sanballat – was the Governor of Samaria – to the NORTH

Tobiah – was an Ammonite Official – to the EAST

Geshem – (now they've added) – was a Ruler to the SOUTH

So now – the Two original trouble-makers
have drawn in a 3rd member

a member to the SOUTH (Geshem)

& we'll see in Neh CH 4 – that these 3
will add a FOURTH member to their opposition force

The Ashdodites (AKA the Philistines)
who controlled the land WEST of Jerusalem

& so – the people of God
WILL BE surrounded – by Opposition

& guys – those who oppose the work of God
will always work very hard

to convince others to join them
until they think they have the people of God surrounded

But here's what REALLY Blows my mind

God continually **ALLOWS** His people – to be **SURROUNDED**
by those who **Oppose** the work of God

Isn't it interesting – that **APPARENTLY** God **KNOWS** . . .

that the **Strongest Wall** of Testimony
is Built under **CONSTANT OPPOSITION**

Let me repeat that . . .

in a way that we **cannot understand** - God knows

that the **Strongest Wall** of Testimony,
is the one built under **CONSTANT OPPOSITION**

& so – those who **OPPOSE** the work of God
are **actually** a part of what God is **USING**
to **make** the Wall of Testimony **EVEN STRONGER?**

HOWEVER - there is still a **VERY HIGH RISK**

that the **Trouble-Makers** will **deceive** the people of God
into **joining** their RANKS

PLEASE BE CAREFUL

Just **one more thing**

Look at their **First THREAT** to Nehemiah (end of V.19)

Neh 2: 19 - NLT

***19 . . . “What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling
against the king? . . .”***

They're already **setting Nehemiah up**
to try to **get him in trouble** with the King

& it's funny – but that's the **same thing** people do around here
when they **OPPOSE** the work of God here

They always say something like;

*I'm going to tell Pastor Chuck on you,
then you're really going to get it !!!*

I **actually** had a guy recently **CALL** Chuck Smith **live** on the radio
to try to **damage me** & **damage** this church **LIVE** – on the air

Alright – **let's wrap up** here

Nehemiah had **travelled**

from **Susa** (Babylon) to **Jerusalem** (800 Mi)

he had **carefully inspected** the situation,
& **the ruins** of the wall

he had **carefully planned out** what would be needed
for the **Wall of testimony** to be rebuilt

he has **now CALLED the people** to the task
of **Rebuilding** the wall of Testimony for GOD . . .

& he is **certainly NOT** going to be **intimidated**
by these three **trouble makers**

& so he **addresses them** – **directly** & **sternly**

He draws a **Line in the Sand**

& he makes it clear **which side** – **each of them** were on

Neh 2:20 – from the ESV

20 Then I replied to them (the trouble makers), “The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem.”

Guys – God is **calling His people** to re-build a **Wall of Testimony**

& yes - **there will be** those - who **oppose** the work

But **even their opposition** will be **used** by God
to **strengthen** the Wall of Testimony

My **Sincere Concern** – is that those **who OPPOSE** the work of God
want very badly, to **enlist** some of you, into their **plan**

Please, don't be **deceived** into joining someone
who is **opposed** to the work of God

God WILL win, and those who **oppose His work**,
will be **left**, with **only** their victims

Please **don't be one**

Join the **work of God** in **YOUR Life**
Throw **your hat** in the ring - Be **ALL IN**

Be PART of building something **ETERNAL**

Everything about this life – is going to **Fade Away**
Don't live for **THIS LIFE**

Live for Eternity – **Be PART** of **BUILDING**
a **GOD-SIZED Testimony** in your life

Join the work of God– **You'll be glad** you **DID**

Let's Pray