

"The Dream Team's WORK"

Text: Nehemiah 3:1-20, 4:16-18

Subject: What it takes to accomplish God's work as a team.

Introduction:

1. In Ch. 1, Nehemiah is told by Hanani, that the Jews are in trouble in Jerusalem (V. 3):

- ◆ The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down.
- ◆ The gates have been destroyed by fire.
- ◆ The news causes Nehemiah to weep and pray.

2. In Ch. 2, Nehemiah goes to Jerusalem to inspect the wall:

- ◆ He asks the king for letters to travel safely.
- ◆ He asks for the timber to build.
- ◆ He rallies the troops to start rebuilding and declares:

"The God of heaven will help us succeed" (V. 20)

- ◆ One commentary states that Nehemiah 3 is "one of the least interesting chapters in all the bible".
- ◆ This chapter 3 reads very ordinary, but it reveals an extraordinary feat of organization, action plans and team-work.
- ◆ It reveals that it takes a team to accomplish God's work (remember – Jesus built a team).
- ◆ Everybody here is part of a team - at work, school, sports, family or church.

In The Context Of Chapter 3:

1. It was a day of reproach for God's people (1:3; 2:17; 5:9).
2. The great city of Jerusalem was no longer beautiful (Ps. 50:2).
3. The Jews were no longer powerful as before, but Nehemiah (just one man) would make a difference.
4. He led the Jews from great reproach (1:3) to great rejoicing (12:43).

In Fact – Nehemiah Didn't Win Alone

(He rallied a team to build walls and gates to protect the people)

There were . . .

- ◆ Priests (v. 1)
- ◆ Craftsmen (v. 8)
- ◆ Committed Women (v. 12)
- ◆ Rulers (v. 12-19)
- ◆ Outsiders (v. 2, 5, 7)
- ◆ People who did extra work (v. 11, 19, 21)
- ◆ And yet others who did nothing and refused to work (v.5)

"The Tekoites repaired, but others refused to help" (v.5)

I guess we all have 3 choices when it comes to work:

1. Some people are **constructionists** – and help to get the job done.
2. Some people are **destructionists** – and keep busy tearing things down.
3. Some people are **obstructionists** – and create problems for the people doing the work. (In which group are you?)

Notice What Nehemiah Noticed and Recorded:

1. There is a willingness to work outside of your comfort zone!

(V. 8) "Next was Uzziel son of Harhaiah, a **goldsmith** by trade, who also worked on the wall. Behind him was Hananiah, a manufacturer of **perfumes**."

Question: What's so beautiful about (V.8)?

Answer: Neither Uzziel or Hananiah were construction workers!

- ◆ One was a goldsmith; the other a manufacturer of perfumes.
- ◆ Neither was raised in construction or trained in building walls,
- ◆ But when Nehemiah asked them to work outside their comfort zone, they took a step of faith:

We See The . . .

...**What** - they worked beyond their normal skills and training.

...**When** - immediately they started to work.

...**Who** - shoulder to shoulder with all kinds of people from different backgrounds.

Fact: A good team member will work outside their comfort zone when needed for a season!

Fact: We all will have opportunities to say "yes" as God opens doors for us!

Question: What must we always remember (and tell ourselves) when invited to try something new or different for God?

Answer:

2. There is a willingness to work beyond other people's expectations!

(V. 12) "Shallum son of Hallohesh **and his daughters**, repaired the next section. He was the leader of the other half of the district of Jerusalem."

- ◆ Women being involved in manual labor was very unusual.
- ◆ At this time in history, females would not be involved in this type of labor...yet Shallum's daughters went beyond societal expectations and worked!
- ◆ They went beyond the bare minimum and what was expected.

(They could have said:)

- ◆ "It's not my job."
- ◆ "It's not my problem."
- ◆ "It's not my responsibility."

But Great Team Players Know:

- ◆ I am not here to give the bare minimum and just meet expectations,
- ◆ I am here to go above and beyond what is expected.

Question: In what ways can you go beyond what's expected of you?

Answer:

Question: In what ways have other people helped or supported you when you needed it?

Answer:

3. There is a willingness to work through **conflict** and disagreements!

(V. 5) "Next were the people from Tekoa, though their leaders **refused to work** with the construction supervisors."

- ◆ Nehemiah remembers this one area of conflict.
- ◆ Some people refused to work with others.

Question: Why is working together hard sometimes?

Answer: Because we can annoy each other!

Question: Why is this reality so important?

Answer: Because if you join a team and don't expect conflict, you will be easily disenfranchised and discouraged!

- ◆ It isn't a matter of **IF** – it is a matter of **WHEN!**
- ◆ But when we share a desired outcome (or goal) – we can get through anything!

When Navigating Conflict

1. Keep the space safe – and meet in person!
2. Name the issue – and be specific!
3. Identify shared goals – what both of you want!
4. Separate facts from observation and interpretation:
 - ◆ Observation - "You walked by me a didn't say "Hi".
 - ◆ Interpretation – "You can't stand me for some reason."
 - ◆ Story – You form a narrative or conclusion that could be totally false.
5. Use "I" statements and avoid "You" statements:
 - ◆ And never yell or point your finger at anyone.
6. Agree to take a break and come back – don't quit.
7. Guard your heart – so you won't stew in your own juice (and become toxic)!

And Never, Ever Forget:

- ◆ Conflict isn't the enemy – **avoiding** it or handling it in an **ungodly way** is!
- ◆ Conflict can be a **true gift** in **moving forward!**

Question: What are some good ways (and poor ways) to handle conflict?

Answer:

4. There is a willingness to work with passion!

(V. 20) "Next to him was Baruch, son of Zabbai, who **zealously repaired** an additional section from the angle to the door of the house of Eliashib the high priest."

◆ Nehemiah remembers this about Baruch - his zeal!

1. Passion is noticeable!

◆ It's obvious when someone loves what they do.

2. Passion doesn't always look the same!

◆ Different personalities express passion differently.

3. Passion is contagious!

◆ It starts with your attitude and perspective.

4. Passion motivates and inspires those around you!

◆ It has a positive affect on people's feelings and mind-set.

Question: What are some obvious signs that people love what they do?

Answer:

Question: What are some obvious signs that people care less about what they do?

Answer:

Question: What are the rewards of diligence and excellence in our work and responsibilities?

Answer:

5. There is a willingness to work for each other!

(4:16-18) "But from then on, only half my men worked while the other half stood guard with spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. The leaders stationed themselves **behind the people** of Judah who were building the wall. The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm."

- ◆ Threats from enemies meant they needed to change their strategy.
- ◆ Half worked while half stood guard – took turns.

"Leaders stationed themselves behind the people" (means):

1. They trusted each other (and),
2. They had each other's back.

Fact: Great teams have each other's back!

Fact: No trust means no team!

- ◆ Can people trust you to do your job?
- ◆ Can people trust you to support their work?
- ◆ Can people trust you to speak well of them?
- ◆ Can people trust you to be honest with them?
- ◆ Can people trust you when the chips are down?

Question: What are some of the ways that you can build trust with someone?

Answer:

Question: How is trust torn down in people's relationships?

Answer:

6. There is a willingness to work for the right reasons!

(3:1) "Then Eliashib the **high priest** and the other priests started to rebuild at the **Sheep Gate**. They dedicated it and set up its doors, building the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and the Tower of Hananel."

Question: Why start at the Sheep Gate and the high priest?

Answer: Because the Sheep Gate was where sheep were brought in to sacrifice for the sins of the people.

In Other Words:

- ◆ Nehemiah started to build at the N.E. corner of the wall to remind his team and us that:
- 1. The sacrificial system tells us that the work we do must always flow from the work Christ did.
- 2. The priests dedicated their work to God – for His glory alone.
- 3. The priests were clearly saying to God, that all of our gifts are **from you** and **for you** for the good of our city.
- 4. As the blood from the offered sheep would atone for Israel's sin, so 4-500 years later, Christ's blood would atone for our sin, the true and better sheep, the Lamb of God.

In Other Words:

(All of our work now, is based on God's work!)

- ◆ We don't work to prove anything, earn anything, protect anything, justify anything or demand anything!
- ◆ We work out of gratitude for what Christ has done for us!!

Conclusion – "Chariots of Fire" Movie

1. It's about 2 Olympic runners named Harold Abram (an English sprinter) and Eric Liddle (a Scottish long-distance runner).
2. They both won the gold medal that year.
3. Eric Liddle was a devout Christian and became a missionary to China where he died from a brain tumor at 43.
4. Harold Abram was a non-believer as far as we know.
5. A journalist asked both runners as they were preparing for the Olympics – **Why do you run?**
6. They gave 2 very different answers:
 - ◆ Harold Abram (the sprinter) said, "I run because, when that gun goes off to start the race, I have 10 seconds to prove myself and justify my existence on earth. A ten second race to earn something and prove my value." That's working for your own glory, and under a lot of pressure.
 - ◆ The journalist asked Eric Liddle the same question and he said, "I run because God made me fast, and when I run, I feel His pleasure."

That's the secret to doing our work well – on the team you serve on.

Why do I do what I do as a minister? Is it because I have 30 minutes to justify myself, or make you laugh, or impress you somehow? Or is it because God made me a preacher, and when I preach, I feel His pleasure?

Question: Why do you serve? And give? And love? And help? And support? And pitch in? And build to reach your city?

Answer: It's not for your glory or my glory – it's to feel God's pleasure from our hearts of gratitude!

Question: What are some good reasons to work real hard for God?

Answer:

Question: What are some unhealthy reasons to work real hard for God?

Answer:

Nuf Sed!
Bill Kirk