

# START WHERE WE ARE

*“Beyond them, Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs in front of their house; and next to them, Azariah son of Maaseiah.... made repairs beside his house.” —NEHEMIAH 3:23*

After the Babylonian invasion of Judah in 586 B.C., the city of Jerusalem, God’s dwelling place, is left in ruins for 140 years. This is symbolic of the broken world we live in today, and Nehemiah’s rebuilding of the city walls is representative of the re-equipping of the church of Jesus Christ.

Nehemiah gathers a great band of people from many walks of life to rebuild the city walls. The gates were the obvious points to identify and reinforce as they were the strategic points of entry into the city. But what happened between the gates? Here, something important occurs several times that teaches us the starting point of rebuilding our own lives. Nehemiah 3:10 says, “Adjoining this, Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house.” There are a number of verses throughout Chapter 3 that specifically name the person and the work they are doing in the vicinity of their homes.

The significance, relating to our lives, is that they began to build in the place they were located. Practically, that would give them a greater interest because if the walls were weak, it would likely be an access point for the enemy, but God’s purpose for us spiritually is that we begin to rebuild where we are.

Serving God isn’t about finding out where we’re supposed to go. That will eventually come, but serving God is initially about: Why has He put

me here? Why do I live where I live? Why has He put me in this college, this office, this community, this church? Have we related where we are to God, and asked Him: Why am I here? Are there connections God wants me to make, perhaps with neighbours, co-workers, fellow students? We don't have to get on a bus, a plane or even in our car to serve God. It starts right where we are.

Jesus said to His disciples, "You will be my witnesses in Jerusalem, Judea, Samaria and the ends of the earth." Jerusalem was the scene of their most awful failure. People knew them, and they'd been exposed as weak and cowardly men. But it was to Jerusalem Jesus sent them first. Our best witness for Christ is where we are known, where we've been defeated and flat on our backs, because it is then people will see the transformation Christ has made in our lives.

These workers, starting in the location of their own homes, rebuilt the wall and moved on to help in other areas. If I'm not a good witness for Christ where I am, then I'm unlikely to be a good witness for Him elsewhere.

***PRAYER: Dear Lord, grant me the courage to go back to my places of failure. I want everyone to know the difference You make in our lives. Thank You, Lord.***

***TO REFLECT UPON: Do I have a 'Jerusalem' in my life I need to go back to?***