

“BEGINNINGS”
(A BURDENED SERVANT)

Nehemiah 1:1-11
September 24, 2017

INTRODUCTION: One thing is notable in Biblical History, God has always had people who cared and responded to His purpose.

Nehemiah 1 begins with a question from an influential Jew to his brother concerning the condition of his hometown. As we study together the reaction of Nehemiah to hometown news, one easily sees the great concern of his heart.

EXAMPLES:

- Abraham cared and delivered Lot from Jordan.
- Moses cared and delivered the Israelites from Egypt.
- Esther cared and risked her life to save her nation from genocide.
- Paul cared and took the Gospel to the Roman Empire.
- Jesus cared and died on the cross for a lost world.

I am convinced that Nehemiah was aware of the condition of Jerusalem before he asked his brother for the report. However, in God's timing, Nehemiah was greatly moved by the "*old news*." Maybe God had prepared him to hear the "*old news*" in a new way. Babylonians had destroyed the walls of Jerusalem in 587 B.C., 142 years before this report.

I thank God that "*old news*" still has the potential of piercing the heart.

EXAMPLE:

April 1981, I parked in the west parking lot of LLBC in Wilmington, NC. I observed the neighborhood and its needs and then cried out to God to send them his pastor. I recommended a friend, God called me.

God laid a city in Nehemiah's heart. In the book of Nehemiah, we see the unfolding of a man's commitment to obey God.

A renowned historian once said, "*No one is fit to lead his followers unless he holds their cares and will begin to be his prime responsibility, his duty, his privilege.*"

Nehemiah was a man that was more concerned with the people than the project.

It was not about how many lived there, but who lived there.

I. CONFRONTED WITH THE PROBLEM 3

A. Survival Mode 3

“who survived” – distress and reproach;
“the walls of Jerusalem is also broken down and gates the are burned.”

- No Protection
- No Leadership

Proverbs 25:28

**“Whoever has no rule over his own spirit
Is like a city broken down, without walls.”**

B. Stripped Of Honor. Shameful 3

“distress and reproach” – great affliction;
to strip of honor; God’s city (Jerusalem) had
become a city of shame and reproach. It is
the city where His name dwelt.

With walls down they had become open
game to every surrounding nation; no longer
strong and vibrant. They were now on the
defense and not the offense. They were not
aggressive, but just holding on.

C. Song Had Died 3

“gates are burned” – The gates were also a symbol of praise. They had lost their song in Babylon. It was in the temple of Jerusalem that the Presence of God dwelt, however, because of sin, God left the temple. Nehemiah now refers to God (Jehovah) as the Lord God of Heaven in verses 4-5. Ichabod was written over the city; the Lord had departed and returned to Heaven.

We should pray, *“Lord please don’t take your hand off my life; my church.”*

Psalms 137:1-6

**“By the rivers of Babylon,
There we sat down, yea, we wept
When we remembered Zion.
We hung our harps
Upon the willows in the midst of it.
For there those who carried us away
captive asked of us a song,
And those who plundered us requested
mirth,
Saying, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!"
How shall we sing the Lord's song
In a foreign land?
If I forget you, O Jerusalem,
Let my right hand forget its skill!
If I do not remember you,**

**Let my tongue cling to the roof of my
mouth —
If I do not exalt Jerusalem
Above my chief joy.”**

II. CONSUMED BY A PASSION 4

Our chief passion should be for the **Glory of God**.

It is apparent that the report from his brother, literally overcame him. It is of truth that no one is moved to build until they see the ruin.

2 Peter 1:9

“For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins.”

In the context of **Fruitful Growth in the Faith**.

A. It Caused Him To Be Broken

“sat down” – evaluation

Luke 14:28

“For which of you, intending to build a tower, does not sit down first and count the cost, whether he has enough to finish it.”

How many come to the conclusion that they cannot make a difference, therefore, the vision never becomes a reality?

- If not me, then who?
- If not now, then when?

Nehemiah – *“I believe with all my heart that it is an attainable goal.”*

“wept” –

Psalms 126:5

**“Those who sow in tears
Shall reap in joy.”**

God broke Nehemiah’s heart for what broke His.

We are not ready to **work** until after we have **wept**.

“mourned for many days” – not a light emotional outburst.

This affects for TIME, TALENTS,
TREASURE.

You no longer simply throw a little money
in that DIRECTION. You give yourself to
your MISSION.

C. It Caused Him To Be Burdened

“fast” – he was desperate to see God move.
He would miss meals to meet God.

“he prayed” – according to Nehemiah 1:1
and 2:1 he prayed for 4 months.

III. COMMITTED IN HIS PETITION 5-11

J. Edgar Hoover said, *“the force of prayer is
greater than any possible combination of man
controlled powers, because prayer is man’s
greatest means of tapping the infinite resources
of God.”*

As Nehemiah petitioned God: 2 things
happened.

1. The Burden From God Grew Greater.

2. The Business For God Grew Clearer.

A. Adoration 5

A-ADORE

C-CONFESS

T-THANK

S-SUPPLICATE

“Lord God of Heaven, O great and awesome God...”

He recognizes God’s superiority and His sovereignty. God is over all, is in-charge of all.

The greater God became to Nehemiah, the smaller his problem became.

B. Confession 6-7

1 John 1:9

“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”

C. Recollection 8-9

“Remember Your Word” – remember it is God’s promises we cling to in our time of **NEED**. God’s promises are based on His word. The Lord made a covenant with His people, promising to bless them richly if they obeyed His word, but warning to punish them if they disobeyed.

D. Supplication 10-11

I needed to hear verse 10! At times I take too much responsibility for some of you; I even feel at times that I can change you!

Charles H. Spurgeon said, *“I cannot change a life anymore than I can create a Star.”*

In verses 10-11 Nehemiah prays to be successful in his God called campaign.

He prays for success and influence.

“in the sight of this man”- King Artaxerxes

Fear was present but **faith** still won the day. Fear did not paralyze him; it was never intended to.

“For I was the king’s cymbal bearer.”

I am just a pastor! But, first and foremost,
I am **“Your Servant.”**

This is the game changer!

Nehemiah faced what appeared to be an impossible task, yet God gave him his heart’s desire. God, give us an unflinching will as we set about the task you would have us do.