



Chosen & Struggling PT. VI | Nehemiah | Mark Allen | 02.08.26

Opening Prayer

Opening Prayer: Begin by thanking God for His Word and asking the Holy Spirit to guide your discussion.

Icebreaker (10 minutes)

Icebreaker Question: Share about a time when you had to rebuild something physical (a relationship, a project, etc.). What was the hardest part? What did you learn?

Sermon Overview (5 minutes)

This message focuses on Nehemiah's mission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem, which symbolized both physical protection and spiritual strength. The sermon explores how we can rebuild "broken walls" in our own lives—whether in marriage, personal faith, or spiritual disciplines—through God's power and guidance.

Key Context: Chronologically, Esther's story precedes Nehemiah. Queen Esther's favor with the king paved the way for Nehemiah to receive permission to rebuild Jerusalem's walls, showing how God uses seemingly insignificant people for significant purposes.

Discussion Questions:

Part 1: Pre-Construction - Preparing to Rebuild (20 minutes)

Read Nehemiah 1:3-11

1. **Concern:** Nehemiah wept, mourned, and fasted for days when he heard about Jerusalem's condition. When was the last time you felt deeply concerned about a spiritual area in your life? What prompted that concern?
2. **Confession:** Nehemiah confessed not just his sins, but the sins of his people (even though he wasn't directly responsible). Why is it important to take ownership in rebuilding broken areas, even when we're not entirely at fault?
3. **Commitment & Courage:** Nehemiah was just a cupbearer—seemingly insignificant. How does his story encourage you when you feel too small or insignificant to make a difference?
4. **Personal Reflection:** Which of the four pre-construction elements (concern, confession, commitment, courage) is hardest for you? Why?

Part 2: The Ten Gates - Areas for Reconstruction (25 minutes)

Read Nehemiah 3:1-32 (overview)

Pastor Mark identified ten gates that needed rebuilding, each representing a spiritual discipline or principle:

1. **Sheep Gate** - The Cross/Sacrifice
2. **Fish Gate** - Witnessing/Sharing Faith
3. **Old Gate** - Truth (unchanging Word of God)
4. **Valley Gate** - Humility
5. **Dung Gate** - Elimination/Removing unhealthy things
6. **Fountain Gate** - Holy Spirit (living water)
7. **Water Gate** - Word of God (never broken down)
8. **Horse Gate** - Spiritual Warfare/Battle readiness
9. **East Gate** - Hope (Christ's return)
10. **Inspection Gate** - Self-examination

Discussion Questions:

5. Which "gate" (spiritual area) in your life feels most broken down right now? Why?
6. The Dung Gate represents removing unhealthy things from our lives. What "trash" might God be calling you to eliminate? (This can be habits, relationships, entertainment, attitudes, etc.)

7. The Water Gate was the only gate that never fell. What does this tell us about the permanence and importance of God's Word in our lives?
8. The Inspection Gate reminds us to regularly examine our spiritual condition. How often do you honestly assess where you are spiritually? What would help you do this more consistently?

Part 3: Application - Rebuilding in Real Life (20 minutes)

Read Nehemiah 6:15-16

9. **For Married Couples:** Pastor Mark emphasized that rebuilding requires both people to be willing to work AND involved in the process. If you're married, which is harder—being willing or staying involved? How can you support each other in rebuilding?
10. **For Everyone:** Nehemiah faced opposition from Sanballat and Tobiah (the "ites"). What opposition or discouragement do you face when trying to make spiritual progress? How can this group support you?
11. **The 52-Day Miracle:** The walls were rebuilt in just 52 days—a record time. What does this teach us about what God can do when we're obedient and committed?

Key Takeaways

- ✓ **You are not insignificant.** God uses ordinary people (cupbearers, queens, exiles) to accomplish extraordinary things.
- ✓ **Rebuilding starts with the Cross.** The Sheep Gate was first—we can't rebuild without returning to the foundation of Christ's sacrifice.
- ✓ **Both willingness and involvement are required.** You must be willing to do the work AND actively participate in the process.
- ✓ **Spiritual warfare is real.** Keep one hand on the trowel (building) and one on the sword (God's Word) at all times.
- ✓ **Regular inspection is necessary.** We must continually examine our spiritual walls to prevent breakdown.

Practical Applications

This Week's Challenge:

Choose ONE gate to focus on rebuilding this week:

- **Sheep Gate:** Spend time at the foot of the cross in prayer, thanking Jesus for His sacrifice
- **Fish Gate:** Share your faith with at least one person this week
- **Old Gate:** Memorize one verse about God's unchanging truth
- **Valley Gate:** Practice humility by serving someone without recognition
- **Dung Gate:** Identify and remove one unhealthy thing from your life
- **Fountain Gate:** Invite the Holy Spirit to fill you fresh each morning
- **Water Gate:** Commit to reading God's Word daily for 7 days
- **Horse Gate:** Pray specifically against spiritual attacks on your family
- **East Gate:** Write down three reasons you have hope in Christ's return
- **Inspection Gate:** Do a thorough spiritual self-examination using Scripture

Accountability: Share with the group which gate you're focusing on and ask someone to check in with you this week.

Prayer Time: (10 minutes)

Group Prayer Focus:

- Pray for broken walls in marriages and families represented in your group
- Pray for courage to rebuild areas that have been torn down
- Pray for protection against spiritual warfare as people commit to rebuilding
- Pray for the Holy Spirit's power to accomplish what seems impossible

Prayer Method: Have each person share one specific "gate" they need rebuilt, then have the person on their right pray specifically for that area.

Closing

Memory Verse for the Week: "So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of the month Elul in fifty-two days." - Nehemiah 6:15

Reminder: Rebuilding takes time, but with God's help, you can accomplish what seems impossible. Don't try to rebuild all ten gates at once—focus on one area where God is speaking to you most clearly.

For Group Leaders

Materials Needed:

- Bibles for all participants
- Paper and pens for personal reflection
- Optional: Print out the list of ten gates for each participant

Tips:

- Be sensitive to those dealing with marriage struggles—this sermon touches on painful areas
- Encourage honesty but maintain confidentiality
- Don't rush through the gate discussion—this is where real ministry happens
- Be prepared to pray one-on-one with anyone who needs additional support