

October 20 & 21, 2018



Person

Promise

Problem

The minor problem: rebuilding the walls

The major problem: restoring the people

### Before they laid the first stone

#### 1. The city of Jerusalem was in great trouble.

Nehemiah 1:1 *The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah:*

*In the month of Kislev (late fall) in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.*

*3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble . . .*

#### 2. They were over 800 miles away.

*Ezra 7:9 He (Ezra) had begun his journey from Babylon on the first day of the first month, and he arrived in Jerusalem on the first day of the fifth month, for the gracious hand of his God was on him.*

#### 3. There was an order to stop construction.

*Ezra 4:17 Greetings.*

*18 The letter you sent us has been read and translated in my presence. 19 I issued an order and a search was made, and it was found that this city has a long history of revolt against kings and has been a place of rebellion and sedition. 20 Jerusalem has had powerful kings ruling over the whole of Trans-Euphrates, and taxes, tribute and duty were paid to them. 21 Now issue an order to these men to stop work, so that this city will not be rebuilt until I so order. 22 Be careful not to neglect this matter. Why let this threat grow, to the detriment of the royal interests?*

#### 4. Nehemiah was not allowed to petition the king.

*Nehemiah 2:2 . . . I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"*

*4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?"*

#### 5. They needed permission.

*Nehemiah 2:7 I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah?"*

#### 6. They need provisions.

*Nehemiah 2:8 . . . And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?"*

## 7. They needed protection.

Nehemiah 2:8 . . . *And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests. 9 So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.*

## 8. Opposition was waiting for them.

Nehemiah 2:10 *When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.*

## 9. The majority had no interest in the project.

## 10. They needed a plan.

### You see the trouble.

#### 1. Lurking adversity

Nehemiah 2:10 *When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.*

#### 2. Identifying with the need

Nehemiah 2:11 *I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days 12 I set out during the night with a few men. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem . . .*

## 3. Transitioning from I to us

Nehemiah 2:17 *Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace."*

Nehemiah 2:18 . . . *They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.*

## 4. Trusting God will give us success.

Nehemiah 2:20 *I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."*

### Discussion Questions

#### Icebreaker Question:

1. When you are facing a problem, do you tend to fix it, avoid it, stew about it, talk to others or \_\_\_\_\_?

#### Digging Deeper:

1. Read Romans 8:5 together. Can you give an example of how you allowed the Holy Spirit to direct you this week?
2. Describe the 2 problems Nehemiah faced? What made restoring the people the major problem? Does this same major problem exist today? Share why or why not you feel this way.
3. Ten challenges were identified to rebuilding the walls. List as many as you can. Which challenge(s) would have been the most difficult for you?

4. Does a greater understanding of a problem or proximity to a problem influence you to want to help? If so, why is that? Is there a current problem or crisis that has moved you to help?
5. Once Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, what kind of trouble did he discover? Who or what did it come from?
6. Have you ever experienced any outward opposition to your Christian faith? If so, please share.
7. Nehemiah said in 2:18, "I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me..." Have you ever experienced the gracious hand of God upon you? Please share an example.

Living it Out:

1. This week how can you choose to trust God more than your feelings, doubts or voices of opposition? Be prepared to share with your group. Continue to pray about where God maybe calling you to have a greater influence.