

The Wall - week 2
Nehemiah 2:17-18
Leaders needed

Leadership is a term that is constantly used today. There are countless books, blogs, articles, and podcasts trying to promote becoming a better leader. In fact, when you search for leadership books on Amazon, there are over 60,000 options to choose from. You can learn leadership from business gurus to societal influencers. You can easily gain insights from former military leaders to athletes. And wisdom from pastors to philanthropists.

The reason for all the focus on leadership is because there is always a need for people to take charge to accomplish a task. It is an area where people can use their influence and expertise to impact the people, culture, and world around them.

Not only is it needed in the world around us, but it is needed in the church today, and that is not solely the responsibility of the pastor, deacons, small group teachers. That is the responsibility for anyone that God has called and given a purpose to influence the culture and world around them.

We need men and women who are full of conviction and courage to lead the charge in engaging the culture for Christ.

Nehemiah was a great leader, and his story will give us great principles on how we can lead well.

1. Developing a Useful Plan (17) - You see the trouble...Come let us build the wall

Often times we try and lead in far too general of circumstances. We think we want to change the culture, so we do not come up with a plan and therefore do not make a difference at all.

There were a lot of things wrong in Jerusalem and Judah, but Nehemiah understood that God had called him to rebuild the wall. So in doing that Nehemiah formed a plan that would allow him to accomplish what God had called.

Plans are incredibly useful, and without them the chance of actually accomplishing the desired goal becomes nearly impossible. Aren't you glad that the builder of your house had a set of plans to ensure it was successfully and safely finished?

We can see how this happens when looking at chapters 2 and 3.

- Received materials from the king (2:7-9)

Nehemiah used his influence and the people around him to gather the needed tools and materials to complete the wall. Not only did he ask the king to let him go rebuild the wall in his hometown, but he asked the king to fund the project. That was a bold question! But Nehemiah figured out that he needed supplies that he did not have direct access too, so he realized that God had put him in the position to get what he needed.

What things or traits do you need to gain or use so that you will be better equipped for what God is calling you to? What things in your life have you experienced that gives you experience or empathy toward people you can influence? Who has God put in your life that can help you become equipped?

- Went around the demolished wall by himself. (2:12-16)

He knew that he had to assess the damage and structure of the wall instead of taking someone else's word for it. He went by night to make sure that he was not influenced by anyone else, but was able to see for himself what needed to be done.

We live in a time when we are bombarded with information, and people make a lot of money and gain a lot of power by telling us what we should do, how we should act, what is wrong with everyone and everything. But if we are going to influence and impact culture, we need to begin to assess what is going on ourselves.

This means see the areas that are broken. See where Christ is already at work so we can join in. Find people who need to see grace and peace, and offer it. This cannot happen if we are listening to everyone else's assessment and not surveying the wall ourselves.

- Formulated a plan to fix the wall. (Ch 2:17-18)

Nehemiah understood the plan and sectioned off the wall and how it could be divided to accomplish the goal. This takes prioritizing and understanding how many people were needed and how long it would take. He had already given King Artaxerxes a timeframe that he needed to keep to return to the king's court. This took excellent and precise planning.

Have you ever been part of a group project where everyone was trying to work on their own project with no direction. At best you hope that everyone ends up in a close enough place that you can piece it together in the end. On the other hand, if you have a plan, then it allows you to end up at the same place and accomplish everything that needs to happen. That is what Nehemiah is doing.

This means that we need to come up with a plan on how we can impact the culture. We need to understand how we can have people come alongside us, and have a plan in place to enlist them into the work. We need to think through all the different impacts of the impact you can make on the culture, and the plan on how to complete what God is equipping you to do.

- Recruited help to complete the plan. (Ch 3)

You are not supposed to live out your faith alone.

Nehemiah recruited all these different tribes and put them to work to accomplish their task. Chapter three is full of names and families and the section of wall that they were responsible for building. This was all in conglomeration of Nehemiah's plan.

You are much more effective when you have others to join in the work with you. Can you imagine Nehemiah trying to build the wall by himself? Or if he was trying to manage every detail. As he formulated the plan, he allowed the different families to build according to the task they were given.

Not only did Nehemiah develop a plan, but he also prioritized the vision.

2. Prioritizing the Vision (18) Used his personal story

Nehemiah rallied the people around him by sharing with them everything that God had done to get him to that point. He talked about the hand of God being upon him. He emphasized that he knew what was going on and how God was leading him to fix it. He showed them that the king allowed him to come and how the king had found favor with God.

It may seem like this is the last place a person would need to cast vision. The people knew that their wall was down. They knew all the struggles they had experienced. But it took Nehemiah coming and laying out not only why the wall needed to be rebuilt, but how it could be accomplished. This was all him casting the vision for the work that needed to be done.

We also love a story. Many of us were willing to watch events during the olympics and cheer for people we had barely heard of because we took the time to hear the story of the athlete. We were drawn to the commitment they had made to become an olympian for their sport. We were energized because of them overcoming adversity. The olympics show that we quickly become invested because of the story.

When prioritizing the vision, using the story that God has given you to impact the world around someone else is a key opportunity to lead well.

If people know why they are signing up to serve and what the impact will be there will be a greater chance of buy-in for the work that is to be done.

When God calls you to do something, to lead out in an area to serve, that story of how God has brought you into that area of leadership is a powerful one to reinforce the vision to others.

A lot of the times they see the change that needs to happen, but have no clue on how to go about creating that change. Or maybe they are so beaten up by the world around them that they have just given up.

When you come with the vision that comes from God, people can be filled with hope and get behind the task and call that you are bringing them to.

When you are leading, there is a great opportunity to also create a community while you are accomplishing what God has called to you.

3. Creating Community (18) Use of us and we

Nehemiah established community from the beginning. He empathized with the people. He considered himself one of them in their struggles. He was quick to rally around the people so they would be willing to follow him because he cared.

People are willing to follow someone much quicker and easier if they see you as someone who is compassionate and caring about the needs of those they are leading.

The Bible talks a lot about community. From the beginning we see the people of God be drawn to community by the fact they are set apart by God himself. Their identity, their purpose is that they were/are God's chosen people. That is why they follow Moses in the wilderness. They follow Joshua to war. They were united under David. This draw of community is not just a cultural phenomenon. It is the plan and function of our creator that we would be committed to living in and finding community.

The New Testament church is founded on community that they had all things in common as they served and created disciples together. That is the same call that we have as a church today. And that is the same call that we have as leaders today. To get other people involved in the mission of God for the kingdom of God.

There are a lot of people who do not know who to follow, and do not have the community around them to feel like they can make a change. If, as leaders, we build the community, we will get the same response that Nehemiah did. Notice in Vs. 18, the people say “Let us rise and build, and they strengthened their hands.”

They were not only willing to be part of the community, they were willing to serve.

We need people invested in the mission of God. We need people who desire to serve and lead out. We need people who are willing to step out of the comfort zone and say yes to the mission of God while leading other to follow God in a new way. Living in community needs to be more than just a saying, but instead a way of life to make the impact God has called us to.

As you lead, use us and we much more frequently than me and you. Bring others into the service with you, let them catch the vision so then you can accomplish more than you could on your own.

Because Nehemiah lead well, and recruited others to serve with him, the wall was completed in 52 days.

What is God calling you to where you can make an impact by leading that you could not accomplish on your own? What parts of your life have you taken off, and you are waiting on someone like Nehemiah to come along and recruit you? Be willing and quick to listen to the stories of what God is doing, then join in the work, or better yet, lead out in the work.

Our culture may be broken, but Christ is calling you and me to change it. So step up and lead.