

XV. Nehemiah in Biblical Perspective  
*The Memoirs of Nehemiah - Arise and Build*  
“One More Time Around the Wall”  
Nehemiah 2:9-20  
Dr. Harry Reeder  
December 11, 2011 – Morning Sermon

This is our last study in the book of Nehemiah. Look with me in Nehemiah 2 for this is the Word of God. It's the truth. Nehemiah 2:9-20 says [9] *Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. (Nehemiah is coming to Jerusalem.) Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. [10] But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel. [11] So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. [12] Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with me but the one on which I rode. [13] I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. [14] Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass. [15] Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. [16] And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work. [17] Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." [18] And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. [19] But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" [20] Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem."*

The grass withers, the flower fades, God's Word abides forever and by His grace and mercy may His Word be preached for you.

Almost a year ago the Lord laid upon my heart the book of Nehemiah for this fall because the Lord had laid upon my heart a deep concern concerning the necessity of revival based upon what I see is the necessity of a Gospel awakening in our culture. I want to confess to you that I am praying with all of my heart that we will not leave the theme of Nehemiah and that we will not just pack away another expositional series in the book of the Bible having seen Christ and it's lessons. I am praying that its very burden of revival that was pointing to a much bigger revival. Nehemiah comes to the city of Jerusalem and there's a revival but the bigger revival it was ultimately pointing to was when Christ would come to Jerusalem and thousands would come to Christ and the Gospel would move and turn the whole world upside down.

The reason this is so much upon my heart is that what was begun in Nehemiah that came to a glorious fulfillment in Christ that is being done throughout the ages until Christ comes again, is that we're in a desperate need of revival in the church. Let me explain again why. The foundations in my culture are crumbling all around us and the great need is a Gospel awakening where men and women come to Christ for the fullness of salvation and a transformed life that the Gospel brings. We are in need of a great Gospel awakening. The answer in this culture is not going to come from politics although I pray that this Gospel awakening will invade the world of politics even as it has through some of you. The answer will not come in the entertainment industry although I pray that a Gospel awakening will invade that industry. The answer will not come from an increased ability to have economic well being. The answer is not coming from the business world although I pray the glorious testimony of Christ centered thinking would enter our business world.

The answer is a Gospel awakening and God's only chosen instrument to turn the world upside down with the Gospel is His church. I believe the problem is the church cannot turn the world upside down because we're upside down. I think we've lost our way. We have become fascinated with the trendy. We're more focused on in many cases church growth, rock style personality preachers and celebrity-ism. That Christ centered, Gospel drive, Spirit filled testimony of a vibrant church is not there. In its place is ministry confusion, spiritual lethargy, biblical illiterate and reaching for almost anything like the personality, the program or something about the church. We are in desperate need of a heaven sent revival that the world could be reached with the Gospel, men, women, boys and girls saved, cultures, people and cities turned and transformed but it will not happen until revival comes to the church.

We will not have revival as long as we keep seeking revival. I don't think I could go to a church today that wouldn't say 'yes' to wanting a revival. So why hasn't God given it? I don't know the providence of God or the sovereign decrees of God but I don't think God ever sends a revival as long as we're looking for revival for revival sake. A man sent revival is totally consumed with the experience of revival, that temporary emotional experience which praise the Lord that when He visits people He gets a hold of mind, heart, will and emotions. Some extraordinary things happen in our thinking, our feeling, our passions and everything else but that's not the objective of revival. In other words, I don't think we're going to have revival as long as we're seeking revival for revival sake.

We need to seek revival for God's sake – a heaven sent revival that doesn't have a focus on a momentary experience but a world shaking effect. We need a heaven sent revival that is Christ centered, Gospel saturated, Spirit filled, sinner saving, sin killing, life changing and God glorifying. That kind of revival is desperately needed and it's not an end. It's a means to an end. That end would be the awakening movement of the Gospel. It is that which Nehemiah gives us a little glimpse of. It is that which I pray we don't leave but keep pursuing even when we're finished with this text.

Today I want to come back to this text to solidify some things and then point us to how we don't leave the theme when we've left the text. I just want to remind you of some things we've gone over that are very crucial. In Nehemiah 1 you see these two questions, two answers and these two responses. Nehemiah who is the son of Hacaliah and cup bearer to the king it is seventy plus years after the decree where the Jews could

return to Jerusalem. So the people are back in Jerusalem and Nehemiah is in the citadel of Susa in Medo-Persia. He wants to know what's happening back in the city of God in Jerusalem so he asks two questions of his brother Hanani.

Question number one is how are the people of God? Question number two is how is the city of God? Hanani gives him two honest answers upon his return. Answer number one is the people are in distress, sin, shame and reproach. Answer number two is the city walls are down and the gates are burned. Nehemiah realizes the gates are down because the people are down and broken. God has fulfilled His Word that He has brought the discipline of a judging hand by conquering nations and so even the city has become a by-word to show His people that they must rest in Him and then follow Him with all of their heart and not abandon them. The walls are broken because the people are broken.

When Nehemiah hears these answers he has two responses. The first response is he weeps and he mourns that the city of God that bears the name of God has become a by-word. People and nations just walk in and out of it. Its walls are breached and its people have joined the throng of apostasy and rebellion against God Himself. They have not learned the lessons of the disciplines of the exile of Babylon. Nehemiah weeps and mourns. I'm not asking you if you're weeping and mourning because of the condition of this country but I want to ask a more fundamental question. Will you weep and mourn over the condition of His church in this country?

When I was kid growing up my father and mother constantly gave to me a high view of the church and a high view of pastors. It breaks my heart. I weep and I mourn literally and absolutely not figuratively when I see the condition, the confusion, and the chaos of the church today in its marginalization and its reaching for answers everywhere other than Christ Himself and the glorious power of the Gospel. The people of God are reaching for answers everywhere other than there. Then there is the ministry itself. Forget when I was kid and how my father and mother challenged me to look at pastors but just think of how pastors used to conduct themselves and how they were viewed by our culture. Today we're the butt of jokes, the father of the editorial cartoons and basically we have ourselves to blame as we have brought reproach upon the office of the ministry of the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

I don't mean this lightly because I was a distance away from this congregation pastoring a church that you helped me plant years ago and I had the privilege to have some mentors and not the least of which was the founding pastor of this church. One of the things I was grateful for by him and not only others but I didn't wake up in the morning wondering what expose in the paper I was going to read about some secret life that they had. Because of the Gospel of Christ and their love of Christ and the church and I as a younger pastor at that time could be encouraged that they were upholding the testimony of Christ with humility yet with integrity. We desperately need that in the leadership today but do we weep and mourn?

He didn't just weep and mourn but his second response was he fasted and prayed. He prayed a season of continual prayer over periods of days and weeks. Then he mixed it in with the intensification of fasting. He was even setting aside the God given necessities of life that we have been given to enjoy like food and drink, in order to wrestle with God for God to do something in the city of God and among the people of God.

That brought him to two objectives in Nehemiah 2. His first objective is that he is going to rebuild the wall and the gates. In what I just read it said he didn't tell anybody what was in his heart. What was in the heart of Nehemiah? The heart of Nehemiah was not simply to rebuild the walls and the gates but a second objective was to use the opportunity to rebuild the walls and the gates to rebuild the people of God. So that as they saw and were reminded of the grace of God they would confess their sins, flee to God and rise up and serve God. There were broken walls because there were broken people. Let's repair the walls in order for God to do a work to repair the people.

Nehemiah 1 through 6 is the rebuilding of the wall even in the midst of adversity from Sanballat, Tobiah and Gersham. God gives the victory when there is persecution from outside and faltering inside. In fifty two days that wall was rebuilt but then glorious truth and testimony are found in Nehemiah 7 through 12 for God rebuilt His people. Now they gathered for worship and reclaimed the Feast of the Trumpets, the Feast of Booths and the worship of God. They repented of their sins. They brought the tithe. They started doing the ministry. The Levites came back into the temple from the surrounding area. God's people now rose up and for thirteen glorious years they served the Lord. God had rebuilt the walls, He had rebuilt the people and revival had come by the grace of God to the people of God.

There are two reminders. One reminder is you can't miss the prominence of leadership and the effect upon the followership. Starting in Nehemiah 2 where Nehemiah stands up, inspects the walls and tells the people. Then the followers say 'we will arise and build, the hand of God has been with Nehemiah then the hand of God will be with us. The God who has given success to Nehemiah who was sent by a pagan king with resources to do this, the same hand of God will be with us and we will rebuild the city.' Then when it comes time to build the city the leaders stepped up and led. The people followed and built the wall section upon section in front of their own house. After it was all built they gathered in worship and it was the leadership that led them in worship. It was the leadership that went up on the wall and on the platform to read the Word of God. When God brought the convicting power and they saw their sins it was the leadership that first confessed their sins and called God's people to follow the Lord. The followership came and said 'we'll strengthen our hand by the hand of God and arise and build.' They built and they followed. They tithed. They served. They ministered. They hung the gates and stood guard, grabbing swords in one hand and trowels in another with confidence in the Lord.

The second reminder was intercessory prayer and the primacy of the Word. There were penetrated twenty plus prayers of Nehemiah, continual prayers of the people and the Word was read and preached throughout the book of Nehemiah. There were those life lines from heaven – prayer and the Word. The Word is where God speaks to us and prayer is where we call upon the Lord. There is the obvious leadership and followership and the obvious intercessory prayer and the primacy of God's Word. Now realizing that, God raise up leadership. God invigorate the followership. God use prayer and the Word as we call upon You. Make us people of the Book and people of bended knee to the throne of grace. As You do those things in our life then where do we go from here into the New Testament?

Then there were two proposals. We need to take the lessons we've learned here. We need to have the courage of Nehemiah and examine the walls. Nehemiah came and

he didn't tell anyone what he was going to do yet. What a wise thing! Look at the scope of the job and all that had to be done. He didn't tell them first what was to be done lest he discourage them who were already laid aside in their lethargy and their discouragement. The first thing he did with a couple of leaders is he went around the whole city wall and inspected it. Where are the breaches? Where are the holes in the wall? What gates are down and burned? How much rubbish is there? Whenever God does a revival there has to be a lot of rubbish to be cleaned out. There has to be a lot of repentance to clean it out. This isn't something he has a second-hand knowledge of. I cannot tell you the courage it takes for a leader like this to very quietly, unobtrusively, not calling attention to himself go around the walls and find out where the walls are down.

The second thing is the people of God. He would number them, locate them, find them, and list them as we traveled through the reading of all those names back in Nehemiah 7. Nehemiah examined the walls and he examined the people. We need to take that trajectory to the New Testament. The question is what are the walls to examine in the New Testament? I think the answer can helpfully be found by first of all looking at what the city of God is today and then you can determine what the walls are. What is the capital of the Kingdom, the center of the Kingdom of God? What is the place where God's Name is to be honored and exalted? When you know the city of God today then you know what the walls of God are. I want to look at Revelation 21.

Revelation 21:1-4 says *[1] Then I saw a new heaven and a new earth, for the first heaven and the first earth had passed away, and the sea was no more. [2] And I saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down out of heaven from God, prepared as a bride for her husband (The husband is Christ). [3] And I heard a loud voice from the throne saying, "Behold, the dwelling place of God is with man. He will dwell with them, and they will be his people, and God himself will be with them as their God. [4] He will wipe away every tear from their eyes, and death shall be no more, neither shall there be mourning, nor crying, nor pain anymore, for the former things have passed away."* There we are looking to the church, the city of God, in all of its glory with no sin or consequences of sin, but where does it start?

Revelation 21:9-14 says *[9] Then came one of the seven angels who had the seven bowls full of the seven last plagues and spoke to me, saying, "Come, I will show you the Bride, the wife of the Lamb." [10] And he carried me away in the Spirit to a great, high mountain, and showed me the holy city Jerusalem coming down out of heaven from God, [11] having the glory of God, its radiance like a most rare jewel, like a jasper, clear as crystal. [12] **It had a great, high wall, with twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and on the gates the names of the twelve tribes of the sons of Israel were inscribed—** [13] *on the east three gates, on the north three gates, on the south three gates, and on the west three gates. [14] And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and on them were the twelve names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.**

I can't run you through all the Scriptures that are referenced here but I'd run you back to Ephesians where you'd find out that the church is built upon the foundation of the prophets and the apostles just as its described there in Revelation 21. The cornerstone is Jesus. So here in the book of Revelation we are given this glorious bifurcated vision of the New Jerusalem that has been built upon the apostles and the prophets and has come

down with a great high wall. That great high wall has a foundation of apostles and prophets with Christ as the cornerstone. That great high wall then exists. Now there is coming a day when it will be here in perfection and there will be no more pain, no more sorrow and no more sin. The former things have gone and the new has come but that church has already come by the coming of Christ and His work on the cross that great mountain of Calvary. He has built it upon the prophets and the apostles and it has a great high wall.

When the Bible uses metaphors and illustrations we need to be consistent with the way those are to be seen. What was the purpose of a wall in the days of Nehemiah and to the days of Jesus? The wall did three things. The wall declared the security of the city, the strength of the city and the significance of the city. So pastor, what is the wall? We need to examine surrounding the New Jerusalem, the church of the living God, the bride of Christ, existing now and anticipating its fulfillment when He comes. What is that wall? What is it that gives you your security, your strength and your significance? That wall is nothing more than the saving, delivering, and redeeming power of the grace of the Lord Jesus in the Gospel of saving grace. It is the Gospel that gives you significance, security and strength. We have realized that without Him, we can do nothing.

The Gospel news is that you can come to Christ and Christ will be in you. Here I am unable to do anything but in Christ I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. There is my strength. Where is my security? The Gospel message is that nothing can separate you from the love of Christ. There is your security. Who am I? It is not the things I can tack on my wall or my degrees or how much money I have or the acclaim of the world because those things pass away. We forget them in a moment, just tell me who won the Super Bowl seven years ago. Three of you probably could tell me but we think all these things bring significance and we're basically going after vanity. The church has a glorious entrustment and stewardship of the Gospel. We proclaim to a world, are you lost and undone? Are you feeling like a vapor? What is the Son of Man that you would be mindful of Him?

Because of what Christ has done it gives you everlasting life. You are a prince, a child of the King, a son of the living God. No bank account, newspaper article or acclaim from the world can ever put you in the position of being in the forever family of God, secure in the grace of the Lord Jesus Christ but Jesus Christ does and will. Nothing can pluck you from His hand. What more security could you have? There is the security in Him. Here is the power of the Gospel within me. All of those things are there within me. The wall of the New Testament city of God is the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ. It is glorious and it is magnificent.

So when I examine the walls today I have some concerns because that Gospel wall has a number of sections to it. That Christ centered, Gospel driven, Spirit filled message of the glorious Good News has Gospel worship and we're upside down on worship. We keep wanting to make it about me instead of His praise. There is the section of the wall of Gospel discipleship, vibrant Gospel fellowship, Gospel stewardship where the things of this world don't control me like my money and time. They have just been entrusted to me. I am a servant of the Lord and the Gospel has laid hold of my heart. So Jesus I love You because You first loved me now here is all this stuff. I want to enjoy You with it and I want to use it to proclaim You to the world. I want to reach the poor with it. I want to reach the oppressed with it. I want to reach one another. I

want the house of the Lord and the people of the Lord to be strong. I want the people of God to be encouraged. There is Gospel leadership. Whenever God does something He raises up leader individuals and leader churches that are ready to be owned of the Lord.

When I think of all of those sections of the wall, dare I say it could be a series of sermons, examining the wall of Gospel worship, Gospel leadership, Gospel discipleship, Gospel fellowship, Gospel stewardship? Let's just take next year and talk about Gospel evangelism. I want to give you a little phrase here to peel back the curtain. "I Share." This is personal evangelism. I Share like the I Pod, I Pad, I Touch and I hope by the end of next year we all have an 'I Share.' Do you know when the world was turned upside down in Acts 17? It was when they left Jerusalem, scattered and everybody went preaching the Gospel. I want everybody to learn how to take people across that bridge of life to Christ. So I would love to spend all next year on that.

I want to conclude this study by bringing you back to something even more fundamental. Here is your takeaway. We will arise and build and the Lord will give us success. Why? I want to go back to Nehemiah 2 because I want to show you something. Nehemiah 2:11-12 says *[11] So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. [12] Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem.* Not many verses later Nehemiah comes to the people after he has inspected the wall and said "We will arise and build." Don't miss this because I think this is crucial. Why were the people willing to arise and build? It's not just because Nehemiah had inspected the wall and they knew the scope of what they had to build. The reason they were ready to arise and build is because Nehemiah *first* arose to examine and build.

Nehemiah went to Jerusalem and then for three days he said nothing about his heart to rebuild the people through rebuilding the walls. Then after the third day out of the night, he arose and he built. Even I can see that. You don't need a Harry Reeder or a rock star preacher. Let me tell you who you need who went to Jerusalem, His name is Jesus. He went to the walls and outside the walls. You have a Nehemiah who left a position of privilege and he humbled himself to redeem a people and build the walls of Jerusalem. The people were in reproach and in sin. He came to redeem them, lead them and to rebuild the walls. He humbled himself to come to such a lowly outpost but praise the Lord for this third Sunday of Advent that we get to celebrate Jesus who left the riches and glory of the right hand of the Father. He humbled Himself to come. He was born in Bethlehem, taken to Jerusalem and would come back to Jerusalem.

The walls of Nehemiah are down and I can take you there and show you those walls today, but Jesus went outside of those walls and went to a cross on Mount Calvary. He humbled Himself to the point of death and there He built the city of God with His atoning, redeeming work and He arose. And He is building His church until He comes again. I want you to pray for those leaders who will follow in the footsteps of Nehemiah in the church of Jesus Christ but I want you to fix your eyes on Jesus. Nehemiah is pointing you to Him, the One who humbled Himself. He came to that very city where that revival had broken out in the days of Nehemiah. He was despised and rejected. He said of the walls that every stone would come down but He goes outside of them and does a work. He arises and He is building His church. Now He is with us and has called us because of Him to rise up and build the very testimony of Christ.

I think as you examine the walls, even with your eyes fixed on Jesus, we have some problems today. As much as I want to talk about Gospel worship, Gospel evangelism, Gospel discipleship, Gospel stewardship, and Gospel fellowship, our problem today is right at the Gospel. We have Gospel confusion. We don't understand the wall because we have Gospel confusion. There are two errors with the Gospel that you always have to avoid. One is that in the avoidance of one we usually fall into the trap of the other. There is this one Gospel error where people say 'God helps those who help themselves. You have to do this and that and this and then Jesus will save you.' That is called legalism. You are not saved by what you do. You don't give power to God by what you do to save you. No, you are saved by grace alone, through faith alone in Christ alone. Praise the Lord for that!

There is another error. The other error that Jude, II Peter, Hebrews, I John and throughout the Bible they are warning us of is that the same grace that saves you is a grace that transforms you and when God's grace has saved you He never leaves that grace alone. He brings a changed life, a changed direction, a changed heart but somehow today in our well meaning effort to get away from polluting the Gospel of saving grace in Christ, with legalism we have polluted the Gospel with a licentiousness that really means it doesn't matter how you live. By the way, if you get serious about sin and holiness you're probably a legalist.

Recently I was passed an article that I was to review. The article was entitled "Jesus Plus Nothing is Everything." I read it and wanted to give it a fair review. The Gospel of saving grace is that Jesus delivers you from sin. He delivers you from the power of sin with regeneration. He delivers you from penalty of sin with justification. He delivers you from the place of sin in adoption. He is delivering you from the practice of sin in sanctification. He will deliver you from the presence of sin in glorification. Jesus plus nothing in regeneration is Amen. I didn't born myself again. I didn't give God permission to born me again. God gave me life so that I would come to Him because I was dead in my sins. Jesus plus nothing in my justification is absolutely. My righteousness is as filthy rags for I need the forgiveness and righteousness of Christ. Jesus plus nothing in my adoption is absolutely. I wasn't an orphan that worked my way into the family of God. I was adopted by the grace of God, freely by His love into His family. Jesus plus nothing in my glorification is absolutely. He will exalt me at the right time.

Jesus plus nothing in my sanctification is nothing. Here is what the Bible says about sanctification. Sanctification is being fully reliant upon the grace of God and fully engaged in the pursuit of God. You may say "How can I be fully engaged in pursuit and fully reliant?" That is a great question. The answer is the Holy Spirit. It's only the Holy Spirit that can work in your life so that you rest in Him yet you rise and take upon yourself His yoke to follow Him. It's only the Holy Spirit that can give you the ability to work out your salvation with fear and trembling for it is God who is at work in you both to will and to do for His good pleasure. It's only the Holy Spirit that can work in your life so that I rest in Christ alone by faith for by grace are you saved through faith and that not of yourself. It is the gift of God and not of works lest any man should boast. For we are His workmanship created in Christ Jesus unto good works which He has before ordained that we should walk in them.

So the truth in my Christian life that I'm trusting in the grace of God is not manifested by indolence and passivity. It is by Biblically informed and Spirit filled activity as you pursue holiness. Flee temptation. Memorize His Word. As you come to Christ and by God's grace become a living assassin of sin and a living honoring testimony of God's grace.

We have a tremendous confusion today and that confusion is that we believe the Christian life comes from merely contemplating what God has done for us. Here is what Paul said in Philippians 3. "I have forsaken my righteousness, straining forward with all my might to lay hold of Him." Resting in Him and following Him is what we need to do. If we do not preach and embrace the glorious Gospel of saving grace in Jesus Christ in its fullness which is the unearned benefits of the cross and the un-negotiated claims of the crown of our Savior, then we have no Gospel to awaken the world. We have a Gospel that brings conviction and brokenness. Praise the Lord! We also have a Gospel that transforms and empowers. We have a Gospel that takes sinners that are immoral, ungodly, gluttons, drunkards and idolaters and saves them.

This Gospel not only saves us fully but there is now therefore now no condemnation for those who are in Christ and the Gospel empowers us so the Bible says 'such were some of you.' Jesus Christ doesn't wait for heaven to give you victories in the life of grace. He gives them to you on the way. He gives not only the victory of forgiveness but the victory of life transforming change as you rest in Him and pursue holiness with all your heart, loving Him with all your heart, mind and strength. It is that Gospel message that I believe has been broken down in the walls today.

We vacillate from legalism to licentiousness and you may be thinking 'why is he so burdened about that?' There are many reasons why I'm burdened about it but I will just give you one. I know if in our reaction to the legalism that we want to avoid that dams up the river of grace and we start polluting it with licentiousness to prove that we think we're saved by grace, then it's just a matter of time until the church will go right back to legalism and I don't want that. I want the church to preach the free, life transforming grace of Jesus Christ that takes you right where you are but never leaves you right where you are and the same God who does everything in your regeneration, justification, adoption and your glorification is the same God who enables you to give everything to follow Him with all your heart, soul and mind. Let's pray.

Prayer:

Father, thank You for the moments we could be together. Thank You Father for that glorious high wall of the Gospel that Christ has brought. So we fix our eyes on You, thanking You for Nehemiahs and men like Peter, Paul, Whitfields and Wesleys. We are thanking You for all of those instruments that You have raised up for revival in the church that brought Gospel Awakenings to the world and we pray for those kinds of leaders but we fix our eyes on Jesus who came to that Jerusalem, born in that manger, lived a perfect life, went to Jerusalem, was dead, buried and in three days He arose and He builds His church with the high wall of the Gospel that gives us strength for a changed life. He gives us security from all of our sins and their penalties. He gives us the significance of knowing that we're His and He is ours for we belong to Him. We are joint heirs with Christ. God, there is a world that needs to hear that Gospel. Help us in the church to get it right, embraced and proclaimed, I pray this in Jesus' Name, Amen.