

Living Stones: Side by Side
March 12, 2017

I Living Stones

A) **SLIDE 1** Peter 2:4-5 (NIV) ⁴ As you come to him, the living Stone--
-rejected by men but chosen by God and precious to him-- ⁵ you
also, like living stones, are being built into a spiritual house to be a
holy priesthood, offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to God
through Jesus Christ.

B) Opposition

- 1) So far, the Lord has shown us the opposition that we will meet
- 2) We have seen this opposition in action on many levels
- 3) However, we are not to lose our focus

C) **SLIDE** Building process

- 1) Ezra: Temple: Heart
- 2) Nehemiah: Wall: Protection (not to keep people out but enemy)
- 3) To restore this nation, God will restore the foundation of Jesus Christ and the Word of God, which is our spiritual temple
- 4) Then He will use us to rebuild a spiritual wall

D) **SLIDE** Video of Wolves

- 1) No one knew that all of this would happen when the wolves were placed back in Yellowstone
- 2) Yet, when all the pieces are in their proper places, rivers will change
- 3) This video shows us how intricately everything in nature is connected
- 4) God does not create pieces of creation; He created creation
- 5) **SLIDE** He created us so that each piece would fit with another piece and so on
- 6) We cannot say that the wolves are more important than the beavers because every part is necessary
- 7) So, how do you keep rivers from wandering all over the place?
- 8) You take a wolf....

- 9) So, how does God keep a nation from wandering in the wilderness?
- 10) You take a living stone.....

II **SLIDE** Building the Wall

A) Nehemiah

- 1) Ezra and Nehemiah are considered one book by Jewish scholars
- 2) It is the same time frame as Esther
- 3) When we look at these three books alone, we can see the meticulous nature of God
- 4) If He has intricately connected the pieces of nature together so that a wolf can change the course of a river, image the care He has put into each one of us
- 5) When Nehemiah encountered opposition, he went to God for the answer

B) **SLIDE** Nehemiah 3

- 1) **Nehemiah 3:1-2 (NIV)** ¹ Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. ² The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zaccur son of Imri built next to them.
- 2) **SLIDE** Throughout this chapter, we read over and over again, "Next to him...."
- 3) Each family was assigned a portion of the wall to build
- 4) Each person focused on his/her portion of the wall
- 5) Each person counted on the others to complete their sections
- 6) Each person was connected to all the others by God's purpose
- 7) This is a beautiful picture of the body of Christ
- 8) This is how we rebuild the spiritual wall around our community

C) **SLIDE 1 Corinthians 12:24-27 (NIV)** ²⁴ ... But God has combined the members of the body and has given greater honor to the parts that lacked it, ²⁵ so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. ²⁶ If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it. ²⁷ Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

- 1) **SLIDE** I am one living stone in this body
- 2) Each of you are living stones
- 3) God has given each of us gifts and a part to the wall to build
- 4) Yes, each of us makes a difference
- 5) Take the wolf out of the picture, and the rivers run wild
- 6) Take one of us out of the picture, and the wall may not get finished
- 7) We are to respect each other, encourage each other, protect each other SO THERE IS NO DIVISION IN THE BODY
- 8) My "job" on Sunday mornings is not to give the message
- 9) My responsibility is to mesh with each of you to glorify God
- 10) The praise team's responsibility does not begin at 10:45 and end at 11:15
- 11) What they do before and after is praise
- 12) Our teachers don't just teach for one hour a week
- 13) They plan and prepare to raise up new living stones
- 14) If each of you builds your section of the wall when I do not, the wall remains weak

III **SLIDE** Enemy

A) **Nehemiah 4:19-20 (NIV)** ¹⁹ Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall.

²⁰ Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!"

- 1) The enemy who wants to stop us is out there - NOT standing next to us
 - 2) EXPLAIN
 - 3) **SLIDE** We need to be on our guard so that the opposition does not cause us to fight one another
 - 4) I cannot build my section of the wall if I am busy critiquing how you are building your section
 - 5) I cannot build my section of the wall if I am using my checklist to see that you are building according to code.
 - 6) With the enemy threatening them, I believe Nehemiah and the Israelites simply wanted the wall built
- B) **SLIDE** **Nehemiah 6:15-16 (NIV)** ¹⁵ So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. ¹⁶ When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.
- 1) How did those wolves help change Yellowstone?
 - 2) By being a wolf
 - 3) By doing what God created them to do
 - 4) **SLIDE** How do we change the world around us?
 - 5) By being a Christian
 - 6) By doing what Christians are created to do!
 - 7) By taking our place on the wall and doing what Jesus has asked us to do
 - 8) Nehemiah's enemies were not defeated by attacks, threats, or protests
 - 9) They were stopped because they realized God was present
 - 10) **SLIDE** Nehemiah and the people defeated their enemies by focusing on God and not giving up
 - 11) It will take all of us to fix the foundation and rebuild the wall
 - 12) It will take all of us to move Cornerstone forward
 - 13) If we work together, we will see rivers change their courses.

- C) Finally, Neh 9 or 10 - read *God's word* - repent - restore - rejoice
- D) Return to Elijah and bring in Elisha