



Empowering People to Change the World

Facing Fear with Faith

Steve Holt

Dr. Steve Spillers sharing with Power Point...

The Road Declaration...

Facing Fear with Faith: Nehemiah 2

Introduction:

- Last week we looked at Nehemiah, a cupbearer of King Artaxerxes, hearing about the destroyed walls around Jerusalem.
- It broke his heart and he prayed and fasted about what to do about it.

Prayer with fasting is nuclear power prayer!

- The Book of Nehemiah is not just a true story of the rebuilding of the literal city of Jerusalem, but it is a metaphor of how God wants to build the city of Jerusalem in our hearts.
- There are two cities, spoken most eloquently by St. Augustine, in one of the great classics of literature, City of God.

In our hearts we are building one of two cities.

- There is a city of man, the City of Babylon, in which we are building to ourselves by loving and cherishing this world and this worlds values and ways.
- But there is another city, the City of Jerusalem, which is the city of the Kingdom of God, and as believers we are citizens of this kingdom and we build this city in our hearts through our love for God, His values, and ways.

St. Augustine would say that the city we are building is determined by which we love the most:

**“These (two cities) are two loves, the one which is holy, the other, unholy; one social, the other individualistic; one takes heed of the common utility because of the heavenly society, the other reduces even the commonwealth to its own ends because of a proud lust of domination; the one is subject to God, the other sets itself up as a rival to God; the one is serene, the other tempestuous; the one is peaceful, the other quarrelsome; the one prefers truthfulness to deceitful praises, the other is utterly avid of praise; the one is friendly, the other jealous; the one desires for its neighbor what it would for itself, the other is desirous of lording it over its neighbor; the one directs its effort to the neighbor’s good, the other to its own...These two loves have created the distinction between the two cities; the one of the just and the other of the wicked.”
(*The City of God* 15.1)**

- Nehemiah is a study in the rebuilding of Jerusalem both literally and figuratively.

Nehemiah 2:1-2

- Nisan is four months, since chapter 1...so Nehemiah has been praying, thinking, seeking counsel about what to do for four months.
- Nehemiah is a cupbearer of the king and it is his responsibility to check the wine before the king drinks.

“I became dreadfully afraid.”

- In ancient times, a servant of the king would never show any kind of sadness to a king.
- Sadness was punishable with death! The king wanted all of his subjects to reflect the well-being brought about by his administrative prowess.

- This was incredibly risky for Nehemiah.
- Nehemiah is fearful:
 - Either his countenance will bother the king.
 - Or his request and explanation would anger the king.
 - But Nehemiah faced his fear for a greater purpose!
 - Faith replaced fear!!

All of us are struggling with fear these days. Some more than others, but if COVID19 didn't frighten you, possibly the rioting and lawlessness has.

How to release the grip of fear (thoughts from Nehemiah):

1) Face your fears.

- Fear will enslave you! Most of us live “fear based” lives.
- Fear is a motivation...a negative emotion and a negative purpose.
- Fear will make you sick!
- Fear will ruin your health, your immune system; I believe most headaches, depression, and sickness comes from fears in our lives.

2) Be vulnerable about your fears.

- Remember, Nehemiah is writing this. He didn't have to add that last line, but he did “I became dreadfully afraid.”
- Another synonym would be exceedingly afraid.
- Being open about your fear with some bloodstained allies can set you free!

3) Build your faith, starve your fears.

- Focus on faith—build up the walls of faith in your life!
- Face it, be open about it, but then turn from it and build up your faith. The more you focus on fear, the more the fears will grow; the more you focus on building up your faith, the more your faith will grow.

4) Build up your faith wall over your life.

- “Perfect love casts out fear.”
- You must decide to quit building the city of Babylon and begin building the walls of Jerusalem.
- The walls of Babylon are built by Fear! The walls of Jerusalem are built by Faith!

Vs. 3

When there is a deeper faith conviction than fear, you will break the power of fear.

- Nehemiah tells him exactly what has happened to Jerusalem...not messing around; he’s straightforward and honest.
- A tomb was a place of respect for dead community members who birthed the living generation and passed on spiritual values to the next.
- Gates were emblematic of the life of the city, it was a place of judicial decisions and a place of community as people came and went.
 - The Babylonians had destroyed the city of Jerusalem, and Satan has tried to destroy your life too.
 - Has your mind and heart been ravaged by the Babylonians?

Vs. 4-5

- The king rightly interprets Nehemiah's attitude, that he wants to take action, and do something about the problem.
- Nehemiah prays for favor!

Always pray for favor and blessing.

- Ask God for favor; ask God for blessing.
- If you know that God is calling you to do something, or fix an issue that involves others, seek the Lord for favor and blessing.

Vs. 6-9

In our chapter, the title and office of "King" is mentioned 14 times.

- The power of a political office is so important! Our coming election for the presidency is important. Our vote for governor, city council, and mayor is very important.
 - Nehemiah could not have gotten permission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem without the king's permission.
 - Zerubbabel and Joshua could not have rebuilt the temple without permission from Cyrus.
- Official letters were a way of transferring the authority of the king to Nehemiah.
- In order to pass through the king's woods, he would need authority from the king.
- Timber was a very precious commodity...we have evidence of this from one ancient city in Mesopotamia in which a man was

taken to court for cutting down one tree. Forests were carefully guarded and only such a letter would get you in.

- This was a three-to-four-month journey that was very dangerous and ridden with bandits and enemies...Nehemiah really needed the king's authorization through such letters.
- Protocol with the other officials was very important. Any misstep by Nehemiah would cost him life with these other governors.
- Note that Nehemiah really has this thought through! He has a clear plan.

Vs. 10

- There is always opposition to God's plan! This is our first introduction to two men who will continue to fight against Nehemiah throughout his rebuilding.
- These are probably the men who were behind the stoppage of the rebuilding of the temple in Ezra 4.
- Sanballat was the governor of Samaria. Elections matter!

Make a plan, and expect opposition.

- Nehemiah has a clear plan for the execution of his plan.
- When you decide to get serious about changes in your life, you will need a plan!
- How, when, and where are you going to change your life?
 - Women, if you want to make some new plans for rebuilding your spiritual life, then sign up for the Women's Groups coming up.
 - Men, you have to plan to go to AIM on Tuesday mornings at 6 am. You have to eat breakfast anyway, so join us.

- Plan on joining Colorado Springs to see Revivalist Sean Feucht on September 12th at 10 am.
- The definition of insanity is to keep doing the same thing, but expecting different results!
 - To rebuild the walls of Jerusalem in our heart we must have a plan.
 - But Satan, through people, will oppose you all the way!!
 - Satan is a deceiver, liar, and like a “roaring lion” that wants to intimidate you to stay right where you are in your life! He says, “You can’t change! You will always struggle with that.”

Ex. I’ve asked one of our bold, young men, Nathan Higbee, to share about a recent outreach he did at Memorial Park...