

Life Group Topic #3
Don't Watch the Waves...Watch the Tide!
Nehemiah 2:11-18

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

Tell about something precious to you that was ruined. How did you respond?

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, etc.

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the application questions.

Nehemiah brought massive change to the city of Jerusalem. It isn't strange to rebuild a defeated city and replace the walls that once surrounded it. *But Jerusalem's wall was over 3 km long, was rebuilt with few workers, limited resources, and surrounded by enemies that sought to stop the work. Yet the work was finished in 52 days, despite the fact that portions of the rebuilt wall were 22 feet thick.* Clearly God had a massive paradigm shift for the people of Jerusalem and He found them responsive to doing things that had never been done before.

Nehemiah sees Jerusalem for the first time in his life after 2500 km of travel. It had to be quite a sight...the rubble of the wall dominating the landscape. What does the wall symbolize? A city wall protects from the incursions of the enemy and that is a profound picture of obedience to God's law...His Word. What priorities surface in building a wall that would be obedience to God's Word?

Nehemiah spent three days resting and listening with God. God was making him *a man who understood the times and knew what the people of God should do.* That development required him to be intimately acquainted with the ruins of the wall of the city. He had to see the worst! He had to see what *was* before there would be any change to what could be. We have been examining the wall at South Abbotsford Church and we need to be aware of its condition...

- *The building block of prayer* has been found amidst the rubble and it is being re-installed but the work is ongoing...this part of the construction will decide the success or failure of the work
- *The building block of unity* is still covered in rubble...
 1. we have experienced a decline in attendance since 2001 that continues to the present. Disinformation floats around and we are in need of the unifying work of the Spirit of God.
 2. we, as leaders, have made errors and mistrust in leadership is now present. We need to correct what we can, forgive and move on together.
 3. We have forgotten our foundation stone...togetherness is a part of our DNA and discovering God's future is dependent on us listening together.
- *The building block of humility* has been found...it was missing, but we have found it and embraced again that we are powerless to see progress in our own strength, but we need help to move it into place.
- *The building block of personal holiness* is a critical cornerstone that requires each worker's effort in finding and placing it in the wall. The enemy has made serious inroads into this city because this portion of the wall has been broken down.

Nehemiah faced a formidable task: 3 kilometers of wall in ruins and a discouraged group of potential workers. The task must be overwhelming or it could be accomplished in human strength without God's intervention. The plan for the building had to be supernatural.

God chose Nehemiah, gifted him and shared with him His plan for the wall...He'll do that for us as well. So he takes a few trusted men and examines the walls.

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.

- He appealed to every person's involvement and he personally identified with them.
- He had no reward to offer them but his call went deep within them and found response to be a part of doing the impossible.

Please don't minimize this profound work of God among these deeply discouraged people. It was an incredible expectation to give these people. It was highly sacrificial because they would not be able to work and earn a living. They did not know how long it would take. They did not know who would provide for their families, but they rose up together and said... *Let us start rebuilding, so they began this good work.*

If you want to see what God is doing don't watch the waves, watch the tide. God is at work among us...He is revealing the rubble...He is pointing out the key corner stones that must be dug out, cleaned off and placed again in the wall.

Will you embrace this task of rebuilding together? There are many critical cross roads in our individual lives and then there are the critical cross roads in the life of our church. This is one! **Will you choose to rebuild with us?**

Word Application Questions: Read through Nehemiah 2: 11-18

1. Why was it so important for Nehemiah to first survey the ruined walls before calling the people to action?
2. What are the building blocks that have been reduced to rubble and need to be restored at South Abbotsford?
3. Consider the building blocks Dan mentions above: prayer, unity, humility and personal holiness. Which of these seem critical to you?
4. What will your part in restoring these blocks in your personal life, Life Group or in the church as a whole?
5. In vs. 17-18 Nehemiah awakens them to the tragedy of their city's condition, and tells them the story of how God was making a miraculous way for change. How might the Lord awaken us to our condition? What stories are surfacing to prepare us for change?
6. How do you understand the phrase: "If you want to see what God is doing, don't watch the waves, watch the tide?"

WITNESS: (15 minutes)

This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolded those we reach into the Life Group.