

Life Group Topic #5

IF NOT YOU...WHO? IF NOT NOW...WHEN?

Nehemiah 3:1-32

WELCOME: (15 minutes)

Tell about something you volunteered to do in the past that was life-giving for you.

WORSHIP: (15 minutes)

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

WORD APPLICATION: (45 minutes)

Briefly read or paraphrase the following sermon summary before moving to the heart of this section: the discussion around the application questions.

God wanted the wall rebuilt and it would be rebuilt on ancient foundations...He was going to do a work of restoration among His people. Our context is as unique as theirs. We have foundations as a church...we will have existed for 78 years on May 1st.

FOUNDATION STONES AT SOUTH ABBOTSFORD CHURCH...

1. Jesus Christ is our absolute focus
2. We discern the will of God together
3. We honor a culture of service...1949—500 in attendance and no staff
4. We have a history of evangelism...May 1945...50 young people taught in 31 summer Bible schools that summer and reached 1,000 children...

At Jerusalem, there was an incredible amount of rubble to remove to even gain access to the foundation stones. Although Nehemiah is not mentioned in chapter 3 there is clear indication of leadership. The Spirit of God had moved the people to believe the impossible but Arnold Toynbee's full quote deserves review...

Apathy can only be overcome by enthusiasm, and enthusiasm can only be aroused by two things: first, an ideal that takes the imagination by storm, and second, a definite intelligible plan for carrying that ideal into practice.

Peak Performance Principles For High Achievers...John Noe

A definite, intelligible plan for seeing the dream realized was absolutely essential.

God called Nehemiah to Jerusalem and now we will be introduced to at least 38 leaders along the 3 km section of the wall. God takes the people's imagination by storm and then places them into His plan for construction under the oversight of leaders appointed to that task.

Chapter 3 is the clear presentation of an efficient and effective combining of the people of God and the leader that God called to the task. We are taken on a counter clockwise tour of the wall construction and significant principles become clear. Please note that the wall is mentioned 35 times in Nehemiah and that the gates are mentioned 31 times. In this description of the rebuilding of the wall, the gates will be the measuring sticks for success. Gates allow things in and out of the city and are strategic points to defend. Each church has gates that need to be defended. Here are a few examples:

SHEEP GATE...v 1-2 The high priest and his colleagues set an example and started the work and it was in the area where the sacrificial animals were brought into the city...their place of

affinity. They didn't wait for the dedication day when the wall was completed...they dedicated it...consecrated it...declaring that the wood and rocks belonged to God. A clear statement that unless He built the wall they would labor in vain

THE OLD GATE...v 6-12 He mentions people from various professions who had no experience as builders...priests, goldsmiths, perfume makers, merchants, district rulers, women. They each left their professions to commit to the wall. **The kingdom of God has been staffed through the centuries by people who were ready to do anything...stuff that will never receive recognition this side of heaven.** But they knew it was for God's glory and the good of others...this listing is merely an indicator that God keeps score...your work matters.

THE FOUNTAIN GATE...v 15-25 Nehemiah's initial inspection had found this area in complete ruin but many people worked together and Nehemiah records their names. He notes Baruch who *zealously* repaired an additional section; Benjamin and Hashub who repaired the section **across from their house**; Azariah who repaired the section across from his house.

UNDERLYING PRINCIPLES

- The work of God was done in an orderly manner
- There weren't any expert builders identified...just willing workers from every walk of life
- Multiple areas were worked on at once
- People were not designated to some small repetitive task but were involved in the whole project in their area allowing for personal ownership
- Past life failures did not compromise people

The construction of any wall that God motivates is saturated by His presence and gives full evidence of His leading. Ask that He would apply that reality to your block of wood.

Word Application Questions:

Please keep in mind that these questions are meant as catalysts designed to get the group talking about life application.

1. **What are your thoughts on the historic foundation stones of South Abbotsford mentioned above? Should they still be central to whom we are? Can they be recovered in our day?**
2. **Consider the quote from John Noe above. If you honestly rated your current disposition towards "reconstruction" @ SAC, with apathy as #1 and enthusiasm as #10, where would you stand and why?**
3. **Enthusiasm is fueled by a God-given ideal that captures our imagination coupled with a definite plan of action. Are we beginning to discern the ideals and the plans God has for us at South Abbotsford? For your Life Group?**
4. **What captures your attention as you read through Nehemiah 3 and hear of the people who rebuilt the gates and walls around Jerusalem?**
5. **What are the applications for us at South Abbotsford?**
6. **Some of you took a block of wood during the last couple weekends. What is God nudging you to write on your block? What will be your part in the rebuilding of the wall?**

Take time to pray together for the discernment meetings on Monday, Feb. 1 and 8 in which all are encouraged to participate.

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.