

Rebuilding The Ruins

The Book of Nehemiah

TEXT: Nehemiah
KEY VERSE: Nehemiah 6:14

*"We all went astray like sheep; we all have turned
to our own way; and the Lord has punished Him
for the iniquity of us all."
Isaiah 53:6 (HCSB)*

Our "walls" lay in ruins, just like theirs did. The beloved, Jerusalem lay in heaps of rubble; a constant, unhealed wound left from those days of horror. The screams and cries of devastated homes and families echoed silently from each fallen brick. If those stones could speak! We know, don't we? In each of our memories is a "You-Tube" that plays at the slightest nudge – a page from a book, a TV commercial, a song, and we, too, relive the moment our walls fell in.

Nehemiah put it: "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach." Ne.1:3(NKJV)

READ:
Chapter 1

I. We Face Devastation! Ne. 1-3

*"The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down,
and it's gates are burned with fire."
Nehemiah 1:30 (NKJV)*

At this point, it doesn't matter **why**!

- All the court dates, extensions, and motions are over, and you've ridden the big bus. Here you are – **fences!**
- You sit in your living room holding a pink receipt that says, "Final Dissolution of Marriage" across the top, signed in handwriting that once followed the words, "All My Love."
- The bricks of your home, literally, lay scattered in the path of devastation, as you pick through the rubble for memories.

We face devastation!

*Someone is about to be set free!

God wants to rebuild your ruins into a "City of Peace" -- your own" Jerusalem."

A. What Nehemiah Did Not Do...

He did not come to Jerusalem with *more* condemnation. Nehemiah 1

What was done was obvious to all, and everyone knew why it happened.

Those living in the crumbled destruction of their lives know what they did to put it that way.

Songs Of

God wants to rebuild your
Ruins into a
"City of Peace."

Deliverance

The prophets had warned Israel for years. Later, after the wall was rebuilt, they would thank God together for His mercy despite their sin, but this was not the time to heap more discouragement on weary people.

B. What Nehemiah Did Do...

He wept, fasted, and prayed. Nehemiah 1

He allowed himself to feel the people's hurt and devastation.
These were **his** people!

This was **his** city!

God loves that sin-broken person as much as He loves you.

He loves you no less if you **are the** sin-broken person.

Nehemiah became so embedded in the situation that doing something to restore God's people was more important than his own needs.

That's fasting. (Fasting is giving up a basic necessity, usually eating, for a period of time to give that time to prayer.)

READ:
Isaiah 58:3-12

Why should we fast?

1. **Not** to get God to pay attention to our prayer. Is. 58:4-5
2. To set free those in bondage. Is 58:6, 61:1-3
3. To feed the hungry, clothe the naked, and shelter the homeless. Is. 58:7
4. To rebuild broken lives and restore captives to their homes. Is. 58:12

"thou shalt be called 'The Repairer of the Breach'" v.12(KJV)

>My opinion< The example of Nehemiah, and the teaching of Isaiah 58 suggest that a fast is not a planned religious exercise, but an uncontrollable response to someone's dire crisis. I think we fast when our situation becomes larger than our need for food or sleep, etc.

1. He knew where to find **real help**. Ne. 1:4-11
2. He recognized God for who He was. v.5
3. He recognized himself for who he was. vs.6-10

*Notice: Nehemiah came to God based on the promise He made to Solomon in 2 Chronicles 7:14 (also 2 Chr. 6:36-39) Whatever the devastation you're facing, God's Word is full of promised restoration to those who turn back to Him with all their heart. Study Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Zechariah! Turn back to Him, receive His promises, and He will begin restoring your life.

C. Keep Your Priorities Right as You Begin to Rebuild Ne. 1:5-11, 2:4-5 Always **God First!**

"So, I prayed to the God of heaven and answered the king." Ne.2:4-5(HCSB)

If you have already found God's will for your situation in His Word and by His Spirit, you can approach the human authorities with confidence.

If not:

1. Humble yourself before God. 1 Pe. 5:6-7
Those verses are one sentence; verse 7 is how you verse 6.
So, submit by putting it in His hands, and leaving it there. Let Him bring honor to you.

2. Ask the Holy Spirit to guide you to God's truth about your situation in His Word Jn.16:13, Ja.1:5-8, Pr. 2:6 It's time to put down your Max Lucado book and get your wisdom where *he* got it.
3. Begin to pray and confess out of your mouth what the Spirit shows you. **REFUSE, REFUSE, REFUSE** to say anything except what God has showed you from His Word. Mt. 12:34, Pr. 18:21, 12:18
 "The effectual, fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much." Ja. 5:17
 Pray, believing God will answer.
4. Review and meditate on those promises frequently.
 "So, then faith cometh by hearing, and hearing by the Word of God."¹

> Yes, read them out loud! <

Remind yourself often that it does not matter how impossible God's promise may seem, this is God's Word.²

=>**WARNING:** A caution is in order here. God warns against manipulating His Word – finding a verse or phrase to say what you already decided you want God to do. That's why submission is first. Even Christ said, "Not my will, but Thine be done." -See Mk. 14:36, Jn. 15:19-23 If you want God to rebuild the ruins as only He can, it must be done His way.

Remember, we already tried doing it our way...

D. Understand *where you stand*. Ne. 1:10

If you have come to Jesus Christ for salvation, you have been redeemed by **HIS** "great power and right hand." Through simple faith in Jesus payment on Calvary, you are redeemed – bought back by God. You have peace with your Father³, you are no longer condemned by sin.⁴ God has redeemed you to Himself forever. His plan for your life is to restore you.⁵ He will not charge sin to your account that has been paid for.⁶ Salvation is not just insurance from Hell, the word means "salvaging." God frees you completely from the guilt and condemnation of the sin you were born with⁷, then He begins rebuilding, restoring your life through His Word.⁸

E. Do Your Diligence! Ne.1:4b, 2:3-16

God doesn't do our "leg work." Nehemiah was diligent. He first got ahold of God on the matter. First, for a number of days he fasted, wept, and prayed until he was sure of God's leading. Then, he *stayed* close to God until the end. The King James Bible says it, "except the Lord build the house, they labor vain that build it: except the Lord keep the city, the watchman waketh in vain." Ps. 127:1

Second, Nehemiah did the work that he obviously had to do, and he did his homework. He researched. He went out to see for himself what had to be done. -2:11-16.
 There will be licenses to get, fees to pay, jobs to find, permission to get, work to do. Don't just get by. Do *more than* you need to. Know *more* than you need to. But always know that it is **still** God's favor that makes your hard work effective. -2:8b, 18, 20a.

¹James1:5

²Romans8:14-22

³Romans5:1

⁴Romans8:1; 4:6-8; IICorinthians5:19

⁵Jeremiah29:11

⁶Psalms32:1,2; Romans4:1-8

⁷Romans5:12; 6:23

⁸I Peter2:2

Never lose sight of the prize! When it got difficult, Nehemiah reminded the people,

***“And I looked, and rose up, and said unto the nobles, and to the rulers,
and to the rest of the people, Be not ye afraid of them:
remember the Lord, which is great and terrible, and
fight for your brethren, your sons, and your daughters,
your wives, and your houses.”***

– Ne 4:14

(KJV)

Remember your God is awesome, and fight for ... your sons and daughters, your wives and homes.

F. Don't Let Emotions Stop You! 1:4, 2:2

It took a while! Because of me, my children woke up one morning to be torn from their home, their parents, and their brothers and sisters. We were a close family, even the judge noticed. Guilt. Hopelessness. Remorse. Satan uses those to defeat us. God uses them to rebuild us.

“And they said, Let us rise up and build.

So, they strengthened their hands for this good work.”

– Nehemiah 2:18

(KJV)

Someone said, “Never despair; but if you do despair, work on in despair.” In a great battle of World War II, a British commander told his men, “Be brave, lads. Think of what they will think of us in England!” To which they replied, “Never fear, Sir. We know our duty!”

Do what is right for the life God has planned for **you!** Do what is right for your family!

“Never, never, never... relent!” Winston Churchill

***“So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together
unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.”***

– Ne. 4:6

(KJV)

Songs Of

God doesn't do
Our "leg work".

Deliverance

READ:
Nehemiah 3

At first glance, it just looks like a record of who built what. It's almost like a job foreman's report. It might have been, Nehemiah was a governor. But, let's notice some things:

1. God sends people to help.
“Divine appointments” Throughout these last two years and four months, God has put exactly the people I have needed at each step of the way. Trust Him, and He will do the same for you. Which leads to this...
2. You **NEED** God's people!

***“And he gave some, apostles; and some, prophets; and some,
evangelists; and some, pastors and teachers; For the perfecting of the saints,
for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ:
till we all come in the unity of the faith, and of the knowledge
of the Son of God, unto a perfect man, unto the measure
of the stature of the fulness of Christ: That we henceforth
be no more children, tossed to and fro, and carried about
with every wind of doctrine, by the sleight of men, and cunning craftiness,
whereby they lie in wait to deceive; But speaking the truth in love,***

may grow up into him in all things, which is the head, even Christ”
– Ephesians 4:11-15 (KJV)

Ask God to send you people to help. Then, be willing to listen to them.

3. Look Closely at *who* God sent:

A. The High Priest. v.1

Gold, gemstones, scarlet, purple, fine linen...

-Not today! Jeans, t-shirt, trowel, chisel...

Today, he came to build a wall!

B. Some of the “folks”. v.3 “son of Hassenash,”

“the men of Jericho,” “Meremath,” just everyday folks.

Some of the best encouragement I’ve gotten has been from other guys, who also are rebuilding. You guys know what I’m going through.

C. Some professionals. v.8 “Uzziel... the goldsmith,” “Hananiah, the

perfumer(apothecary).” These men had businesses of their own to run, but they were willing to sacrifice in order to help rebuild. Understand these business owners don’t get paid vacation.

D. Government officials. vs.14, 16, 17, 19

v. 12 even his daughters wanted to help!

Songs Of

God is willing to send
Whoever is needed
Into your life.

Deliverance

Do you see it?

God is willing to send whoever is needed into your life to help rebuild the ruins.

•
•
•
friend?

Do you need Spiritual help?

Do you need an encouraging

•
lawyer, doctor, someone who will hire you?

Do you need professional people,

•
government?

Do you need favorable people in

All these people came to Nehemiah and volunteered their help.

*God has His people EVERYWHERE, ready to help you rebuild! *

Oh, please understand how valuable your life, and your family are to God! He is willing to invest significant human resources into your life to restore what is broken down!

Do you ask the same thing I did? Why?

“Why would you do that for me?! You remember what I did, right?”

I’m going to show you what He answered me, and His heart beats the same toward you.

***“Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honorable,
and I have loved thee: therefore, will I give men for thee, and people
for thy life.”***

– Isaiah 43:4 (KJV)

You are precious, valuable in the eyes of God! The day you surrender all to Him, He will unleash the resources of Heaven to come to your aid! The day you allow Him, He will move resources of earth to your help!

Read; Psalm 40:1-3

***“« To the chief Musician, A Psalm of David. » I waited patiently for the LORD; and he inclined unto me and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings. And he hath put a new song in my mouth, even praise unto our God: many shall see it, and fear, and shall trust in the LORD.”
– Psalm 40:1-3 (KJV)***

He will move people out of your way!

***“For I am the LORD thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour: I gave Egypt for thy ransom, Ethiopia and Seba for thee. Isa 43:3
Since thou wast precious in my sight, thou hast been honourable, and I have loved thee: therefore, will I give men for thee, and people for thy life. {life: or, person}
– Isaiah 43:4 (KJV)***

(Recommended study: “#4: The Man Who Believed God” by John Kerr, Songs of Deliverance Publications)

God made a covenant – an unbreakable promise, with Abraham. We Americans don’t understand covenants, we break contracts all the time. This kind of blood covenant has two options: 1) Keep the agreement, 2) Die. God made an agreement with Abraham that He, God, cannot back out of and continue to exist!

God promised Abraham that He would bless all the families of the earth through his seed.⁹ God promised to bless Abraham *and his descendants* in Genesis 12:1-3, then He defined “bless” in Deuteronomy 28: 1-14. God specifically told Abraham that these blessings would be inherited by his seed.

READ:
Galatians 3:7-14, 26-29

***“And if ye be Christ’s, then are ye Abraham’s seed, and heirs according to the promise.
– Galatians 3:29 (KJV)***

In short, God has a covenant to keep with you if you are in Jesus Christ, if you have placed your faith in Him. God will move people as needed to fulfill His plan for your life.

The answer to “Why?” Isaiah 43:4 – He loves you! Stop and thank your eternally merciful Father.

We’re going to see the people who opposed the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem. In Nehemiah 4:15 it says that God frustrated those people. He will do that for you!

“our God shall fight for us.” Ne 4:20 b

READ:
Nehemiah 4

I’ve walked the sidewalks of this prison right beside you – some of you, LITERALLY, right beside you (“Pair up!”) I’ve felt the disdain of guards, seen their mocking looks, and heard the comments. To some, you’re nothing, and they’re smug in their sense of superiority. You’ll always be nothing.

Enter: Sanballat, Tobiah, and Gershem the Arab. Ah! Now our tale has a villain: an arch-nemesis!

There will always be those, driven by their own fear, who feel the need to KEEP you down when you’re down. God’s people were in bondage no different than prison. They’d been taken from their homes and forced to live under their captor’s rule. Those captors, like ours, liked them right where they were; defeated, broken, and subservient – slaves!

God wants you free!

⁹Genesis 12:3

*"The LORD looseth the prisoners:"
Psalm 146:7 (KJV)*

II. We Face Opposition! Ne. 4-6

A. When Opposition Comes, Just Work-On. Ne. 4:6

"So, we rebuilt the wall..."

Mockery is a tool of panic. When you realize that your enemies react out of fear, you don't need to fight back.¹⁰ You carry in your hand the power that created the worlds – God's Word. When you wield that kind of power, you don't **need** to throw your weight around.¹¹

Facing a verbal assault:

1. Let them talk. Ne. 4:1-3

No one stands to argue with Sanballat and Tobiah. Silence can be the strongest and loudest argument. This takes the help of the Holy Spirit. When you really understand and believe that God knows the end from the beginning, and that He has a plan for you that no one can stop, you won't need to argue with those who fight it. Isaiah 46:10(11-13)

2. Go to God for help. Ne. 4:4-5

DO NOT mistake your own silence for weakness. You're not silent, just choosing to talk to the right Person.

"Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy and find grace to help in time of need." (Heb 4:16 AV)

- When David had enemies, he went to God.
- Joshua took his battles to God.
- Nehemiah took this issue with Sanballat and Tobiah to God.

No matter who is opposing you, the battle is spiritual. The *human beings* that are fighting you are only the puppets of their father, the devil.¹² When you put down the hand of the devil, the puppet on that hand will fail as well.

*Remember, Satan's puppets are in bondage, not you! When you choose not to fight the man, but the spirit that controls the man, you may win twice. You will defeat the evil spirit.¹³ You may deliver the human puppet.¹⁴

Songs Of

No matter who is
Opposing you, the
Battle is spiritual!

Deliverance

*"Therefore, if thine enemy hunger, feed him; if he thirst, give him drink:
for in so doing thou shalt heap coals of fire on his head.
– Romans12:20 (KJV)*

*"Ye are the light of the world. A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.
Neither do men light a candle, and put it under a bushel, but on a candlestick;
and it giveth light unto all that are in the house. Let your light so shine before
men,*

that they may see your good works and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

¹⁰ IITimothy1:7

¹¹ Luke10:19; Philippians1:6

¹² John8:44

¹³ IICorinthians10:4; Colossians2:15; Ephesians6:12

¹⁴

I have seen it happen, and heard testimonies of those, delivered from Satan's control, becoming close friends of the believers they had previously tried to destroy. Most of your New Testament was penned by such a man. There is a huge story of God's deliverance buried in the words, "Paul, an apostle of Jesus Christ..."¹⁵

***"For we wrestle not against flesh and blood,
but against principalities, against powers,
against the rulers of the darkness of this world,
against spiritual wickedness in high places."***

– **Ephesians 6:12**

On that battlefield, you have already WON!¹⁶

3. Build! Ne. 46-15

"So, we rebuilt the wall..." v. 6a

Some Christians begin in the work of God, but when the battle comes, they become fighters. They stop doing the work of God altogether.

Build!

The end of verse 6 says, 'For the people had a mind to work.' They did not have a mind to fight. They prepared to fight if necessary. They carried swords. They set guards. They took precautions against attack. They did not march on Sanballat and Tobiah. They didn't send someone to burn down their houses. God didn't tell them to do that.

Build!

Their enemies plotted together to attack Jerusalem and send them into confusion.

****Israel kept their priorities! ****

"So, we prayed to our God, and stationed a guard because of them day and night."

– **V.9(HCSB)**

When people oppose you and threaten you, go to God. He will guide you what to do.¹⁷

Songs Of

Go to God first,
He'll tell you
What to do.

Deliverance

***¶ Thou art my hiding place; thou shalt preserve me from trouble;
thou shalt compass me about with songs of deliverance. Selah.
(meditate on that)***

***I will instruct thee and teach thee in the way which
thou shalt go: I will guide thee with mine eye.***

– **Psalm 32:7-8 (KJV)**

{guide ...: Heb. counsel thee, mine eye shall be upon thee}

Then, Build!

4. Don't let your own tongue fight *against* you. Ne. 4:10

The people began to talk discouragement. Notice verse 12.

The neighbors come to talk despair. "Everywhere you turn, they attack us." (HCSB) Discouragers love to exaggerate. There's no record that *anyone* was attacked. In the middle of your struggle, Satan loves to send along someone you expect to be an encouragement, to knock the wind out of you. Suddenly, for three

¹⁵ ICorinthians1:1; IICorinthians1:1; Galatians1:1

¹⁶ Colossians2:15

¹⁷ IIChronicles20:12

verses, God's people begin to talk despair, for no reason.

***"Death and life are in the power of the tongue."
– Pr.18:21 (KJV)***

What we say is very important. The truth is what God's Word says will happen. It's up to us who have God's Word to speak the truth.

READ:
Proverbs 10:11; 12:6; 14:3; 15:4

***"Set a watch, O LORD, before my mouth; keep the door of my lips."
– Psalm 141:3***

***"Let us hold fast the profession of our faith without wavering; (for he is faithful that promised;)"
– Heb 10:23***

Songs Of

Just because you speak
The **facts** doesn't mean you
speak the **truth!**

Deliverance

"Don't dig up in doubt, what you planted in faith." -Elisabeth Elliot

God Himself operates on this principle.¹⁸ Because Abraham believed God "against hope", he became the father of a great nation and a blessing to all nations. Don't look at your 100-year-old body or your 90-year-old wife – have a son! Don't look at the churning sea, Peter, walk on the water! Don't look at the piles of rubble, Israel – build a wall! Don't look at the impossibility of your situation, brother – Rebuild your life!

***"I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials, and the rest
of the people, 'don't be afraid of them.
Remember the great and awe-inspiring Lord, and fight
For your countrymen, your sons and daughters,
your wives and homes!'"
Nehemiah 4:14 (HCSB)***

***"Our God will fight for us!"
– vs.19 & 20***

Nehemiah understood how critical words are. At this crucial moment – the moment of Satan's attack – *words* could have spelled disaster, the end of the wall. When Satan comes against you to make God's promise to you seem impossible, you MUST speak only the truth, the Word, the promise of God.

***"Each carried his weapon, even when washing."
– Nehemiah 4:23 (HCSB)***
{The footnote in the KJV says, "everyone went with his weapon for water."}

***"And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit,
which is the word of God:"
– Ephesians 6:17 (KJV)***

***"This book of the law shall not depart out of thy mouth;"
– Joshua 1:8***

¹⁸ Romans 4:17

Immerse yourself in the Word of God and keep your weapon with you at all times in this battle.

Now, Build!

READ:
Nehemiah 5

B. Sometimes the Opposition Comes from Within. Ne. 5:1-12

*“And there was a great cry of the people, and
of their wives against their brethren the Jews.
– Nehemiah 5:1 (KJV)*

One of Satan's greatest weapons to keep you in bondage is money. If you are poor, you cannot resist. If you are poor, you cannot afford to do much for God. The enemy knows you are disabled when you are broke.

Israel's Persian captors understood this as well. The best and brightest were taken to Persia.¹⁹ A remnant was left behind; enough to keep wild animals from overrunning the land, but not enough to build a powerful economy. Governors were put in place to assure continued oppression. Some of the Jews were so financially starved that they had to sell their lands, and even allow their children to become slaves to pay the governors' high taxes.

Nehemiah had worked with these people to redeem their lands and their children. One day, some of them came to him with the report that now *their own countrymen* were doing the same to them by charging interest when they borrowed money. God had commanded Israel that they were not to charge “usury” (interest) to their own Jewish brothers.²⁰ Thankfully, when Nehemiah confronted these people, they returned the interest they had charged and stopped doing it.

Your brother, who is trying to rebuild a decimated life, does not need you to add weight to his burden. God comes to the defense of the oppressed. Don't be the oppressor!²¹

c. Everything We Do Should Be to Help Rebuild Lives. Ne.5:14-19

On top of all the other taxes, these governors took *more* from the people for their meals – *and you know how politicians eat!* Nehemiah was made a governor (“tirshatha” -KJV) over the Jews who were rebuilding. He could have exacted these same personal luxuries. He did not.

As you struggle to recover, do nothing to make your brother's struggle worse. Help where you can. God WILL reward that attitude.²²

READ:
Nehemiah 6

1. In the Face of All of Satan's Opposition – FINISH! Neh.6:1-19

1: Satan has been doing this a long time, he will not quit.
You have been promised victory.²³ The enemy cannot win. You MUST finish!

*“Being confident of this very thing, that He
which hath begun a good work in you will
perform it until the day of Jesus Christ.
– Philippians 1:6*

Satan would love for your life to remain scattered across the ground. **DON'T STOP!!** Sanbalat and

¹⁹ Daniel 1:1-7

²⁰ Leviticus 25:36,37; Deuteronomy 23:19,20

²¹ Exodus 22:25-27; Psalm 10:14, 82:3; Isaiah 1:16-20

²² Nehemiah 5:19

²³ Joshua 1:5; Jude 24,25

Tobiah tried every desperate thing to get Nehemiah to give up. He said, “My work is too important to come down and argue with you.” **FIVE TIMES!!** Then Sanbalat sent a letter saying, “I’m gonna tell!” You can almost see him with his thumbs in his ears, and his tongue sticking out!

*Note: If you choose to serve Satan, he really makes an idiot out of you. Neh.6:6-8

Don’t waste time trying to justify the work God is doing in your life, just keep going! Hebrews, 11:7 says that Noah condemned the whole world, not by 150 years of preaching, but by building an ark, and getting into it. His preaching did not produce a single convert – **NOT ONE** - in 150 years! But God calls him the “preacher of righteousness.” His most powerful sermon was the one that ended with a “thud” as the ark door latched shut!

Notice something Hebrews 11:7 says he “built an ark to deliver his family.” God destroyed the whole world. He saved the one man who would believe Him and do what God said to do to save his family. Will you keep building, even if the whole world is against you?

2: If you will trust God completely, miracles will happen.

***“The wall was completed in fifty-two days,
on the twenty-fifth day of the month of Elul.”
Nehemiah 6:15 (HCSB)***

Despite opposition and discouragement from enemies AND friends, miles of stone walls were rebuilt in only a month-and-a-half! When we try to work things out by our own logic, we may succeed; but when we let God lead, He knows this short-cut **THROUGH** the Red Sea!

***“Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and
lean not unto thine own understanding. In
all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall
direct thy paths. Be not wise in thine own eyes:
fear the LORD and depart from evil.
Proverbs 3:5-7 (KJV)***

God has new and amazing things He wants to do in your future, if you’re willing to let Him lead you there.

***“The steps of a good man are ordered by the LORD: and He delights in his way.
Though he fall he will not be utterly cast down:
For the LORD upholdeth him with His hand.
Psalm 37:23,24 (KJV)***

Not “the life”. Not “the days”. “The STEPS”.

God cares about you enough to order every place your foot falls! Satan would like to order your steps into the path of an on-coming bus! God prevents that.

Notice that next phrase: “and He [God] delighteth in his way.” God has a plan for your life that’s **so good**, that even **He** is excited about it! Wait ‘til you see! And it may happen sooner than you expect!

In these two years and five months, (been working on these notes for a while!), I’ve learned one of God’s phrases, “in the fullness of time.” God doesn’t need to hurry, He knows how this thing ends.²⁴ Not only that, He **decided** how this thing ends. Not only that, He decided it ends **good**!²⁵ Even when you fall, God says, “Just hold on to Me. I won’t let you be destroyed. I’ll hold you up, as you learn to walk again!” Glory to God!! Look at Neh.6:24.

3: Forget the old “walls”, there are new “walls” now.

²⁴ Isaiah 46:9,10

²⁵ Jeremiah 29:11; Philippians 1:6; Romans 8:28

***“Do not remember the past events, pay no attention to things of old.
Look, I am about to do something new; even now it is coming.
Do you not see it? Indeed, I will make a way in the wilderness,
rivers in the desert.”***

Isaiah 43:18,19 (HCSB)

I lived on a corner in Zion, IL; white house with a porch on two sides. We loved to barbecue on our two, Char-Griller grills. (No, I wasn't rich. I have 10 kids. It **takes** two grills!) God reminded me that those memories are past, I can't go back to them. My kids are already three years older. **THEY** are different. But whatever God's "new thing" is, He has promised me that it is a better thing. Trust God completely and let Him make it new.

READ:

Psalm 112:1-3; Isaiah 41:9-13;
42:5-9; 44:3-5; 54:2,3,13;
Jeremiah 31:16,17

4: When God does it, He deals with your enemies too.

Because God's people followed His guidance, day by day, Jerusalem was rebuilt in record time, and their enemies were "intimidated and lost their confidence." Your enemies will be ***much more*** defeated when they

see that God fought for you.

Two lepers sat at the gate of Jerusalem, nearly starved to death. Israel had been under siege until nearly **everyone** was starving! They decided to throw themselves at the mercy of the Syrians. Nothing to lose, they figured it was a worthy gamble, perhaps the Syrians would give them some food. When they arrived at the Syrian camp, they found it deserted.

Songs Of

Trust God completely.
Let Him make it new.

Deliverance

***“For the LORD had made the host of the Syrians to hear a noise of chariots,
and a noise of horses, even the noise of a great host:
and they said one to another, Lo, the king of Israel hath hired
against us the kings of the Hittites, and the kings of the
Egyptians, to come upon us.”***

II Kings 7:6

(KJV)

**They had simply fled with the
for us.”**

This chapter has one, affected when you allow the your story to encourage someone else to rebuild. Like Jerusalem, how many lives will be sheltered by the reconstruction of your life? The people who rebuilt these walls gave homes to 42,360 people! (...and 6720 donkeys. See? You might even help your mother-in-law!

Do you see? Your life touches lives and will touch lives you don't even know yet. And God will reward you richly for each one.²⁶

God told Abraham, "I'm going to bless you. I'm going to make your name great. I'm going to make you a blessing to others."²⁷ In Jesus, that promise belongs to you.²⁸ (Read, #4: The Man Who Believed God) God wants YOUR life to be a blessing to those you influence. If you allow Him to make your life as He designed, He intends it to be a blessing.²⁹

READ:

Nehemiah 7

clothes on their backs! Nehemiah said it, "Our God will fight

outstanding message: You have no idea how many lives will be LORD to rebuild your life. It isn't just for you. God wants to use

**READ:
Nehemiah 8**

III. We Require Congregation

Ne.8,9

²⁶ Matthew 10:40-42

²⁷ Genesis 12:1,2

²⁸ Galatians 3:29

²⁹ Jeremiah 29:11; Romans 8:28

***“Now all people gathered together as one man
in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate;
and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses,”
Nehemiah8:1 (KJV)***

Go to church! After this taxing, emotional, physically exhausting couple of months, the people of God needed two things; His Word and each other.

***“I was glad when they said unto me, 'Let us go into the house of the LORD.'”
Psalm122:1***

After this battle, we need the preaching and teaching of God's Word. Even though the walls of Jerusalem were built, there was still work to do. The temple needed to be built.³⁰ Most of the *city* still needed to be rebuilt.

This life on earth is an unending build. God will bring us through large victories, like being released from prison, but building goes on until we are home with Jesus. Until then, we need the ministry of the Word, and each other.

CHURCH – WHAT ARE YOU LOOKING FOR?

1: Unity

***“All the people gathered together as one man”
v. 1***

There needs to be singularity of purpose to know the presence of God, and to hallow His name.³¹

2: Hunger to Know God's Word

The phrase, ***“those who could understand”*** is repeated three times here. All the people who were old enough to understand the Word of God that was being explained to them, stayed *half the day* to hear God's Word. When Ezra opened the scroll, they stood. God's Law was precious to them.

***“Oh, how I love Your law! It is my meditation all the day.”
Psalm119:97 (KJV)***

Find a church where love for God's Word is obvious, not just presumed. Verse 8 says that all the people listened attentively to the reading of the law.

- Your hunger for the Word matches your love for God.
- Your love for God matches the time you spend alone with Him.
- So, if your love for God needs some warmth, you MUST make more time for God's Word in your day.

3: A Spirit of Praise and Worship Toward God

It is evident on the faces of God's people, when worship is heart-felt. You cannot truly worship God and not see your emotions become involved. Find a church that is passionate in praising our Savior! It doesn't matter if they sing Fanny J. Crosby, or Chris Tomlin; from a hymnal, or a big-screen, PRAISE! Victories begin in praise to our mighty God!³²

³⁰ Read the Book of Ezra

³¹ Luke11:2

³² Joshua6:20; IIChronicles20:21-23

4: Bible teaching

We will never stop learning more about God, and His glorious Son. The Spirit of God in you will reveal new truth about the Word, as long as you live. He will coordinate the revelation of truth with your own study, and the teaching at church, and books you read, etc. You need a church where the Bible is explained in the anointing power of the Holy Spirit, so that you will mature spiritually.

“But grow in grace, and in the knowledge of our LORD and Savior, Jesus Christ.”
II Peter 3:18 (KJV)

If you don't focus on Jesus, and growing more like Him, you will go back to the old ways.

“Looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of our faith,”
Hebrews 12:2 (KJV)

READ:
Verses 9-18

5: You NEED godly celebration!

Man, go to the church picnic! Get in the men's basketball or softball league. I grew up Baptist – once-a-month, after Sunday night service, potluck! Glory to God! Don't spend the rest of your years mourning your *lost* years; “eat the fat, drink the sweet”. (In the original Hebrew, that means “burgers and Coca-Cola.” Ok, not really, but you get the idea.)

The Israelites discovered a feast they had forgotten, and so they started 'er up again. It is more than just good times, “the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

“A merry heart doeth good like a medicine.”
Proverbs 17:22 (KJV)

*Notice the first part of Neh.9:18. Don't get out of the Word.

6: Separation from sin

READ:
Chapter 9:1-3;
Ephesians 4:11-16

I notice two things here:

A: It's only three verses. You shouldn't leave church feeling beaten-down. God gave us those anointed people to help us to mature³³, doing the work of serving,³⁴ and building up,³⁵ strengthening the body of Christ.

B: It IS vital to stay clean from sin. You cannot live in this world without getting some on you. You need a church that does not condone sin. If God's Word says, “Don't!”, so should your pastor. We need to be reminded of pitfalls, and things to avoid. You and I need accountability to someone who is the guardian of our soul; a shepherd, a pastor. Find a church where the truth is told about the destructive effects of sin, with the compassion our Father has toward one who has fallen.³⁶ He runs to His prodigal, who still reeks of the abomination of sin, and restores him. He gives a ring – the authority of the Father's name – the robe of His righteousness, sandals – the ability to walk in our position as His sons. The attitude of the church should be the same as Jesus' attitude.

“Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave

³³ “perfecting” -KJV

³⁴ “ministry” -KJV

³⁵ “edifying” -KJV

³⁶ Luke 15:20b

***to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold,
we are slaves. And its rich yield goes to the kings whom
You have set over us because of our sins. They rule over
our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress.”
Nehemiah9:36,37 (ESV)***

Wait a minute, we're right back where we started! Look at Nehemiah1:3, “The survivors... are in great distress.” (NKJV) True freedom is only found in a totally committed walk with God. You can go through all of this, even repent of your sin, and still miss the biggest truth in all of God's Kingdom. Look at all the times in chapter nine that it says Israel repented, then returned to their sin. Through all of history, God has wanted one thing: “Love Me as I have loved you; with all your heart!” From Exodus6:7 to Revelation21:3, and numerous places between you will find what I believe is the theme of the entire Bible, in a phrase. “I will be their God, and they will be my people.” This Book is not a religious manual. It's a love letter from a God who wants a close relationship with you. Therein is the key to freedom. Know Him! Love Him!

**READ:
Nehemiah 10**

“In view of all this”, (HCSB) The people vowed to return to God with all their hearts. They vowed to obey the Word of God that had been given to them. “We will not neglect the house of our God.” (v. 39) In the New Covenant, **you** are that house of God. The same Spirit of God that filled that temple, dwells permanently inside of you, as a believer. Don't neglect the temple; follow the Spirit and become more like Him.³⁷ When Israel worshiped the LORD, smoke filled that temple. When you and I worship the LORD, His glory fills us no less!

**READ:
Nehemiah 11, 12**

This is the “credits” at the end of our story, but don't leave the theater, just yet. These people made it into God's **ETERNAL** Word for their courage! Wow! Put yourself there. Today, they sit in glory, look at this, and say, “Hey, that’s me! Right there in verse (?). God put **me** in the Bible!”

The story of YOUR victory will be no less noteworthy!

***“Jerusalem's rejoicing was heard far away.”
Nehemiah12:43 (KJV)***

Look at Luke15:32. God says that He just isn't going to be able to help but celebrate when your life is restored! *Oh, let Him, Please!!*

Wherever you are at this moment, just kneel before Him, and give Him all of you. He will not fail you! He waits to make everything new, and to provide you a future and a hope.³⁸ If you've never come to Christ for salvation, today is the day.³⁹

Understand this:

- 1: You were born a sinner, it's in your blood.⁴⁰
- 2: Sin's penalty, or wage, is death. Death is the place of God's wrath on sin, Hell.⁴¹
- 3: Jesus, who did not owe that penalty, paid it anyway in your place.⁴²
- 4: Forgiveness, and peace with God is yours when you receive it as God's free gift.⁴³
- 5: Receive that gift by believing those four things in your heart and confessing them with your mouth.⁴⁴

³⁷ IICorinthians3:18

³⁸ Jeremiah29:11

³⁹ IICorinthians6:2

⁴⁰ Romans5:12, 3:23

⁴¹ Romans6:23a; Revelation21:8

⁴² Romans5:8; IICorinthians5:21

⁴³ Romans5:1; Ephesians2:8,9

⁴⁴ Romans10:9,10,13

"**LORD**, I know I am a sinner, deserving Your punishment in Hell. I believe that Jesus took that punishment in my place to provide forgiveness of my sin debt. I receive that forgiveness as a free gift from You; on no merit of mine, by no good works of mine, but simply that I believe You. I do now confess that Jesus is my **LORD** and Savior, and I am forever a child of God through Him. Thank you, **LORD** Jesus for saving me. -amen."

"Be serious! Be alert! Your adversary, the devil, is prowling around like a roaring lion, looking for anyone he can devour."
1Peter5:8 (HCSB)

Don't relax and let your spiritual guard drop! Notice again, how they kept in the Word,⁴⁵ and God revealed new things that they needed to do. God will lead you forward from here.⁴⁶

Mighty God, our Father,

*I pray for every person reading these notes, that You would reveal to each one, individually, the amazing plan that You have laid out for his life. I pray that he would see, firsthand, Your unlimited might. I pray that decimated homes, families, and marriages will be restored. I call on the angels of God to work on behalf of these heirs of salvation. **LORD**, I ask that You work miracles on behalf of these homes, families, and marriages.*

I bind the spiritual enemies of restoring these lives, in Jesus' name. I pray that victories will be seen in the lives of each one through the power of Your mighty name.

I ask these things with thanksgiving, in Jesus' name. -amen."

Thank-you, again for allowing me to share what God is doing in my life. I pray that it will help you as well.

-John

⁴⁵ Nehemiah13:1a

⁴⁶ Philippians1:6