

Sunday 10th January 2010
Building Outreach Belonging x02. GS.

Title of talk: Rebuilding the Walls with timeless Lessons and reliable Guidelines

Text: Nehemiah 1:1-11, 2 Chronicles 36:18-20,

1. Introduction

Slide1: *Wall & Title*

We begin a new theme for this New Year - *Building Outreach Belonging BOB*

We are looking at Foundations

Last week Jane spoke about Jesus our foundation

This week we are going to dip into the Book of Nehemiah.

Slide 2: *Map*

Nehemiah tells his own story of how God called him to return back to Jerusalem to rebuild the Walls the date of this context is 586 BC.

2. Background to Text

Let just go back in time & review the History

Israel began to have world significance under the rule of Saul, David and Solomon. David expanded Israel's territory tenfold. His son Solomon succeeded him but he later compromised his integrity by allowing idol worship.

Slide: 3 *Map 2 Kingdoms*

The kingdom was split into two areas. (1King11:11)
The Northern Kingdom in Samaria, which included 10 tribes, called Israel and the Southern Kingdom which included two tribes called Judah.

722BC God allowed the Assyrians to invade and conquer the Northern Kingdom. Some of the people escaped and fled to Judah.

300 years later 586BC King Nebuchadnezzar from Babylon invaded Jerusalem.

They burned down the house of God and took all its treasures and they took the people captive, on a 800 miles trip to Babylon, today it is part of Iraq.

Slide 4: Text**2 Chronicles 36 (New Living Translation)**

¹⁸ The king took home to Babylon all the articles, large and small, used in the Temple of God, and the treasures from both the LORD'S Temple and from the palace of the king and his officials. ¹⁹ Then his army burned the Temple of God, tore down the walls of Jerusalem, burned all the palaces, and completely destroyed everything of value.

²⁰ The few who survived were taken as exiles to Babylon, and they became servants to the king and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

Slide: 5 *Babylon, today it is part of Iraq.*

70 years later the Persians under King Cyrus overthrew the Babylon Empire.

Cyrus led by the Lord sent a proclamation out that the Lord God of heaven, who had appointed him to build him a house in Jerusalem. (2Chro 36:22-23)

Some refer to this as the "second Exodus".

1st Group set out to build the temple were led by a man called Zerubbabel

2nd Group left 80 years later with Ezra the Priest

3rd Group 13 years later left with Nehemiah the Prophet.

3. The Problem:

We pick up the story with Nehemiah taking up God's call to rebuild the wall.

Slide 6: Text

V 3 They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire."

Nehemiah role was clear he was called to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

To rebuild on foundations that have already been laid

In this biblical manual (Nehemiah) which is a great book for leaders we also find timeless Lessons and reliable guidelines that work for building quality characteristics in all our lives in all situations we find ourselves in.

What are characteristics? It's how we behave
Like Jesus or like the way we feel!

We are **ALL** called to lead something even if it is to lead the dog for a walk!

Slide 7: Dog taking the lead

We lead in our homes, in our work place, and in our church, wherever we do life.

4. Today we are going to begin to look at what *lessons & reliable guidelines* we can learn from this great leader - Nehemiah

We will see how some of these timeless lessons and guidelines, can help us build and rebuild the Walls in our life, having laid the foundations of our faith.

As Jane said last week - We are attempting to build upon the foundations of last year's teaching but we will not re-lay the same foundations in detail - but build further. (*Hebrews 6: 1 – 3*) NLT

5. The story begins with an ordinary servant called Nehemiah

The story follows his personal journey from cup bearing, wall builder to becoming the official governor of Israel.

As we explore some of the life of Nehemiah my prayer is that we walk away with another **Brick** to add to our Walls - to our lives in what ever situation that needs rebuilding, strengthening.

In Isaiah this is what God Says

¹⁵ *"Never! Can a mother forget her nursing child?
Can she feel no love for the child she has borne?
But even if that were possible,
I would not forget you!*

¹⁶ *See, I have written your name on the palms of my hands.*

Always in my mind is a picture of Jerusalem's walls in ruins. *Isaiah*
49 (*New Living Translation*)

Slide 8

God was saying to His People "your lives are like walls, always on my mind, written on my palm.

e.g. When ever I really want to remember something I write it on the palm of my hand.

***God has us on his mind at all the time!
God has his hands upon us.***

6. The walls of our lives can be in ruins through neglect!

The Holy Spirit is the leader in our lives that bring to attention the things that need rebuilding.

If we neglect our walls we make room for the things of the world to creep in through the gaps.

In chapter 1 we see a process of how to build.

(1) The first Brick / Lesson we can learn from Nehemiah is Evaluation

We need to assess (Look - Examine) the situation, we can't just shrug our shoulders, and hope someone else does something about it, we can't reject responsibility.

If this is our attitude than the enemy is living in our camp.

(2) The second Brick / Lesson we can learn from Nehemiah is Rebuilding but beginning with Prayer.

V4 When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.

Nehemiah did not rush in with some emotional reaction or plan, but he stepped back and he prayed for God's guidance & correction.

How do you respond when you hear a bad report?

Do you rush in?

Or do you stop, assess and pray?

St Paul tells us

⁶ Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done. ⁷ Then you will experience God's peace, which exceeds anything we can understand. His peace will guard your hearts and minds as you live in Christ Jesus.

Philippians 4:6

It was said of Hudson Taylor that the sun never rose for forty years in China without God finding him on his knees in prayer.

Rebuilding is hard work.
We need to stay consistent.

No one suddenly hits the bottom,
falling away is not sudden!

Erosion is our constant battle.
If the mortar, becomes loose the bricks will begin to fall out.

Bad Behaviour does not happen overnight.

(3) The third Brick / Lesson we can learn from Nehemiah is Perseverance.

We may weep over our sins
We may confess our wrongdoings
But unless you and I "have a mind to work"
at our lives, at our Walls,
it will soon be overrun by the world and our walls will crumble!

☺ **Point**

Good leaders, (Good Followers of Jesus) are **Made**
They are Not **Born** - they are **built,**
shaped, and **tested** by God
Brick by Brick – over time.

7. We are all different

Some people have more bricks than others.

Not because God favours others more than us, but we all come to the Lord at different points in life,
With different hurts, hang-up and habits.

Harry last week mentioned two buildings that have two different types of foundations.

I believe this was a prophetic word.

Slide:9

The 1st Salisbury Cathedral

This is built on only four feet of foundations,

The cathedral also has the tallest church spire in the **United Kingdom** (123m/404 ft).

The other building is East London Tabernacle, this was bombed during the IIWW and later they rebuilt the church on existing old foundations, I think bigger and taller.

☺ **Point**

The point I Believe that God wants to make from this to us, is that it does not matter how deep our foundations are in Christ.

Or how long we have know Jesus

Or our background, our heritage.

Slide 10:

The question is, Are we on to the next brick for rebuilding or building the walls of our lives?

That included wherever the Lord has placed us and given us:

Relationships - Family & Friends

Our Work place

Our Community

Our Church

We are building for Now and for Eternity.

St Paul asked the question to the Corinthian church -

¹⁶ *Do you not know that you are the temple of God and that the Spirit of God dwells in you? 1 Corinthians 3 (NKJV)*

Let us not just Repent

But Rebuild our Walls

Persevere in Rebuilding

And Let us not give up. Lets Pray.