

## **Bible e-Study** - Nehemiah #2

Today we look at Nehemiah about faithful living.

*"I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days, I set out during the night with a few men. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem."* Neh 2:11-12

**NUGGET** - The verse today comes from the 2<sup>nd</sup> chapter of Nehemiah. Nehemiah has arrived in Jerusalem from Babylon with all the authority he needs to accomplish the vision that God has placed before him. But he doesn't just wade into the fray; he first takes stock of the situation 'on the ground' as we read in verses 11-12. He knows the vision, but he needs to set the plan in place also.

For that he needs to see things in Jerusalem as they are for himself, not just what he has heard. How often in our lives do we let our plans jump ahead of the facts based just on what we've heard or what we *think* we've heard? In the growth of our spiritual lives, moving ahead without first getting our facts in order can be damaging to us. Oftentimes in our country, people think that they've 'heard' something and so they're Christians. But is what they've heard the true facts, which are:

- God created us and we turned from Him in sin
- That He sent Jesus Christ to die in our place to pay for our sin and restore us
- And that for Jesus' sake alone God gives us new life, filled with the Holy Spirit to guide our daily lives.

In verse 12 above Nehemiah refers to what "God had put" in Nehemiah's heart to do. God has put new life in Christ in our hearts. Now we are called to live according to a new way; to plan to live faithfully following after Christ. We live the new life that God has put into us by His grace through faith alone. And so we too, like Nehemiah, make our spiritual plans based not what we think we've heard, but on the facts, on the fact that God has redeemed us by His choice.

Notice also that Nehemiah set out with a few men to do his inspection. It's good to have companions in our journey of faith. That's what comes of coming to church, we're in the company of others who know those facts and make *their* plans based *on* those facts. When we make plans based on the new life we have in Christ and we do so with others we become accountable for how we live. Now in the verses above Nehemiah has not yet spoken of his plans but you read that in verses **16-18**. And when he puts forward his plans, others join in. We too need others in the plans of our lives. Living in accountable relationships is helpful to living faithfully to what God has put in our hearts.

**APPLICATION** - Consider the following about living faithfully;

1. Who have you given permission to "ride along" in your life? Who have you opened up your plans in your spiritual life to and allowed them to help you with them?
2. As a way of faithful planning, sit down with a calendar and set aside blocks of minutes or hours in the next week for personal time with the Fact Book - the Bible. (B-asic I-nstructions B-efore L-eaving E-arth)

**PRAY** - God wants to hear from you. There is nothing you can tell Him that will surprise or offend Him. Trust Him to listen and hear you. Ask Him to guide your Bible reading and open your eyes to what He wants to show you in there.

*Going Deeper together. We meet in the **Fellowship Hall** during the Education Hour for discussion and prayer with all those who're able to come. If you're not able to make it Sunday, please feel free to e-mail me with your comments or questions so that we can have the benefit of sharing them together.*

Peace in Christ, Pastor Tom Rhodes



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### **'HEARING, SHARING AND LIVING THE GOSPEL'**

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## **GOING DEEPER**

Nehemiah, in chapter 2, set forth the vision that God gave him to the leaders. (*the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.*) As we spoke above, he did this only after setting off around the city and inspecting it for himself. And this followed three days of rest after getting there. Nehemiah planned and he built relationships.

But notice that right from the start of leaving the king's presence, Nehemiah had opposition to the vision. Read verses [9-20](#) and see there what took place. The opposition was right out of the gate. The enemy of God never gives an inch. He stands ready to oppose the work of God any where on this earth.

In our own lives this often gets expressed in the question, why? Why God? Why God did you give me sight to see this or that and now I seem to be frustrated in trying to get there? The vision that God gives us is not accomplished simply by seeing it. (What comes to mind from your own observations of life that confirm this?) And when we do seem to understand what God wants for us, there often seems to be something that stands ready to oppose it or take it away.

Do you remember the story of the seeds that Jesus told? It's in [Mark 4:1-20](#). Notice in verse 15 that Jesus says some people are like the seed that falls along the road side where Satan snatches the word of God from them as soon as it is sown. We must always be aware that Satan really does oppose God and those who follow Him. Satan also tries to sow discord and discontent among God's people.

Such distractions are common to those who would seek to follow God's will. Saint Paul spoke of this in [Romans 7:21-25](#). We have a traitor that lives within us, in our very flesh, that seeks to undermine the word of God that comes to us from outside of us to give us freedom from sin's bondage. Yet there is a part of us that wants to remain bound and enslaved by sin. It is only the objective truth of scripture that can overcome the traitor.

Like in a court room. It is the declaration of the judge that matters, it's not how the parties feel, it's what the judge says that counts and nothing more. (In my house growing up, that was Mom; what she said was law, how about in your house?) So also in our lives, it's what God has declared true that matters. [Romans 7:24-25](#). Jesus Christ is our rescuer and deliverer. That cannot be changed by how we feel at a given moment. It is true, always! We are under God's control and not under sin's.

Yes, sin is always there ready to oppose God's will in our life. Just as what Nehemiah faced from Sanballat and Tobiah. It is important to remember that the opposition that comes our way is not of our own doing. Hear that again, the opposition that comes our way is not of our own doing. We often think we have done something to cause it. No, we haven't other than desiring to follow where God would lead us. The opposition we face is to God and His will.

Remember what we said before, that the vision that God gives us is not accomplished simply by seeing it or knowing it. And when we set out to do what is asked of us by God there will be opposition. In the face of it, like Nehemiah we must be steadfast in our faithfulness of living according to God's word and His leading. We have been given all the instructions we need for that faithful living by the Word of God. After all, as we noted in our application above, the Bible provides us with God's Basic Instructions Before Leaving Earth.      God's Peace, Pastor Rhodes