

Today we look at Nehemiah about faithful participation.

⁸ Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the next section; and Hananiah, one of the perfume-makers, made repairs next to that. They restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. Neh 3:8

NUGGET – This is an exciting section of Nehemiah to read. No, really it is! The verse today talks about just two of the many many people who put their personal lives on hold and put their backs into making the vision of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem a reality. I pick these two because of their professions, one a goldsmith and the other a perfume maker. What a pair to be building a wall!

I can't urge you enough to take the few moments needed to read all of [chapter 3](#). When you do, make a list of the different professions / occupations or other descriptions of the people that you see listed there. The variety is wonderful to see and reminds us that in God's family it takes all manner of people to do the work that God has for His people to do on this earth in the building up of His kingdom.

Take note of the descriptions of the people and places and the orderliness of the process as this work was carried out:

- One person's work did not overlap, but adjoined the next persons.
- The variety of different people all worked together toward the same goal.

These people were all working to repair the wall of the city. They shared a common vision to see Jerusalem rebuilt, this was the vision that God gave to Nehemiah and that he faithfully passed on. That vision was the motivation for their joint effort. God had called them to something greater than themselves, and yet that same vision included them in it.

Each person, as was said, did his own section and did not overlap into the next. Also note that God did not do the work Himself, as He had done in creation. Nehemiah also did not simply see the need and do all the labor alone. No, this was done *together*, each person doing what they could. Each doing their part to match up with the next person's part. Each one taking on a *portion* of the *whole* under the call of God motivated by the vision that He gave.

APPLICATION - Consider the following about faithful participation in life;

1. This is like driving on a freeway- not all of us drive the same cars or have the same backgrounds – but to arrive safely we must all participate in the same effort. We must all drive the same direction and follow the same rules or we crash. Think of faithful participation in the work of God next time you use the freeway on ramp.
2. As a way of faithful participation in the work of God, think of what you can do in the congregation that may not be a specialty of yours but you can participate in anyway. Perhaps on the next clean-up day you can show up and simply ask to be put to work, willing to do whatever needs done.
3. And when we have our quarterly voters meetings you can show up to those meetings and help to build the new 'wall' of the future for our congregation.

PRAY – Keep the congregation in prayer as together we seek to be faithful in new ways here. Pray also that God give each of us the willingness, as He gave the inhabitants of Jerusalem, to step forward to do the work He has here for us all to do.

*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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GOING DEEPER

When you read this section of Nehemiah, the places named are unfamiliar to us. However, these descriptions were apparently well known to the first readers. And while the significance of those details may escape us, those details gave the initial readers something familiar to them.

One of the things that this sort of detail tells us is that God is interested in the details of our lives. We are not mere ciphers or just cogs in His great Machine. (*Can you think of a time or detail from your life that clearly showed you that God is interested in the details of your life?*) These place details make it clear that God knows and understands the details of daily life. Look at some of the names of these places:

The Sheep Gate – The Fish Gate – the Tower of the Ovens – The Tombs of David – The House of the Heroes – The Armory – The Dung Gate and The Angle (love those!).

All of these places held significance in the lives of the initial readers and also in the lives of the builders. (*Besides demonstrating God's interest in the details of our lives, what might be another good reason for Nehemiah to include such minute details in writing this?*) This was where they lived and worked and spent their days and years. God knows the details of each of their lives, to the point of knowing the spot where they helped rebuild the walls of the city. Even at a place called the Dung Gate! (*What is a significant place for you where you've seen God at work in your life?*)

We so often think that God only knows us from a distance. Perhaps that's because we tend to try and keep Him at a distance. We don't let Him inside the walls of our own lives. We keep Him outside and separate. We want to wall Him off from the details of our lives and keep Him in reserve for the 'big things' of life.

That isn't how a wall, much less a relationship, gets built. You don't have a relationship with God that is impersonal and compartmented. On one level it's funny to think that we can keep God from various parts of our lives. It nears the height of hubris to think that we can 'build a wall' to stymie the God of all Creation. No, God wants to be involved in all the "Angles" of our lives because He cares for the whole of who we are.

One more point from nugget verse of [3:8](#), notice that in referring to the wall, Nehemiah refers to all of Jerusalem. The *one* wall stands in for the *whole* city. The wall represents, before God and the world, the city of Jerusalem. The 'one' standing in for the 'whole'. That is also what Jesus does. (*Where else in scripture or in life do you see this happen?*) Jesus stands in for the whole: for the whole of broken-down and burned

out, rebellious and sinful creation. We are the broken down ones that Jesus comes and 'repairs'. He repairs us with His body and blood sacrificed in our place.

He bears the weight of our sin, and He dies the death that should have been ours. The breaking down of our relationship with God happens by one man, Adam. And the restoration of that relationship also happens by one man, Jesus. We see, in the *wall* of Jerusalem, a representation of the *city* of Jerusalem. We see in Jesus Christ the real thing. He is the true restorer and repairer of all creation.

And like the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt by many people doing their part, so also in our lives. Jesus has done His part and we are now totally restored to a right and righteous relationship with God the Creator. (*Who is someone that God has used to build you up in Christ? How has God used you to build up Christ in someone?*)

We now work on the next 'section' in our lives, that is, by the power of the Holy Spirit, doing the good deeds we are now in a position to do. Since Christ has re-established our relationship with God we now can carry on the work that God has laid out for us to do ([Eph 2:10](#)) just as each neighbor did their work on the wall.

God's Peace as you 'build', Pastor Rhodes