

It's Ain't About the Wall

Text - Nehemiah 8

Introduction: Surely you have heard that President Trump wants to build a wall between the US and Mexico to cut down on illegal immigration. There are other great walls in history:

a. Great Wall of China - The Great Wall of China has a main-line length of 2,150 miles. Completed during the reign of Qin Shi Huangdi (221-210 B.C.), it also has 2,195 miles of branches and spurs. It is 15-39 feet high and up to 32 feet thick.— *Guinness Book of World Records*. The Great Wall of China was decades in building, and was finished at the expense of vast treasure and 400,000 human lives.

b. Berlin Wall

c. Bethlehem Wall

d. Wall to be in Heaven:

Revelation 21:12-14 *And had a wall great and high, and had twelve gates, and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which are the names of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel: On the east three gates; on the north three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west three gates. And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.*

By the way, no undocumented people in Heaven – Matthew 22:11-14

There was a great work on the Jerusalem wall in Nehemiah 3

- a. An **Identity** Issue for the People
 - b. A **Security** Issue for the People
 - c. **A Matter of Restoring Glory to God**
3. Once they got to work, they completed the task in **52 days** (Neh. 6:15)
- a. Big tasks require an deliberate start.
"A journey of 10,000 leagues begins with the first step."
"How do you eat an elephant?" – "One bite at a time."
 - b. Big tasks require unified cooperation.

Chapter 6:15 *"So the wall was finished in.... fifty and two days."*

Chapter 7 tells how the people got organized, housed and fed, and they all got involved in a big love offering, from the least to the greatest, to jump start their new spiritual life in their new city with their new wall.

The wall is finished, but the real work has just begun. And God's real purpose for the wall is just beginning. Thank God His people in Jerusalem did not have a 'monument' mentality. They didn't see building the wall as the ultimate goal. **They understood that what went on inside the walls was what really mattered.** This was the reason they were built in the first place.

Chapter 8 - Once the wall was finished the people began to worship and they had revival! They had an old fashioned, heaven sent, sin erasing, devil chasing, window shaking, soul saving revival! It's not about the wall, it's about the Word and worship that went on inside the wall. **Chapter 8** reveals a:

- **Remembrance of Scripture**
- **Repentance of Sin**
- **Reverence for the Sovereign**

--and also...

1. Hunger for the Word.

v. 1 "We want to hear what God has said!" This happened at the water gate, a symbol of the Word! The people gathered there in great number because they were hungry for the Word. Are you hungry for the Word? Is that why you've gathered here today? Are you really hungry for it? Does that mean you'll gather at the gate again tonight? Wed. night?

A little boy brought his father the family Bible from the coffee table. "What is this daddy?" "It's the Bible, it's God's book." his dad replied. "Then should we give it back to Him since we don't use it?"

Psalm 19:9-10 *"... the judgments of the LORD are true and righteous altogether. More to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold: sweeter also than honey and the honeycomb.*

We're not gonna have revival in America because of the election results. We're only gonna see revival when God's people want the Word more than they want money, prosperity, or healthcare.

Job 23:12 " I have esteemed the words of his mouth more than my necessary food.

I'm addicted. I'm addicted to food! So are you!! Just fast from it for 24 hours and you'll know it. In just a few hours you'll find yourself looking longingly at that fridge, saying, remember what we used to have together?

Most of us can't go 7 hours without eating, but we can go 7 days without partaking from the Word of God! Something is wrong. We feed the flesh bountifully but we don't feed our Spirit properly. No wonder our flesh grows and our Spirit shrinks up against our spine!

*"These hath God married and no man shall part,
Dust on the Bible and drought in the heart."*

Nehemiah's people were hungry for the Word more than food, gold, or treasure. Keep in mind they didn't all have copies of the Word. They didn't

have a Bible bookstore on the corner. Most of them only heard the Word when someone would stand and read it publicly.

2. Hearing of the Word.

v. 2-4a, 5 They were not time conscious, thinking about lunch. They stood for 5 or 6 hours a day, day after day. We won't have real revival until we get over our clock watching [watch clocking?]

I'm thankful for a church that is attentive. It is a common compliment you get from guest speakers who come here. I never get a complaint even if I go long. I take that back...**there was one lady recently who said I was putting her to sleep, but I cut her some slack since we're married!**

III.--a little boy went to big church for the first time. He was usually in junior church. He had so many questions at all he saw. He would look at his father and ask, "What does that mean?" [choir sung / 'what does that mean?' / ushers came forward / preacher opened his Bible / took off his watch and set it in front of him - 'what does that mean?' / "Son, that don't mean a thing!"]

3. Honor for the Word.

v. 5-6 There it is! They said **Amen!** Do you? When you say amen you honor the word of God, and you help me out too.

You say, "It's too easy for people to get carried away." Maybe. But it's easier to cool down a zealot than to warm up a corpse! We're Baptists. The greatest danger we face is not becoming a bunch of fanatics it's being so cold and indifferent that we can't get excited about the Word of God! Is He worth the effort of coming forward and bowing our faces to the ground at the old fashioned altar?

4. Handling of the Word.

v. 7-8 It wasn't enough for them to just read the Word, somebody had to explain it. It's called preaching! We don't just need people to stand and 'give a talk', we need the **preaching** of the truth of the Word! It doesn't matter how brilliant the oratory, how clever the outline, or touching the poem is, if it's not rooted in the Bible...if it's not exposing the power of the Word, it's worthless!

Bible preaching is taking the Word, explaining it, illustrating it, and applying it to everyday life! And there's a famine in the land for that kind of preaching. That's the kind of preaching that builds great Christians, and I believe great churches!

v. 7b 'their place' = their SS class, their small group.

These 13 men in v. 7, and the Levites, were leaders who explained the Word more, even one on one as needed. That's real discipleship!

5. Heeding of the Word.

v. 9-12 **Tirshatha** in v. 9 = governor.

The goal of Bible preaching is life transformation. But it's not hearing the Word that transforms lives. And not just understanding it. It's obeying the Word that transforms lives. Giving heed. "Be ye doers of the Word, not hearers only."

It's not about the wall, it's about the Word and the worship.

Their transformation began with:

Weeping

9b What were they weeping over? Their sin! Their separation from God!

Joy

10b Nehemiah and Ezra had wisdom and stepped in to encourage the weeping that there was hope and help in the Lord. The devil wants to turn conviction into guilt, and there is a difference between a broken spirit and a morose spirit.

The devil wants to bring you down and keep you down. The Spirit of God wants to bring you down in order to lift you higher than ever! Preaching may at first make you mad, but then it makes you sad, so the Lord can make you glad!

I feel sorry for the sad sacks that sit in church and look at the floor. They're determined not to laugh, not to smile, and not to hint at enjoying the service. They may not like it around here because we're gonna enjoy the Lord!

Obedience

v. 12-17a What in the world is going on here? It's a restoration of the feast of tabernacles or booths. In Bible days God's people were commanded to have a festival once a year and go out away from their home to a brush arbor and camp out in a festive atmosphere. It was a recognition of the fact that they once permanently were encamped in the days of Moses. It was a memorial.

Mourning leads to joy which leads to obedience...which leads to revival!

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III.--a man bought his wife a nice new car, and he told his wife that if she was ever in an accident, he put the insurance info. in the glove box. Well she had an accident, and she was terrified to tell him she had wrecked the new car he bought her. She was shaking and so flustered. She remembered to look in the glove box, and as she opened the insurance binder a note fell out...it was from her husband. It said, if you are reading this, it's probably because you wrecked the car. I'm just glad you're doing well enough to read. I want you to remember, it's just a car, and you are all that is important.

We've been doing a lot for our building, but let's remember what's really important. Let's pray for what goes on inside this building, and the effect we are seeking to have outside of it as we go our way.