

WHEN ALL ELSE FAILS FOLLOW THE INSTRUCTIONS
Next Steps Devotional Guide — Nehemiah 3
Sermon Series: Nehemiah > Repair, Rebuild & Restore
Sunday, March 5, 2023
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1. Think back over your life. When was a time you did not follow the directions and it did not turn out well? How did it impact you? Impact others?
2. God is in the business of using people to get His will done. In order to do that, it will mean we have to enlist people to help us in a ministry as well as they insisting us to help them in a ministry. Read Nehemiah 3:1 in your sermon outline. Nehemiah let the people who wanted to serve, serve. The first group of people who volunteered finish repairing and restoring what was called “the Sheep Gate.” This gate is where sacrificial lambs would enter to be offered for the sins of the people. Little did they know that 400 years later, the ultimate and final Lamb of God would be led by soldiers through this same gate. This means that what you do for the Lord today can have long term, even centuries long, results. If you are in a ministry today, what are some of the long-term results you hope will happen after you have gone to heaven and why?
3. God is in the business of using people to get His will done. In order to do that, it will mean we let those who are not necessarily experts in an area go ahead learn by serving in an area. Read Nehemiah 3:8-9 in your sermon outline.
 - a. Has there ever been a time in your life you wanted to serve, but you were not allowed to serve because of your inexperience in that area? How did that make you feel?
 - b. Has there ever been a time in your life that someone wanted to serve alongside you in a ministry or project for God but you really did not want them because you felt they did not have the experience? How did they and you handle it?
 - c. “We learn by doing” someone has said. What are the benefits and challenges of seeing such opportunities as an apprenticeship? Meaning — we let people learn as they serve.
 - d. Nehemiah put someone on the task force to help build part of the wall. They were a manufacturer of perfumes. They had never done anything like this in their life. They weren’t even a stone mason, but at least when they came to work they smelled good. Why would Nehemiah do this? Why is this good?
4. God is in the business of using people to get His will done. In order to do that, it will mean we let people who are willing to do more than their fair share, do it. In Nehemiah 3:11, 19, 21, 24, 27 and 30, depending on your translation, all of these verses have the same common phrase — “. . . *they repaired another section of the wall.*” These people did not stop when their assignment was over — they volunteered for another assignment on the wall. Have you ever done that for a ministry or a church? When? What happened?
5. God is in the business of using people to get His will done. In order to do that, it will mean we let people who want to serve in the “unpleasant” areas, serve.
 - a. Read Nehemiah 3:14a in your sermon outline. There was a group of people who repaired and restored what was called “The Dung Gate.” One of them was from a royal Jewish family. He did not think this was beneath him or that he should be in some kind of supervisory role. Is there any position in the church that you feel is beneath you? Why? Serving is not a matter of experience or competence — just willingness. Why?
 - b. These people could smell the stench from the human waste that was dumped in the Valley of Hinnon. These were some awesome people who did this. Why do you think they were willing to work in such unbearable conditions?
 - c. We also learn there is another Jewish royal who worked on a part of the wall, but this section of the wall was much more pleasant — pools for relaxing and gardens with pleasant aromas from flowers and plants. One part of the wall under repair and restoration was for refuse and another part of the wall being restore and repaired was for recreation. Are you willing to serve in an area at church that is not so glamorous or not so “important?” Why or why not?
 - d. Would people who know you best say that your life is more characterized by complaining or cooperating? For example, do you typically say, sometimes with sigh, “*Well, I got to go to that dumb committee meeting at church?*” Or, “*I’ve got to go work in the nursery?*” or something like that. You don’t say it with enthusiasm, but with almost disdain or disgust.
6. God is in the business of using people to get His will done. In order to do that, it will mean we let people serve with zeal and enthusiasm. Now this would seem obvious but sometimes we can stymie people’s enthusiasm and zeal. Read Nehemiah 3:20 in your sermon outline as well as the explanation of the Hebrew word translated as “repaired.” These people may have been smiling, singing or whistling with enthusiasm, energy and zeal. Sometimes we say, “*Well, slow down there. What’s got you so upbeat today?*”
 - a. Have you ever seen someone serving in the church for the Lord with enthusiasm and zeal only to lose it because of what someone said or did? Why do you think people say or do things that kill other people’s enthusiasm and zeal?
 - b. Have you ever had that happen to you? How did you respond?
 - c. Have you ever done that to someone else? Why and what happened?
7. For those who choose to serve, they have to accept that there will be those in the church who will choose never to serve. Read Nehemiah 3:5 in your sermon outline. There will always be those who feel that due to a position in their career, wherever the church and God could use them, is not important enough for them to give of their time and attention. What suggestions would you give to help change this?
8. One of the best ways to know what is in people’s hearts is by letting them serve. Read Nehemiah 4:6 in your sermon outline. These people “*had a mind to work.*” They wanted to see the gaps in the wall repair and gone. Serving with others gives you an inside track to their heart. They will say things around you. They will do things around you and that attitude you see, reveals what is really in their heart.
 - a. When and where have you seen this for the good and the bad?
 - b. When and where has this been seen in you for the good and the bad? How did you respond to it?
9. Read Philippians 3:12-14 in your sermon outline. The great Apostle Paul never felt or acted like he had “arrived.” He kept pressing on and on to finish the race and to receive God’s prize for him. Does this characterize you? Why or why not?
10. When you hear the word “church,” what comes to mind and why?
 - a. Read in your sermon notes the explanation for the Greek New Testament word translated as “church.” When you read the definition given in your sermon outline, does this change your view of the church? Why or why not? If it changes it, how?

- b. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 16:18 in your sermon notes. It is obvious that all of Hell will come against God's church, but all of its attempts are an effort in futility. Hell will never prevail against God's church. What kind of understanding does this give you about the church and why?
11. Jesus is the business of building a church. One of the ways that He does that is that He calls us to be holy.
 - a. Read Jesus' words in John 17:17, which were prayed by Jesus within hours of being arrested and crucified. Why do you think Jesus specifically prayed this at that time? What are the implications for us, the church, today?
 - b. Being "holy" does not mean without sin or rarely sinning. Read Romans 6:19 in your sermon outline and the explanation for the word translated as "holy" in your sermon outline. Would you say there is enough evidence to prove that today you are more like Christ and His character than you were a week ago? A month ago? A year ago? If so, what is that evidence?
12. Jesus is the business of building a church. One of the ways that He does that is that He has commissioned us, His church, to go into the world. Jesus prayed in John 17:15 that He wanted us *"to be in the world, but not of it."*
 - a. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 28:19-20a. These words were said by Jesus before 120 new believers just before He ascended back to heaven. One of the ways we demonstrate that we are part of "the called out ones," is we make disciples. No matter what your ministry position or role in the church is, your primary role according to Jesus is to "make disciples." Notice that the #1 thing that Jesus wanted His church to do after He left was make disciples. Do you do that? If so, how has it gone? If not, would you be willing to learn how to make disciples? If so, let us know.
 - b. Read Ephesians 4:11-13 in your sermon outline. There is a huge heresy and lie from hell that permeates many churches. That lie and heresy is this: paid staff are solely responsible for getting people to come to church and solely responsible to grow the church. Though they share in that, they are called to EQUIP the church to do this. In the 1st century, the word translated as "equip" was used in two primary ways. Read those two ways in your sermon outline. When you look at the paid church staff, what role and responsibility have you typically believed was theirs and why?
 - c. Dr. Howard Hendricks, taught for years at Dallas Baptist Theological Seminary, said this: *"The church today is too much like a football game—fifty thousand people in the stands, desperately in need of exercise, watching twenty-two people on the field desperately in need of rest."* What do you think of his statement and why?
 - d. Read Ephesians 4:12 again and the explanation for the Greek New Testament word translated as "building." God sent Nehemiah to not just rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, but to rebuild and restore the Jews faith and obedience to God. God is into building a church — meaning — God wants us to mature. Take your Bible and read 1 Corinthians 3:2 and Hebrews 5:12. What is the point of these passages and how does it relate to "building?"
13. Jesus is the business of creating a church that resembles a human body. Read 1 Corinthians 12:14-20 in your sermon outline.
 - a. How is using the humans body a great analogy for the church? How does this analogy help you?
 - b. It has been said the manual of the church looks more like an anatomy chart rather than an organization chart? What do you think about this and why?
 - c. Read Ephesians 4:11-13 again in your sermon outline. See the phrase "the unity in our faith?" In the Greek language when the word "faith" is preceded by an article such as the word "the," it is referring to doctrinal truth — that truth which forms the foundation of our faith. It is what Jude 1:3b says. Read this verse. What does this mean to you and why?
 - d. Unity is not derived from everyone thinking alike, everyone liking the same kind of music, or everyone eating the same kind of food. Our unity is not based on personality, appearance, or social standing. Our unity is based on our collective commitment to the unity of the faith—the truth of Holy Scripture. How does this impact your view of the church and maintaining unity in the church?
14. In the sermon, PK shared a quote from a surgical oncologist, who said there are spiritual diseases that can spread through the body of Christ as a form of "spiritual cancers." Many churches have split over personality, music styles, money, and etc. When the world sees this happening, what "diagnosis" do you think they give about the church and why?
15. If you go to the gym, you will see body builders. Well, there are 2 main benefits we get from a "spiritual form" of body building. One of the metaphors the Bible uses for the church is metaphor — the human body. We, "the called out ones," the church, are protected from spiritual deception. Read Ephesians 4:13 again in your sermon outline. What does this passage say about how the church can be protected from spiritual deception?
16. If you go to the gym, you will see body builders. Well, there are 2 main benefits we get from a "spiritual form" of body building. One of the metaphors the Bible uses for the church is metaphor — the human body. We, "the called out ones," the church, are protected from spiritual disability. Read Ephesians 4:16 in your sermon outline.
 - a. People who join a church and do not serve become like disabled, ineffective parts of a human body. In fact, if a person has a body part that doesn't function as it should, we call that person disabled or handicapped. When people attach themselves to the church and refuse to function, the church becomes disabled and handicapped in the ministry. What do you think of this? Has it ever occurred to you that non-serving church members are handicapping the church? How are non-serving church members handicapping the church?
 - b. Are you handicapping the church? If no, how? If yes, what should you do to not be that handicap?