

Wheelersburg Baptist Church 10/27/10

Series: *“Facing the Past, Moving Ahead for God’s Honor: Nehemiah”*

Current study: Nehemiah 6:15-7:3

We return once again this evening to the book of Nehemiah. I’d like to begin our study with a question. *How should we treat God’s promises?* God has given us many promises in His Word. What should we do with those promises? When God says He will do something, what should *we* do?

Nehemiah can help us. So can Daniel. Both men did the same thing.

Let’s look at Daniel first. Look at Daniel 9:1-2...

Q: Where was Daniel and what was happening at this point in history? Verse 1

Q: What happened to Daniel in verse 2? He discovered a promise God had made as recorded in Jeremiah’s book. What was the promise?

Q: What did Daniel do with this promise? Verse 4—he prayed. Indeed, he prayed, not passively, but fervently in verses 4-19. Notice what he asked God to do, for instance, in verse 17, 18, & 19.

Note: Daniel asked God to do what He had promised to do. So did Nehemiah.

Let’s look at Nehemiah 1...

In Nehemiah 1 we see his prayer. He, too, prayed in light of a promise God had made in His Word.

Q: What promise? READ verses 8-9...

Nehemiah’s request follows in verse 11. He asks God to do something specific in light of His promise. What? “Give me success when I approach my boss!”

In essence, both Daniel and Nehemiah ask God to do what He promised.

Discuss: Why? Too often I take a passive approach to God’s promises, but Daniel and Nehemiah didn’t. If God already promised to do something, why should we ask Him to do it?

Three principles regarding praying in light of God’s promises:

1. Search God’s Word for promises.
2. Believe what God promised.
3. Ask God to do what He promised.

Discuss: What are some promises God has given us?

Tonight: Nehemiah finishes the building project!

I. The wall was completed (6:15-18).

READ verses 15-18

A. We learn how long it took (15).

Q: How long? 52 days. It’s amazing what amazing things can happen in a relatively short period of time if God’s people will do God’s will in dependence upon God (e.g.—what I often say to counselees...)

B. We learn about its effect (16).

Q: What two groups are mentioned in verse 16? The “enemies” and the “surrounding nations.” When God’s people do something for God, it impacts non-believers. In what ways?

1. *The enemies were afraid.*

Q: Why?

2. *The enemies lost their self-confidence.*

Q: What does that mean?

3. *The enemies knew they’d seen God at work.*

Q: How did they know? What lesson do you see here?

C. We learn another reason the accomplishment was so amazing (17-19).

This is amazing...

1. *Nehemiah’s own leaders were corresponding with the enemy (17).*

Q: What enemy? Tobiah (to see his danger, see 4:3, 7-8)

Q: Who specifically corresponded with Tobiah? The nobles of Judah! Of all the nerve! What were they doing?

2. *Nehemiah’s own leaders had conflicting loyalties (18).*

Q: What were the connections between them? Tobiah was...

a. Son-in-law to Shecaniah

b. His son, Jehohanan, was married to the daughter of Meshullam.

Q: What do we know about Meshullam? See 3:4, 30—he worked on the wall. Do you see a problem here?

Key: Doing God’s will is more important than appeasing family. Few of God’s people would deny that. But many don’t live in light of it. Why not?

3. *Nehemiah’s own leaders kept pressuring him to compromise (19a).*

Q: How so? They kept reporting Tobiah’s “good deeds.”

Key: A leader must see what others fail to see, but that can get him into trouble. How so? Nehemiah saw through Tobiah’s hypocrisy and the façade of his outward “goodness,” but some of Nehemiah’s own people were duped by it. Nehemiah’s own people put pressure on Nehemiah to do what?

4. *Tobiah did the same (19b).*

Q: How so?

II. Here’s what happened *after* the wall was completed (7:1-3).

A. Gatekeepers, singers, and Levites were appointed (1).

Q: By whom? We’re not told. We can assume Nehemiah was instrumental in the recommendation, if not the actual appointment.

Note that singing was important to God in the OT economy. Why? In the Torah God instituted a position of individuals to lead His people when they came for corporate worship. *Singers.*

Discuss: Why is that significant? What does it teach us about the Lord?

B. Hanani and Hananiah were put in charge of Jerusalem (2).

Q: Who appointed them and why? Nehemiah did because he had to return to his job back at headquarters in Susa.

Note: It's significant who Nehemiah did *not* select for the position. See 3:9, 12 for the names of two men who were already in charge of half-districts in Jerusalem.

Q: Why did he select these men (and apparently by-pass the others)? First of all, he selected his brother, not because of family loyalty, but because of spiritual qualifications (see 1:2ff.).

And why did he select Hananiah?

1. *He was a man of integrity.*
2. *He feared God more than most men do.*

Q: What does that mean? A lot of people have just enough of God to be dangerous! Not this man.

C. Nehemiah put security measures in place (3).

1. *He told them what to do with the doors.*

Q: Namely, what?

2. *He put guards in place.*

Q: Who?

Lessons: What do we learn from this episode?

1. *It's amazing what God will do through us if we don't give up.*

Do you think Nehemiah ever got discouraged? Why didn't he give up? What will help us to keep going when we feel like throwing in the towel? How does John 15:4-5 fit into this matter?

2. *When we're seeking to do God's will, we must not allow anything or anyone to distract us.*

What are some examples of things that often distract us from doing God's will?

Discuss (if time allows): What are some of the promises God has given us in His Word that should affect the way we live our lives today?