



## **A Calling - A Plan - A Provision**

Gerry Letourneau // Nehemiah 2:1-20

1. Uniqueness of Reading the Historical Books of Old Testament
  - a. 'How does God speak to us'? The Old Testament biographies are a big help.
    - i. There is not a neat little formula that gives "12 steps to hearing and following after God".
    - ii. God rarely if ever interacts with us that way, and so it was for the OT characters. God has provided for us stories, biographies of how He interacts with His people.
    - iii. It is from the written record of the lives of these OT individuals that we begin to develop sensitivity to the ways and the voice of God.
2. The Book of Nehemiah is such a biographical record of how God worked in the life of Nehemiah to accomplish His purposes.
  - a. We see how God calls Nehemiah
  - b. How Nehemiah prepares to serve
  - c. How God directs and provides to accomplish His purposes
  - d. Historical setting of Nehemiah
    - i. Exile and return to Judah
3. God prepares the heart of the king
  - a. **Proverbs 21:1** The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes.

### **Neh 2:1-2**

4. Protocol before the king
  - a. Sadness not permitted before the king
  - b. Approaching the king un-summoned could result in death (Esther 4).
  - c. Nehemiah did not bring it up / did not plan to be sad – it leaked out

- d. God made the king sensitive to Nehemiah

### **Neh 2:3**

#### 5. Stepping out in Faith

- a. Nehemiah sensed that this was his time – he had to step out in boldness.
- b. There are moments when we too have to step out in spite of our fears.
  - i. There is a danger of paralysis waiting for God to open the door.
  - ii. There is a moment of decision where you have to trust that God has opened the door.
  - iii. Discernment and wisdom is something we should constantly be praying for

### **Neh 2:4-5**

#### 6. God created the opportunity

- a. God worked on the king's heart Prov 21:1
- b. Rather than react in anger, the king said “what is it you want”?

#### 7. Nehemiah had not only prayed, he also planned

- a. **Proverbs 16:9** A man's heart plans his way, But the LORD directs his steps.
- b. Nehemiah was not reckless or hyper-spiritual in his sensing of God's calling
- c. He planned out his steps and now it appeared as if God was opening the door
  - i. He planned his way and now God was going to direct his steps  
Prov. 16:9

### **Neh 2:6-9**

#### 8. Nehemiah had give this a lot of thought:

- a. set a time when he would return 2:6
- b. requested letters of safe conduct (hall-pass) 2:7
- c. Requested letter to provide timber 2:8

9. By God's grace the king granted Nehemiah's request 2:8
  - i. God worked on the king's heart Prov 21:1
  - ii. God also provided officers and cavalry for Nehemiah's journey 2:9

### **Neh 2:10**

#### 10. Opposition to God' Plan

- a. Our battle is not against flesh and blood (Eph 6:12)
  - i. When we are fulfilling God's plan we will always face opposition

### **Neh 2:11-16**

#### 11. Humility in service

- a. Even though arriving with Cavalry escort and letters from the king Nehemiah kept low profile for 3 days 2:11
- b. Did not mention God's burden on his heart to anyone 2:12 & 2:16
- c. Set out during the night to assess the damaged walls
- d. Took only a few men – on foot so as not to create a spectacle
- e. Those who rightly serve are truly humbled to do so

#### 12. Assessing the Work

- a. Mental preparation in 2:6-9
- b. Onsite assessment 2:13-16
- c. Luke 14 **Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it?**

### **Neh 2:17-18**

#### 13. Revealing God's Plan

- a. Over time we become blinded to the damage and junk around us. 2:17
  - i. We all have junk in our lives, we depend on those who care to open our eyes to it.
- b. Spiritual and physical confirmation
  - i. Nehemiah not only told them of God's calling but there were also tangible signs that God's hand was in this. 2:18
- c. Recognizing the need, confidence in the leader – let's build!

- i. More than just moral support – they started the work!

## **Neh 2:17-18**

### 14. Opposition begins

- a. The method of opposition 2:19
  - i. Ridicule:
    - 1. This is often the first wave of attack made on God's people
- b. Nehemiah's response
  - i. He does not argue or defend his actions. He places God between himself and his opposition stating "The God of heaven will give us success" 2:20
  - ii. Proverbs 21:31 says, **The horse is made ready for the day of battle, but the victory belongs to the LORD.**

### 15. Nehemiah as a type of Christ

- a. The richness of God's Word
- b. One common theme throughout the Bible: That mankind had sinned against God and had fallen out of relationship with Him, But throughout, God promised that He would provide a way, a Savior to reunite mankind to Himself.
- c. All through the OT there were foreshadowings or types that gave pointers of the Savior that God would provide.
- d. Typology is a method of Biblical understanding and interpretation of the OT to the NT, where the OT provides types for Christ that are fulfilled in the NT.
  - i. Examples:
    - 1. Gen 3:21 The Lord God provided garments of skin for Adam and Eve, this required the sacrifice of a life; a type that foreshadowed Jesus' death on a cross for the sins of mankind.
    - 2. Moses was a type of Christ because he delivered the people of God from captivity
    - 3. In 1Cor. 10:4 Paul says that the spiritual Rock that the Hebrews drank from in numbers 20 was Christ.

- e. We can see typology in our text this morning.
  - i. Nehemiah left the comfort and security of the palace to go to Jerusalem to restore and renew what its brokenness. In the same way, Jesus left the comfort of heaven to come down into our brokenness to restore and renew mankind.
  - ii. Nehemiah gathered those who would follow him to restore the walls of the city. Likewise Jesus has commissioned His followers to help restore men to a right relationship with God.
  - iii. We also see that just as Nehemiah was ridiculed and opposed for his calling to rebuild and restore, so Jesus also faced ridicule, opposition, and ultimately death as He fulfilled God's plan.

#### References

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3. Hand Me Another Brick; Charles Swindoll
4. Nelson's Encyclopedia of Bible Facts; Packer, Tenney, White
5. The New Bible Dictionary; JD Douglas