



SERMON BASED STUDY GUIDE

Pastor Charlie Riley

Concealed to Revealed: Nehemiah

OPENING & PRAYER:

The story of Nehemiah offers a powerful picture of the Christian journey, showing how God calls us to rebuild, restore, and advance His kingdom even in the face of adversity. Nehemiah's heart broke when he heard of Jerusalem's ruined walls, and his first response was to fast and pray, calibrating his heart to God's will. This teaches us that prayer is not just a ritual, but a way to align ourselves with God's direction, especially when life feels broken or overwhelming.

"Father, I thank you for Your word and Your promises. Continue to guide me as we piece together Your Word throughout the Bible. Bring clarity and understanding as we move through our study. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."

SCRIPTURE:

And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire." So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. **Nehemiah 1:3-4**

Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach." **Nehemiah 2:17**

And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king's words that he had spoken to me. So they said, "Let us rise up and build." Then they set their hands to this good work. **Nehemiah 2:18**

But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?" So I answered them, and said to them, "The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem." **Nehemiah 2:19-20**

Next to him Uzziel the son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs. Also next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs; and they fortified Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. **Nehemiah 3:8**

but, speaking the truth in love, may grow up in all things into Him who is the head—Christ— from whom the whole body, joined and knit together by what every joint supplies, according to the effective working by which every part does its share, causes growth of the body for the edifying of itself in love. **Ephesians 4:15-16**

Next to them Jedaiah the son of Harumaph made repairs in front of his house. **Nehemiah 3:10**

After him, Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house. After them, Azariah, the son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs by his house. **Nehemiah 3:23**

After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah made repairs in front of his dwelling. **Nehemiah 3:30**

But it so happened, when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, that he was furious and very indignant, and mocked the Jews. **Nehemiah 4:1**

Now Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Whatever they build, if even a fox goes up on it, he will break down their stone wall." Hear, O our God, for we are despised; turn their reproach on their own heads, and give them as plunder to a land of captivity! Do not cover their iniquity, and do not let their sin be blotted out from before You; for they have provoked You to anger before the builders. **Nehemiah 4:3-5**

So we built the wall, and the entire wall was joined together up to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. **Nehemiah 4:6**

Now it happened, when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites heard that the walls of Jerusalem were being restored and the gaps were beginning to be closed, that they became very angry, and all of them conspired together to come and attack Jerusalem and create confusion. **Nehemiah 4:7-8**

Nevertheless we made our prayer to our God, and because of them we set a watch against them day and night. Then Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is failing, and there is so much rubbish that we are not able to build the wall." **Nehemiah 4:9-10**

And our adversaries said, "They will neither know nor see anything, till we come into their midst and kill them and cause the work to cease." So it was, when the Jews who dwelt near them came, that they told us ten times, "From whatever place you turn, they will be upon us." **Nehemiah 4:11-12**

Therefore I positioned men behind the lower parts of the wall, at the openings; and I set the people according to their families, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. And I looked, and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, great and awesome, and fight for your brethren, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your houses." **Nehemiah 4:13-14**

And it happened, when our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had brought their plot to nothing, that all of us returned to the wall, everyone to his work. So it was, from that time on, that half of my servants worked at construction, while the other half held the spears, the shields, the bows, and wore armor; and the leaders were behind all the house of Judah. **Nehemiah 4:15-16**

Those who built on the wall, and those who carried burdens, loaded themselves so that with one hand they worked at construction, and with the other held a weapon. **Nehemiah 4:17**

Now it happened when Sanballat (Moon God), Tobiah (God Is Good), Geshem (rain or shower) the Arab, and the rest of our enemies heard that I had rebuilt the wall, and that there were no breaks left in it (though at that time I had not hung the doors in the gates), that Sanballat and Geshem sent to me, saying, "Come, let us meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono." But they thought to do me harm.

Nehemiah 6:1-2

So I sent messengers to them, saying, "I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down. Why should the work cease while I leave it and go down to you?" **Nehemiah 6:3**

But they sent me this message four times, and I answered them in the same manner. Then Sanballat sent his servant to me as before, the fifth time, with an open letter in his hand. **Nehemiah 6:3-5**

In it was written: It is reported among the nations, and Geshem says, that you and the Jews plan to rebel; therefore, according to these rumors, you are rebuilding the wall, that you may be their king. And you have also appointed prophets to proclaim concerning you at Jerusalem, saying, "There is a king in Judah!" Now these matters will be reported to the king. So come, therefore, and let us consult together. **Nehemiah 6:6-7**

Then I sent to him, saying, "No such things as you say are being done, but you invent them in your own heart." For they all were trying to make us afraid, saying, "Their hands will be weakened in the work, and it will not be done." Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands. **Nehemiah 6:8-9**

GO DEEPER:

Nehemiah's journey began with a burden, but it quickly became a team effort. The rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls was not a solo mission; it required the hands and hearts of many, each contributing their unique gifts. The text emphasizes "next to them" repeatedly, highlighting the importance of unity and collaboration. Whether a goldsmith or a perfumer, everyone had a role, reminding us that God uses all kinds of people and talents to accomplish His purposes.

Another key lesson is to start with what's right in front of us. Many of the builders repaired the wall directly in front of their own homes. This is a call to faithfulness in the ordinary and immediate—our families, our work, our daily responsibilities. Before we look for grand assignments, God often asks us to be faithful with what He's already placed in our hands.

Opposition is inevitable when we pursue God's calling. Nehemiah faced ridicule, threats, and persistent attempts to distract and discourage him. Yet, he responded with prayer, focus, and perseverance. He didn't allow the enemy's confusion or rumors to derail the work. Instead, he and his team built with one hand and held a weapon in the other—a vivid image of the Christian life, where we are called to build God's kingdom while remaining vigilant against spiritual opposition.

Finally, Nehemiah's unwavering focus is a model for us. He refused to be distracted or come down from the "good work" God had given him, no matter how many times the enemy tried to pull him away. Staying faithful to our calling, even when others misunderstand or oppose us, is essential. God's work is too important to abandon for lesser things.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

1. Prayer is the calibration of the heart. When faced with adversity or confusion, the first and most vital step is to seek God in prayer. Just as Nehemiah fasted and prayed before taking action, we must align our hearts with God's will, allowing Him to set our direction and give us clarity before we move forward. **[09:13]**

2. God's work is always bigger than one person and requires unity. The repeated phrase "next to them" in Nehemiah 3 shows that God's assignments are meant to be accomplished together. True kingdom work demands humility, cooperation, and a willingness to value the contributions of others, regardless of their background or skill set. **[18:10]**

3. Everyone has something to contribute, no matter their gifting. The wall was rebuilt by goldsmiths, perfumers, and ordinary families alike. God does not require us to be like someone else; He asks us to offer what we have, right where we are. Our unique gifts, when surrendered to Him, become essential parts of His greater plan. **[21:41]**

4. Faithfulness begins with what is right in front of you. Many builders started with the section of wall nearest their own homes, teaching us to prioritize faithfulness in our immediate responsibilities—our families, our work, our daily lives. God often entrusts us with greater things as we prove faithful with what's already in our care. **[24:34]**

5. Expect opposition, but don't be distracted from your calling. Nehemiah faced relentless resistance, rumors, and attempts to lure him away from his task. Yet, he stayed focused, prayed for strength, and refused to come down from the work God had given him. Spiritual perseverance means building and battling at the same time, never letting the enemy's tactics pull us away from God's purpose. **[40:16]**

LEARNING AND GROWING:

1. In Nehemiah 3, what phrase is repeated over and over, and what does it show about how the wall was rebuilt? **[18:10]**
2. Why do you think Nehemiah's first reaction was to fast and pray instead of immediately taking action? What does this show about his priorities and trust in God? **[09:13]**
3. Why do you think God chose to use people with all kinds of backgrounds and skills—like goldsmiths and perfumers—to rebuild the wall? **[21:41]**
4. Nehemiah's project was too big for one person. Are you trying to handle something in your life all by yourself that you should invite others into? Who could you ask for help or partner with this week? **[18:10]**
5. Nehemiah refused to come down from the wall, even when others tried to distract him. Is there something in your life that is tempting you to "come down" from what God has called you to do? How can you resist that distraction? **[40:16]**

CLOSING PRAYER:

"Father, thank you for the opportunities to grow in our faith. As we read through what is to come, we put our faith and trust in You. There may be questions, but when we lean on You, those questions seem small and insignificant. Thank you for guiding us through this world and guiding us to You. In Jesus' name we pray, amen."