“When the Wall Was Built”
Nehemiah 7:1-73

This is the longest chapter in the book of Nehemiah, with the majority of it given to listing the families of those that had returned to Jerusalem after the exile in Babylon some ninety years prior to the rebuilding of the walls. The walls were rebuilt, the doors had now been reestablished on the gates, and that part of the work that Nehemiah came to do was finished. What follows in this chapter is that, even though that portion was done, there was still more to do. There are some practical principles that we can learn in this chapter that can help us as individuals, and as a church, to continually rely on the Lord as we serve Him.

I. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE WORK TO BE DONE – VS. 1-2A

A. The work of the Lord is never done, and until we are in heaven, we are to be always striving to do what needs done.

B. Nehemiah’s portion of the work was finished, it seems, but before he headed back to his duties in Persia, he left faithful leadership in place to continue on with the work that would continually need done.

C. Verse two gives us the two men whom he left to continue on with the work – his brother Hanani, and “Hannaniah the ruler of the palace.”

II. THERE WILL ALWAYS BE A NEED FOR LEADERSHIP


A. One thing this shows is, if there’s always a need for leadership then it follows that there will always be people to follow. That doesn’t make the leadership more important in God’s eyes, but it does necessitate that they be followed, being placed in their position by God.

1. Spiritual leadership

   Hebrews 13:17

   17 Obey them that have the rule over you, and submit yourselves: for they watch for your souls, as they that must give account, that they may do it with joy, and not with grief: for that is unprofitable for you.

2. Employment leadership

   Ephesians 6:5

   5 Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ;

   Colossians 3:22

   22 Servants, obey in all things your masters according to the flesh; not with eyeservice, as menpleasers; but in singleness of heart, fearing God:

3. Familial leadership (the husband being the head of the home)

   Ephesians 5:23

   23 For the husband is the head of the wife, even as Christ is the head of the church: and he is the saviour of the body.
1 Timothy 3:4–5

4 One that ruleth well his own house, having his children in subjection with all gravity;

5 (For if a man know not how to rule his own house, how shall he take care of the church of God?)

4. Political leadership.

Romans 13:1–5

1 Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. For there is no power but of God: the powers that be are ordained of God.

2 Whosoever therefore resisteth the power, resisteth the ordinance of God: and they that resist shall receive to themselves damnation.

3 For rulers are not a terror to good works, but to the evil. Wilt thou then not be afraid of the power? do that which is good, and thou shalt have praise of the same:

4 For he is the minister of God to thee for good. But if thou do that which is evil, be afraid; for he beareth not the sword in vain: for he is the minister of God, a revenger to execute wrath upon him that doeth evil.

5 Wherefore ye must needs be subject, not only for wrath, but also for conscience sake.

B. We could say that there is always a need for good, godly leadership, which is the case here with Nehemiah’s brother and one of the faithful, God-fearing rulers, but whether they be godly or not, those rulers are still to be followed as long as the laws they institute do not violate clear directives of Scripture.

C. That said, there are two very important
and very clear attributes of not only these two men but are descriptive of what God wants in any leader in any position they may hold. This isn’t true of just men, although that is the teaching of some, even today. This is true of both men and women in whatever position of leadership they hold.

1. “A faithful man” – קָדוֹשׁ אֱמֶת

a) K&D: The כָּאִי אֱמֶת before כָּאִי is the so-called Caph veritatis, which expresses a comparison with the idea of the matter: like a man whom one may truly call faithful.

b) This word for “faithful” carries the idea of stability or truthfulness (of the 127 times it’s used in the Hebrew Old Testament it is translated by the principle of “truth,” in its various forms, at least 116 times) and can be seen as one who can be trusted to do what was right to do, and to do it with the best of his ability. One who would not do anything (publicly) that would cause disgrace to the God he served, nor to those he was leading. What he said and what he did was simply truthful – could be trusted implicitly.

Matthew 24:45

45 Who then is a faithful and wise servant, whom his lord hath made ruler over his household, to give them meat in due season?

Matthew 25:21

21 His lord said unto him, Well done, thou good and faithful servant: thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee
ruler over many things: enter thou into the joy of thy lord.

1 Corinthians 4:2

Moreover it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.

2 Timothy 2:2

And the things that thou hast heard of me among many witnesses, the same commit thou to faithful men, who shall be able to teach others also.

2. “Feared God above many”

a) This goes back to chapter five and the principles taught on the fear of God from Nehemiah’s own life. That principle of fearing God was something of utmost value to him and something for which he sought in those he would leave in leadership after he left.

b) “Above many” – more God-fearing than many. There were others that feared God, just as there are today, but these two seemed to put that principle into practice more clearly and distinctly than others.

III. There will always be challenges in the work – vs. 3-4

A. In verse three Nehemiah instructs these two faithful men in a very practical issue – make sure the gates of the city stay shut when it’s dark and appoint watchers to keep an eye on things while it is dark. God doesn’t just care about the spiritual things of life – He also cares about the physical things of life, including our personal safety and security.
B. Verse four gives the reason why:

1. “The city was large and great” – it was six to six and a half miles in circumference.

2. “But the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded” – there were 42,360 people that came back to Jerusalem after the Babylonian captivity ninety years prior to the rebuilding of the walls, but many of them settled outside of Jerusalem because the city was in such a desecrated state. It would seem from this chapter, that not many had returned to their place of heritage in Jerusalem.

C. No matter what we do in life, we will face challenges, and as a believer doing our best to serve the Lord, those challenges will be even more difficult because of the spiritual battle we face. If it seems like those around us that don’t claim to be believers fair better than we do in life, it’s because they quite often do. The spiritual battle they face is less detrimental to them because the Devil doesn’t need to work as hard in his battle with them – they’re already his. He works to stop us from reaching them.

D. What we need to bear in mind is that we are to seek the advancement of the kingdom of God through our lives – in love and compassion, doing our best to bring people to Christ.

Matthew 6:31–33

31 Therefore take no thought, saying, What shall we eat? or, What shall we drink? or, Wherewithal
shall we be clothed?

32 (For after all these things do the Gentiles seek:) for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.

33 But seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness; and all these things shall be added unto you.

Jude 20–23

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference:

23 And others save with fear, pulling them out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

IV. THERE ALWAYS NEEDS TO BE A PLAN OR DIRECTION FOR THE WORK – VS. 5-73

A. Most of this chapter is given to lists of names, and although they are part of the inspired Word of God, it is not the purpose of this study to delve into the history behind the listing.

B. Verse five shows that Nehemiah had a plan that God instilled in his mind. As a child of God, we need to be ever mindful of the still, small voice of the Spirit of God as He speaks to us in every area of our lives. There is no part of our lives that He is not working, and there is nothing we face in which He will not lead.
“Whatever good motion is in our minds, whether prudent or pious, we must acknowledge it to come from God; for every good gift and every good work are from above; he gives knowledge, he gives grace. What is commonly called human prudence, ought to be ascribed to the direction of Divine Providence.” (TSK note)

C. “My God put into mine heart” – again, we find Nehemiah referencing the personal aspect of the Lord – He’s ours, personally, and He treats us with that kind of mercy and compassion, that kind of loving kindness.

D. With the work of the Lord never ceasing, and with the challenges we will face in that work, we need to know that the Lord is there to guide our thoughts in the plan He has for us to follow.

Philippians 4:6

6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

Proverbs 3:5–6

5 Trust in the LORD with all thine heart; and lean not unto thine own understanding.

6 In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.

Conclusion: I heard a great comment on time management some years ago. I don’t remember exactly who it was that said it, but the simple statement was, when one job is finished, “do the next thing.” Don’t worry about the enormity of the
many tasks ahead – just do the next one. That’s partially why Jesus said, in the Sermon on the Mount, “Take therefore no thought for the morrow: for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient to the day is the evil thereof” (Matt. 6:34).

Twice in the church epistles the Apostle Paul makes the statement, “Redeeming the time...” (Eph. 5:16; Col. 4:5), showing that we need to make full use of the time we have for time is running out.

The task will always be great in the work of the Lord – we must find a way to keep pressing forward in that work.