

Nehemiah 3:1-27 – Working Together for God’s Kingdom

Brothers and Sisters in Jesus Christ: It was time to repair the walls of Jerusalem. Without walls there was imminent **danger to man**. Without walls there was **dishonor to God** as sacrifices were lacking. So all the Jews had to get to work immediately. But they had to also work well. Hear about this today.

Our headings are:

All worked

All worked in unity

They built strong walls

Our goals are: **That the glory of Christ would compel each of you to know who you are, and to work in unity, using your specific gifts, so the church of Jesus can be repaired and become a better Bride of Christ.**

All Worked

1. There was a notable inclusion of men from all levels of society to help rebuild the city walls.

2. Consider some of those who were involved:

a. The high priest. This man was the closest position to God on earth, but he still had to get his hands dirty when it was necessary. There was a sense of urgency and he had to work. **What a good example for the others!**

1 Then **Eliashib the high priest** rose up **with his brethren the priests** and built the **Sheep Gate**; they consecrated it and hung its doors. They built as far as the Tower of the Hundred, and **consecrated it**, then as far as the Tower of Hananel.

He was likely **the first one to start building!** But there is something most notable about his work. **The Sheep Gate was near the temple.** It was the gate from which the sheep for the sacrifices came. It **got special consecration!**

b. People from outside of Jerusalem came to help with the work – from Jericho, Gibeon, Mizpah, and Zanoah. (V7,13)

2 Next to Eliashib the **men of Jericho built.** And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

c. The delicate hands of goldsmiths and noses of the perfumers did not excuse them from repairing Jerusalem’s walls.

8 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.

d. Civil leaders (and their children – even their daughters). They could not claim special privilege. And there were quite a few of them from Verses 12-18.

12 And next to him was Shallum the son of Hallohesh, leader of half the district of Jerusalem; he and his **daughters made repairs.**

e. Levites and priests were involved.

17 After **him the Levites**, under Rehum the son of Bani, made repairs. Next to him Hashabiah, leader of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. 22 And after him **the priests**, the men of the plain, made repairs.

f. Servants. The Nethinim-**Gibeonites**-were servants of the Levites (so they were servants of servants).

26 **Moreover the Nethinim who dwelt in Ophel made repairs as far as the place in front of the Water Gate** toward the east, and on the projecting tower.

This wall at Ophel was discovered in 1867. This was the gate from the palace to the Gihon spring to collect water.

g. Farmers. (The Tekoites were farmers.)

27 After them the **Tekoites repaired another section**, next to the great projecting tower, and as far as the wall of Ophel.

3. There were some common duties all men, women, and children had to perform – all voluntarily.

At a time of great danger, every man had to keep arms nearby. (Women did not normally do this.)

In fact, you will see that as they built the walls, every man had to keep his weapons at his side.

Nehemiah 4:18 Every one of the **builders had his sword girded at his side as he built.** And the one who sounded the trumpet was beside me.

4. And among them there were divisions of labor, with some building, some carrying stone, and other fetching water.

Some had to do really dirty work. But most were willing to work.

14 Malchijah the son of Rechab, leader of the district of Beth Haccerem, **repaired the Refuse Gate**; he built it and hung its doors with its bolts and bars.

5. Lessons:

- a. Whatever you are doing for God's kingdom, ask God bless it.** Don't try working in your own strength...whether it is teaching your children...reading your Bible...or sharing the Gospel...
- b. Whenever God blesses something you do, give him thanks – thanks which rightly belongs to him.**
- c. All are required to work for the kingdom, even the most important people.** Your high level of education, your important job, or your high salary must never prevent you from serving the kingdom of God. A pastor is not above doing diaconal work. A non-ordained person can still help save a marriage.
- d. Some common types of work all men (and women and children) are expected to do.** You must be ready to **give the reason for the hope** that you have. No one is excused from **being kind and generous**.
- e. There are specific gifts and callings that each one has.** Know what your gifts are! Is it generosity, hospitality, evangelism, apologetics, friendliness, comforting, or listening? Use them. Each one must use his gift for the good of the other members of the church and for potential members of the church (so everyone outside)!

All Worked in Unity

2 **Next to** Eliashib the men of Jericho built. And **next to** them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

1. There is a beautiful order and description of that order of the families who rebuilt the city walls.

They all had the same goal! Each family or groups of men had to **stick within their own area** so they could complete the task faster. That is why **you see the phrase “next to,”** mentioned so many times. **They didn't try to take a job God exclusively gave to certain other people...like priestly jobs...**

2. Notice all the details to show who was doing what, where they were doing it, and who could verify it.

These **details show historicity and truth.**
And what **honor was given to each named person!**

3. Sadly there were a few people who did not work together with the rest to build the walls of Jerusalem.

And Nehemiah make a record of them for their shame and for their lack of reward.

5 **Next to** them the Tekoites made repairs; **but their nobles did not put their shoulders to the work** of their Lord.

The leaders of Tekoa thought they were too good to work, **too good to get their hands dirty,** to secure the prosperity of the kingdom and secure the land from which Jesus would come. Or maybe they just wanted to **keep doing their secular work to keep making money.**

There was another case in Verse 30. Hanun, the 6th son of Zalaph, helped, not his other 5 brothers.

4. They even repaired the house of a governor.

7 **And next to** them Melatiah the Gibeonite, Jadon the Meronothite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, **repaired the residence of the governor of the region beyond the River.**

This must have been a governor who was a friend to them...or one who helped Nehemiah's return.

5. Lessons:

a. All kinds of gifts are necessary for the kingdom of God to thrive and each one must work in the area of his calling and not try to overstep other positions. Unity is not always doing the same thing. **Unity is working together with your different gifts for the same goal:** Building Christ's church.

b. Henry: United force will conquer that which no individual dares venture on. Don't we say, "Many hands make light work?"

c. Pray that it will not be recorded in the annals of heaven that you did not play your part in the

kingdom because you were too proud, or too busy to get involved, even to have someone over to your house for a meal. Never let it be recorded that you said: “We pay the pastor; let him do the work.”

d. What will be written next to your name when people remember you on earth?

They Built Strong Walls

1. The unity and organization of the labor were written about to show this was a sound construction.

It was not done in haphazard way.

2. The repeated description of materials used: beams, bolts, and bars show this was a sound construction.

They were in a hurry, but they had to do things properly. They needed beams, and bolts, and bars!

3 Also the sons of Hassenah built the Fish Gate; they laid its **beams** and hung its doors with its **bolts and bars**.

This was not the ¼ inch steel they found in some school buildings that were destroyed in an earthquake that killed many kids. **This was made to last...and to provide protection.**

3. Lessons:

a. Don't water down the Gospel in order to quickly bring people in and build up the numbers of the church. Take time to share the full Gospel so the church can be strong. **It is easy to rush when there is an urgency and to sacrifice strength.**

b. Know and use the tools at your disposal to repair the church of God today. What are some of those tools? Know the **Bible** well. Read **good companion books** with the Bible. Attend **theology class**. **Study arguments** people make so you can address them. Encourage **discipline** in your life, in the home, and in the church. Pray and support **elders, preachers** and those preparing to be elders and preachers. Learn to live a **balanced life** so you have time for kingdom work. Train your children to fight too – in a good way.

c. What makes you work for the kingdom? You work because **you know who you are!** You are the redeemed of the Lord. **You are confused like the world.** The world doesn't know who a man or woman is. Many believe a man can become pregnant! Others believe they can be a man in the morning and a school girl in the evening. They believe they can pick what they want to be and deny biology. This is chaos! This chaos stems from self-deception. But **more the deceit, more the chaos.** You are the Lord's! He died for you. You know your purpose in life. Order is for good. **Order facilitates growth.**

Conclusion:

In the rebuilding of Jerusalem's walls, **everyone**, high or low, rich or poor, man and woman, powerful or ordinary, **had to work and they had to cover all the different jobs** that were needed. Then they had to work in a **united way...doing their different jobs, with the same goal.** When that was done, **the walls were strong.** God's people then had a place to worship and wait for Messiah to come.

Brothers and sisters in the Lord Jesus:

1. Be ready to serve. You may have to set aside some of the busy-ness of your life to do so, but God will reward you for giving up things for his service.

2. Be ready to work together for the kingdom. That's the privilege we have today of seeing another one joining to work for the kingdom. Stand behind Nnenna. Help her.

3. Develop the skills God has given to you.

Finally: If you are like Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem, and oppose God's kingdom for financial and political gain, you will go to hell. If you join the people of God, there is hope for you. To join the people of God, you have to see the hopelessness of your life and the consequences of your sin, and then receive the life and death of Christ as your own. Then God will adopt you as his child.