

Nehemiah Sermon #16

Nehemiah 7

Now, Nehemiah 7 is one of those chapters in the Bible where it lists – 73 verses – most often skipped.

Now, in Chapter 6 – vs. 15 – the wall is built so what is Nehemiah doing in this transitional Chapter 7?

Folks, he continues strong leadership after the building project was finished.

He realized that a great success can still be followed by a great failure.

He had not allowed his focus to be just on the building project.

I have entitled today's sermon "Stand Up and Be Counted"

Nehemiah 7:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word

Nehemiah 7:1-5

Let us pray

You may be seated.

Stand Up and Be Counted

If there was a temptation to rely on walls and gates, Nehemiah was proof against it.

The Jebusites had made that error with King David in II Samuel 5:6.

They told David that their city was so strong that the blind and the lame could defend it.

They forgot that the final strength or weakness of a city is its people.

As a country – we are only as strong as the people.

As a church – we are only as strong as the members.

It is one thing to build a building – it's another to build a congregation.

It is one thing to draw a crowd – it's another to have a strong group of believers (strong church – a church that counts).

A church that stands for something – a church that matters

The walls were completed, the gates were restored, but Nehemiah's work was not finished by any means.

The work was not finished and Nehemiah knew it.

A city is more than bricks and mortar, walls and gates.

A city is people – so is a church.

And if Jerusalem was going to become the city God intended, the city to be visited by the Messiah, it was important to continually address the broken-down condition of the hearts and lives of the people.

In other words – you can have a beautiful building and a rotten people.

Nehemiah had to be steadfast in conserving the gains.

II John 8, *"Look to [watch out] yourselves, that we lose not those things which we have wrought, but that we receive a full reward."*

Unitarianism denies the Trinity – denies the Deity of Christ – Bible inspiration

Nehemiah organized the wall builders, now it was time to organize the community so that the citizens could function in the way God wanted them to.

God had great things in store for Jerusalem, for one day Jesus would walk the city streets, teach in the temple, and die outside the city walls.

God has great things in store for His people – for us if we wholeheartedly commit.

This chapter records three important steps that must be taken by any believer in order to protect and progress himself, others, and the work that has been done for God.

I. The first step for Nehemiah was enlisting leadership.

Where do you find leaders?

In suits? Does a suit make a leader?

In money? From the business world?

Where do you find leaders in God's church today?

Leadership rises to the surface.

It is from that group, leaders are appointed.

Not a novice – must already be proving himself.

Pattern of works, pattern of living, a good testimony – it's recognizable

Most leaders fail to enlist others – try to do it all themselves – and equip.

They fail to equip the people to do the work of the ministry

Ephesians 4:12, *“For the perfecting [equipping] of the saints, for the work of the ministry, for the edifying of the body of Christ”*

All saints are to be involved – spiritual growth, spiritual stability, spiritual supply

If you always do what you always done, you will be what you always been.

Notice first that Nehemiah placed people in their gifted areas (vs. 1)

We all can serve – help – but some of us are gifted in certain things

I can't sing – verse 1

Secondly, Nehemiah carefully selected these men. He chose faithful people.

Why and how was Nehemiah convinced that these men would be good leaders?

They had two wonderful qualities:

First, they were faithful to God – “The greatest ability is dependability.” (vs. 2)

Secondly, these men feared God – holy reverence

If we truly fear the Lord, we will be faithful to do the work He has called us to do.

When leaders fear people instead of fearing God, they end up getting trapped and that leads to failure.

Proverbs 29:25, *“The fear of man bringeth a snare: but whoso putteth his trust in the LORD shall be safe.”*

God is looking for faithful, God-fearing men and women who will have the courage and conviction to serve Him, come what may – to stand up and be counted.

Nehemiah was careful to select men of integrity who feared God.

Proverbs tells us if we count on an unfaithful person to deliver – it's like bones out of joint.

Thirdly, Nehemiah again showed qualities of good leadership by delegating authority.

Nehemiah appointed two assistants, Hanani and Hananiah.

Vs. 2

Hanani was the one whose sad news of Jerusalem had set in motion the whole course of Nehemiah's actions, back in Shushan, the palace (1:2).

Nehemiah gave the added responsibility by putting these men in charge of the entire city.

God entrusts with greater honor those who have proved themselves faithful in that which is lesser.

Luke 16:10 – faithful in little – faithful in much – unfaithful in little – unfaithful in much
 Matthew 25:14 – the Parable of the Talents – five, two, one – given according to their ability

Unfaithful servant – in every church – unfaithful to church – in the Bible
 Preacher, you're being hard on us. You wait till Jesus speaks to you.
 I am not asking you to do anything that I'm not doing myself.

Not only did Nehemiah delegate authority to Hanani and Hananiah, notice he delegated authority to gatekeepers and guards – Neh. 7:1, 3b.

What good are strong new gates if nobody is guarding them and controlling who enters and leaves the city?

Joel Osteen – largest and fastest growing church in America – Houston – 30,000
 CNN – Larry King – just asking him questions – he stood for nothing.
 He will not make anyone uncomfortable – positive
 You ever heard Jesus preach, “Ye generation of vipers, how can ye escape the damnation of your souls?” (Matt. 23:33)

He didn't take a stand on anything.

If we don't take a stand for something, we will fall for anything.

What good are walls if the gates are open to every foe who wants to enter the city?

Methodist Church – open doors, open hearts, open minds

I understand that the Great Wall of China was penetrated by the enemy at least four times, and each time the guards were bribed.

Gates and walls are only as good as the people who guard them.

The responsibility for guarding the gates was committed to faithful men.

Fourthly, Nehemiah gave them clear directions (vs. 3).

The gatekeepers (“porters”) were given specific instruction as to when to open and close the gates (vs. 3).

The gates were not to be opened before a certain hour and then they were to be closed again before nightfall.

And while this was being done guards were to be standing by at strategic points (vs. 3).

In the ancient Near East, it was customary to open the city gates at sunrise and close them at sunset, but Nehemiah directed that the gates should be opened late and closed early.

Clear instructions and clear directions

We don't have a muddy Bible.

Fifthly, Nehemiah recognized that you must work with what you got/have – vs. 4

First, don't be overwhelmed about the amount of work – Lord, this is what you want us to do – it is too much.

Stop looking at the size and start working.

Stop looking at the size and start praying.

Second, don't be overwhelmed by the low number of workers.

Jesus told us the workers are few.

Don't get the "Elijah Syndrome" – no one else is doing anything (I Kings 19) –
depressive – deflating

**If God's people don't protect what they have accomplished for the Lord, the
enemy will come in and take it over.**

How many Christian colleges, churches, Christian homes have been taken over?

What a tragedy that schools that once were true to the faith are today denying the faith,
and churches that once preached the Gospel now have in their pulpits ministers
who preach "another gospel."

Folks, we have to stand up and be counted.

**Every Christian ministry is one short generation away from destruction, and
God's people must be on guard.**

We need guards at the gates, faithful men and women who will not allow false
Christians to get in and take over the ministry (2 Cor. 11:13-15).

We need gatekeepers who spot false teaching and sound the alarm.

We need watchers on the walls to warn us when the enemy is approaching.

Christian parents need to guard their homes lest the enemy get in and capture their
children.

Creation – Genesis 1-11 – Biblical Creation message has been in the cross hairs of the
Devil's rifle.

Museums, secular education, compromised churches, government, evolutionary
science, Hollywood, T.V., millions of years ago, secular media.

God's Word – it doesn't take a degree to understand – all you need is the Holy Spirit.

Creation does matter – stand up and be counted.

Christians need to remember that it only takes one gatekeeper to fail for the city to be taken.

- I. **The first step for Nehemiah was enlisting leadership.**
- II. **The second step for Nehemiah was establishing citizenship (Neh. 7:4-69) – establishing membership (who's in and who's out).**

The list started with the *leaders who returned with Zerubbabel* – from Ezra – led the first group – first governor (Neh. 7:7).

Next are listed the various *families* or *clans*

Listed with their towns – vs. 26

The temple personnel are listed next (vs. 39-45).

God saw fit to list these people – an individual is never lost to God

The individual is important to God

There is no sliding by for anyone – God knows who you are and what you're doing

Our God is personal and if we don't have a real relationship, a personal relationship with

God – God will say depart from me, for I never knew you.

Are you in or are you out? Believer or unbeliever? Saved or unsaved?

God demands that all men everywhere – repent – turn

Divine nature – real change

Church membership – join the church – identifies us with Medora,

Pastor Wayne Johnson

Stand up and be counted – this is my church, my family

And I will do what is necessary to see it successful

One group of people *could not prove their genealogies* (Neh. 7:61-65).

Vs. 65

The Urim and the Thummim, meaning light and perfection, were two stones which were contained in the breastplate of the high priest.

They were used to discern the mind of the Lord in certain given situations – to determine God’s will.

The purpose of the stones is supplanted and is now supplied by the scriptures, for the Lord guides His people today by His Word.

There are times when we don’t know what to do – as a church, as individuals

The Word of God is our light – is our perfection

It is God’s Word that tells whether we are in or out – citizens or non-citizens

Those stones were God’s provision in that day, but today we determine God’s will through His Word, prayer, and Godly counsel.

Finally, there was a miscellaneous assembly of over 7,000 servants (v. 67).

Even the animals were mentioned (vv. 68-69)

The important thing is not to count the people but to realize that *these people counted*.

In leaving Babylon, they did much more than put their names on a list.

They laid their lives on the altar

One of the key lessons we can learn from this long chapter is that *people are important to God*.

The Lord didn’t send a band of angels to do the job; He used common people who were willing and faithful.

I Corinthians 4:2, “Moreover, it is required in stewards, that a man be found faithful.”
Faithful in church, faithful in the Word, and faithful in practicing what we KNOW.

What began with *concern* (Neh. 1)

Led to *construction* (chaps. 2-3)

That led to *conflict* (chaps. 4-7) – we are not going to do anything for the Lord without
conflict – hurdles, troubles

And now it was time for *consecration* (chaps. 8-13).

Third, Nehemiah encourages worship – Nehemiah 8

Nehemiah 7 reveals the crucial foundation laid by Nehemiah for a spiritual revival that
God would soon engineer through the preaching of Ezra.

Nehemiah knew that there was a desperate need to rebuild the wall.

He also knew there was a desperate need for the people to come back to the Lord and
turn away from their sins.

Nehemiah enlisted leaders, he established citizenship, he encouraged worship

Let us stand up and be counted.

Let us stand for invitation.

Christians, are we faithful to God?

Do we love Him? Do we obey Him?

Are we faithful to church? The Bible? To giving? To living?

Are we good stewards, profitable servants?

Are you a member of God's Kingdom?

Are you a member of this church?

Preacher, I am in – you can count on me.

I'm committed to helping God's church at Medora be successful in fulfilling its divine
commands