

Devotions – March 29 – April 4, 2020

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A Quick Walk Through Nehemiah

Sunday, March 29, 2020

Text: Nehemiah 1:1

The memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah.

Nestled near the middle of the Old Testament is a little book about a contractor/community leader named Nehemiah. I love this book for several reasons and was praying about which verses and lessons I would get to share with you this week, when it hit me...it's about building a wall. A great, grand wall used to keep God's chosen people safe from attack. All of a sudden, I was full of fear that this book might be too controversial. It was there the Lord met me. With his permission, I won't be dwelling on the wall itself. No matter what side of "the wall" debate you land on, I pray you will take away a story full of faith and dedication and the amazing power of prayer.

Let us pray: *Holy and gracious Lord, we go where you lead us this week. Help us to meet each other right where we are and celebrate the greatest thing we have in common, you Lord. Amen*



Monday, March 30, 2020

Text: Nehemiah 1:11

At the time, I was cupbearer to the King.

How I hope you all take a minute and read this book. It's only 13 chapters and it's worth the time. I promise. Having to pick only 7ish verses does a disservice to the story but I will do my best. Nehemiah had a pretty cushy job. He was the cupbearer and a well trusted member of the royal court. When he heard about all that was happening to the city his ancestors were buried in, he wept, mourned, fasted. Have you ever heard something that just made you cry thinking of it? That is the Holy Spirit. The same Spirit that nudged Nehemiah to approach the king and get all he needed for the job at hand.

Let us pray: *Holy Spirit, we have no faith without you. Open our eyes and hearts to the see what you would have us see and to see opportunities to share your word in our everyday lives. Amen.*



Tuesday, March 31, 2020

Text: Nehemiah 2:16

The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest that were to do the work.

You ever just have to go and take a look at it yourself? I am a mother. There is nothing more terrifying than a child who starts a sentence with “It isn’t that bad but...” I have no peace until I see what kind of a mess we are in. I love how little Nehemiah tells you about this trip. It seems so methodical. He travels the perimeter of the wall and notes all the gates and what the damage is. He sees what needs to be done. He doesn’t dwell on how much money it will cost. He doesn’t mourn, he already did that. Now is the time to access.

Let us pray: *God of resurrection, help us all to focus on the small tasks that we can complete and not get bogged down by the amount of mess that is made. So many times we never even start a task because the task seems too much for us to handle. Remind us that with you, Lord, all things are possible. Amen.*



Wednesday, April 1, 2020

Text: Nehemiah 4:1-3

Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he mocked the Jews. He said in the presence of his associates and of the army of Samaria, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore things? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish it in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish-and burned ones at that?” Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, “That stone wall they are building-any fox going up on it would break it down!”

Every hero needs a villain. Nehemiah was so extra he got three. Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem. Their ancestors were driven out of the promise land and here they are again. They want Jerusalem in ruins and Nehemiah, with his big plans, is going to disrupt the status quo. What they fail to see is that they are not mocking Nehemiah’s plans. They are mocking God’s plan. A plan so much bigger than anything they could ever comprehend. The flesh in me loves that Tobiah goes down in history for being a man with terrible trash talk.

Let us pray: *God of wonder, we thank you that we are not so good that we can mess up your plans. That no matter what you have in store for us, you equip us with all that we need to complete your task. Forgive us when we miss an opportunity to serve you. Amen.*



Thursday, April 2, 2020

Text: Nehemiah 6:15-16

So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days. When our enemies heard about his, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God.

52 days. People without the miracle of modern tools built a wall around a city in 52 days. I can barely get a permit to build a porch in 52 days. The teamwork it must have taken is unmeasurable. Not to mention they had enemies they were fighting against. They had patrol at night and the workers by day were never without a weapon nearby.

Let us pray: *Lord of Love, we love to see the Spirit move. We love to see you work in the people around us. Remind us of our mission. Show us how to serve you every day. Maybe it will be in a big way, maybe in small subtle ways, but reveal to us your Spirit moving in others and light the fire in us. Amen.*



Friday, April 3, 2020

Text: Nehemiah 8:8

So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation, they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

Sometimes these little “nothing” scriptures jump out at me like nothing else. In the celebration of the walls being completed the crowds request scripture. When Ezra comes with the Pentateuch, they listen. But they also need interpretation. Isn't it comforting to know that we all need a little help understanding the Bible sometimes? Sometimes little nuances stick out and big picture gets lost. One hundred people can hear one verse and have one hundred different interpretations. But Ezra gave the sense so the people could understand. This is the power of worship.

Let us pray: *Father God, you have given us the Word. Sometimes we don't understand but thank you for loving us and teaching us all that we need to know. Thank you for opening our eyes to*

your truth when we are ready to receive it. Thank you for good teachers who help us learn your ways. Amen.



Saturday, April 4, 2020

Text: Nehemiah 13:31

Remember me, O my God, for good.

Do you have someone you think of every now and again and it just makes you smile? How would you feel if the Creator of all things smiled every time he thought of you? It would make you feel pretty good, wouldn't it? It sure makes me feel good thinking about it. Today, take a moment to imagine God, looking down from Heaven at all he has made. Imagine he spots you, a smile breaks out on his face and he delights in you.

Let us pray: *Awesome Father, we delight in you. We worship all that you have made, including us. We live in faith, just waiting for the day we can come home to you. We thank you for all you have blessed us with. Amen.*

