

Wesleyan Methodist Church Sunday 9th March 2014
 Nehemiah #3 Having a vision; Sharing the vision; Making the vision a reality.
 Passages: Nehemiah 2:11-20; 3:1-3, 12-13

Intro: See that paddock that will be our church!

Pastor Kietiott in Thailand at Sila Children's Home

- He believed and trusted God even though they had no funds or materials.
- He could see it and knew it would become a reality.

Continuing the series: **Rebuilding the Wall**

Recap on chapters 1-2

- Nehemiah hears that his beloved Jerusalem is in ruins.
- He prays earnestly to his God
- Nehemiah approached the king to request permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls.
- He seized the moment because he knew that God's gracious hand was upon him.

Now Nehemiah has travelled to Jerusalem and we see him in Chapter 2:11-20 doing a tour of inspection.

1) What motivated Nehemiah?

What caused him to risk his life, his job, his reputation?

Firstly he had...

a. A personal relationship with God

- 'My God': Notice that Nehemiah referred to 'My God' in verse 12 & 18.
- Describe his relationship with God: close, intimate and trusting.

Can you claim to have a personal relationship with God?

Do you refer to God as 'My God'? Or is he a concept in your head or simply knowledge in your mind?

- Is the God you read about in the Bible your personal God? I hope so. He can be.
- Refer to invitation to accept Jesus as personal friend.
- 'My God' by Michael Green. Expand

Secondly Nehemiah had...

b. A passion to help his people

In Ch 1 we read about his prayer to God for his people. He wept and mourned and prayed and fasted.

- He loved his people which stemmed from his love for God.
- He could feel their disgrace, their hurt and their pain.

And thirdly he had...

c. A vision of what is possible

Nehemiah was a motivated man but if he had stopped after his passionate prayer to God and his obvious love for his people nothing else may have happened. His love and passion had to be united with a vision of what God can do.

- He could see into the future to what God could enable them to achieve.
- His vision of the walls restored had begun over 1,000 km away but now as he inspected the city in person he could see afresh what was needed and how it could be done.
- You see God had placed it in his heart.

I cannot over emphasis...

2) The importance of vision

In Aug 1963 Martin Luther King Jr stood in Washington before 250,000 people and delivered his famous speech, 'I have a dream' ... Expand

Vision: the ability to see beyond the present circumstances, to visualise what can become, to see into the future.

- In a physical sense: As people who have minds that can create and think we need to be able to plan and dream into the future. Do you dream, have visions? I hope you do.
- Let me share some of my dreams and visions:
 - My dream to preach the gospel to people. Back of the potato planter.
 - My vision to win the KOM
 - My dream of a Park the Kids Ministry
- In a spiritual sense: God want to place his Spirit on us so we can complete his work.
 - Joel 2:28, "And afterward,
I will pour out my Spirit on all people.
Your sons and daughters will prophesy,
your old men will dream dreams,
your young men will see visions."
 - Notice how blessing and dreaming are linked together.
 - Mighty things can happen when God invades us by his Spirit.
 - However where there is no ability to see into the future what happens?
Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) "Where there is no **vision**, the people perish." (NIV)
'Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint.'

'No revelation' means no understanding or knowledge or no capacity to 'see' God. 'Cast off restraint' reminds me when Moses went up the mountain to receive the 10 Commandments and the people made the golden calf because they couldn't 'see' Moses or God any more. They had no motivation to stay on track spiritually.

The problem is we can often find ourselves in a place where we are too damaged, too beaten up, too afraid, too cautious or too lost in our sin to be able to dream anymore. Notice the people in Jerusalem: One thing that I've always struggled to understand in the story of Nehemiah is this: What stopped the people from rebuilding the wall themselves? After all they ended up doing the work. Why did they need Nehemiah? The problem was...

a. The people were content with a bad situation

- Describe the situation they were in.
 - No walls... vulnerable
 - No hope... against the enemies
 - No pride.... No value in themselves
 - A target for ridicule... They were in disgrace (verse 17)

They may have said, 'What's the use in trying, we're finished, doomed. Why trust in God, why dream about good times.

Am I describing your life here? Do you feel like a city without walls at times?

- Do you feel like life has you stuck in the pit?
- Peter Goodwin: Hard labour in the gravel pit.
- Describe life in the gravel pit.
 - No hope
 - Not good enough: no pride or dignity
 - Settling for second best

I have news for you: You don't have to stay there!

God has far better plans for you than to be stuck in the pit.

God had far better plans for his people in Jerusalem but first Nehemiah had to help them...

b. Seeing the vision

Up to this point Nehemiah had kept the vision to himself. Read V 17-18 (Explain)

Now that the people had caught the vision of what was possible and how God was behind it they said...

c. Let's make it happen!

- Everyone got into it: Families, sons and daughters, officials, leaders in the community, priests, goldsmiths, temple servants and merchants.
- Worked as a team.
- They were passionate; 'Baruch son of Zabbai zealously repaired another section'.

They had gone from a people who were downcast, defeated and in disgrace to...

3) Becoming a people of purpose

If you and I are to be people of purpose then we will need...

a. A personal vision

Let me be very direct here: If we want to be someone with eternal purpose and vision in life then we must allow the Holy Spirit to take up residence in our lives. Jesus promised before he went back to heaven that he would send the Comforter, the very Spirit of God and Jesus to heal and restore us to the image of God and then to guide and direct our path as we follow Jesus.

Can you say confidently that God is in control of your life via the Holy Spirit? Would you like to be able to say that? Or is your life in a state of chaos and you find yourself in the pit.

- Describe again.
- Maybe you try to climb out but keep tumbling back in. Reoccurring sin, pride, depression, anger, un-forgiveness, resentment etc.
- Describe what we can do about it:
 - Acknowledge you need help
 - Believe that Jesus can help you. That he has already paid the price for your sin.
 - Confess your sin, your selfishness, your rebellion against God. Say sorry.
 - Now ask him to fill you with his Spirit so you can live the way he has planned you to.
 -
 - Jeremiah 29:10-12 says, 'This is what the Lord says: "When seventy years are completed for Babylon, I will come to you and fulfill my good promise to bring you back to this place. ¹¹ For I know the plans I have for you," declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future. ¹² Then you will call on me and come and pray to me, and I will listen to you.'

How does Jesus get us out of the pit? Well he comes down there with us and lifts us out. When we pray and ask him to forgive us he hops down there and lifts us out. Praise God!

In a moment I'm going to pray a prayer that you can follow.

But first let me talk about the song we will sing in closing:

Blessed Assurance: Read and explain.

Message by Pastor David Lloyd