

Laborers Together (1)

Text: Nehemiah 3:1-32

Introduction:

1. 1 Corinthians 3:9 “*For we are laborers together with God: ye are God’s husbandry, ye are God’s building.*”
2. The commitment of the people in Chapter 2 to the work is now bearing fruit in action.
3. This chapter reveals the wisdom the Lord gave Nehemiah for coordinating this great task.
4. This chapter reveals that the people “had a mind to work” and the job was done in 52 days, a phenomenal achievement.
5. Overview of map: Northern wall (Vs. 1-7); Western Wall (Vs. 8-13); Southern Wall (Vs. 14) & Eastern Wall (Vs. 15-32)
 - 10 gates mentioned
 - Some illustrations of spiritual truth in the gates – Sheep gate = Christ the Lamb of God; Valley Gate = picture of humility; Dung Gate = removing defilements from our lives; Fountain & Water Gates = the Word and the Spirit; Horse Gate = spiritual warfare; East Gate = return of Christ

As we analyze this phenomenal team of workers we will note 4 key ingredients that contributed to their success in the work of God:

I. Cohesion – “next unto them/him...after him/them repaired”

There were two things that contributed to their unity

A. Direction –Guidance/Leadership

1. They were united behind Nehemiah’s leadership (2:18)
2. Our job is to follow the leaders God raises up as they lead us scripturally.
3. Three times the Apostle Paul exhorted the believers to follow him: 1 Cor. 4:16 “*Wherefore I beseech you, be ye followers of me.*” 1 Cor. 11:1 “***Be ye followers of me***, even as I also am of Christ.” Phil. 3:17 “***Brethren, be followers together of me, and mark them which walk so as ye have us for an ensample.***”

B. Destination – Goal/Objective

1. When we all know what the goal is, and we all strive for that goal, we will find ourselves a unified people. Sometimes churches resemble the confusion that reigned in the temple of Diana in Acts 19:32 – “*Some therefore cried one thing, and some another: for the assembly was confused; and the more part knew not wherefore they were come together.*” Sometimes churches can be like the

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Israelites were in the Book of Judges where everyone does that which is right in their own eyes (Judges 21:25)

2. The task for the children of Israel was clear: the walls and gates were to be rebuilt. This would help preserve the purity of their witness so that they might be a light to the Gentiles. They were all on the same page that this was what was to be done!
 - a. **Walls:** Denote separation and protection, a line of demarcation.
 - b. **Gates:** A point of access but monitored access with the ability to discriminate. Refer 7:3 & 13:9
 - c. Note: There is an important link between separation (the walls) and propagation (the temple)
3. Similar to Israel, the church is commissioned with the light of the Gospel. This is our main task as a church (Matthew 28:18-20). As we witness for Christ, we are to construct spiritual fortifications (separation principle) for the preservation of the truth. The church is called “the pillar and ground of the truth” (1 Tim. 3:15). We are exhorted to “earnestly contend for the faith” (Jude 1:3)
4. Phil. 1:27 “*Only let your conversation be as it becometh the gospel of Christ: that whether I come and see you, or else be absent, I may hear of your affairs, that ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind striving together for the faith of the gospel;*”
5. 1 Cor. 1:10 “*Now I beseech you, brethren, by the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that ye all speak the same thing, and that there be no divisions among you; but that ye be perfectly joined together in the same mind and in the same judgment.*”
6. Illustration: Early church’s success largely due to the fact it was a united church – “in one accord, in one place” They were both a separated church and a propagating church. We all need to have this same vision as well.
7. 1 Corinthians 12:12-27 – The church likened to a body

II. Motivation

A. The Sense of Mission

1. They were involved in something significant.
2. They had purpose and direction (last point)

B. The Safety of Family

1. “over against his house” – Vs. 10, 12, 23, 28, 29, 30
2. Alan Redpath: “That is where every real work for God must begin – at home...A church is no stronger than its homes, for a church is made up of families.”
3. Principle: When we see the part walls play in the spiritual safety of our families, we will be motivated to help build them.
4. The importance of having a fortified home

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5. The importance of your family being in a fortified church
6. Note: The attitude that says, “I’ll toe the line at church and play the part because I have to but then live however I like at home” is destructive. The truth is the same whether you are at home or in church!

C. The Skills of Individuals

1. Nehemiah set others to work in areas that would have been of particular interest & relevance to them. For example, The priests area (Vs. 1) and the merchants area (Vs. 31)
2. Be open to leadership as to what part you play in your local church

Conclusion:

1. Are you a contributor to church unity? Eph. 4:3 *“Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace.”*
2. Are you focused on the task the Lord has given us to reach the world for Christ and build ourselves up in the faith?

Go, labour on; spend, and be spent; Thy joy to do the Father’s will; It is the way the Master went, Should not the servant tread it still?

Go, labour on; tis not for naught; Thy earthly loss is heavenly gain; Men heed thee, love thee, praise thee, not; The Master praises – what are men?