

## Kingdom Builders 2

### I) Introduction – S11

A.) The Lord has given Nehemiah a passion to act on behalf of fallen Jerusalem and his impoverished Hebrew brothers and sisters

B.) How does Nehemiah react to the need? He mourns, weeps and seeks the face of God

1) He does three very important things:

a) He prays intently for the people – he praises God, addresses the root problem causing their pain, sin, and claims the promises of God to heal their land if they repent

1) Take God's promises serious pastors; He never fails in them; they are the source of his people's strength; we can trust them always!

C.) Nehemiah is ready to put feet to his faith; to step down from his royal position for a time and personally lead the Jews in rebuilding their city.

1) However, there is something he must do first: he must gain the blessing of the Persian king

2) This isn't easy because most ancient kings were not the type to listen to the sad stories of servants, particularly servants from a conquered people

[Nehemiah 2:1-2](#) - *Early the following spring, in the month of Nisan, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. <sup>2</sup> So the king asked me, "Why are you looking so sad? You don't look sick to me. You must be deeply troubled." Then I was terrified...*

a) These kings were often ill-tempered and would be offended to see a servant who looked depressed or distracted...so Nehemiah was fearful

- 3) One might ask, “Well, if Nehemiah had God’s calling why should he ask at all...just look this king in the eye and say, “God told me to go, I’m going, and you have nothing say about it.” Why be scared?!
- 4) Paul tells us that all earthly authorities are ordained by God, and if we fear God, we will respect the authorities set over us
  - a) When we look through biblical history, we see the godliest people respect even pagan kings and obey their laws
  - b) We should never approach God’s work with any sense of arrogance toward government
  - c) Obey when appropriate with humility; disobey when appropriate with humility

[Nehemiah 2:3-8](#) - <sup>3</sup> but I replied, “Long live the king! How can I not be sad? For the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.” The king asked, “Well, how can I help you?” With a prayer to the God of heaven, <sup>5</sup> I replied, “If it please the king, and if you are pleased with me, your servant, send me to Judah to rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried.” <sup>6</sup> The king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked, “How long will you be gone? When will you return?” After I told him how long I would be gone, the king agreed to my request.

<sup>7</sup> I also said to the king, “If it please the king, let me have letters addressed to the governors of the province west of the Euphrates River, instructing them to let me travel safely through their territories on my way to Judah. <sup>8</sup> And please give me a letter addressed to Asaph, the manager of the king’s forest, instructing him to give me timber. I will need it to make beams for the gates of the Temple fortress, for the city walls, and for a house for myself.” And the king granted these requests because the gracious hand of God was on me.

- 5) God’s timing here was perfect because he elevated a king that was known to be a wise and tolerant ruler...he actually cared why Nehemiah looked sad and asked about the cause of it
- 6) Artaxerxes not only approves of his mission to Jerusalem, but writes him letters of authority to enable him to get the supplies and assistance he needs from local authorities

D.) **S12ab - Lesson 1: Ensure that any work you do as a pastor or leader is grounded in the Lord's approval and provision; wait for guidance!**

1) In verse 2:10, we see why:

*When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.*

2) When you embark on God's work, you will encounter opposition from three sources: the flesh (your own flaws), the world (anti-Christian culture), and the devil

a) You cannot stand on your own and face these enemies; God alone gives the strength and the resources to stand...Nehemiah ensured he started with proper authority and assurance of provision

b) Start when you know you've heard from God and not before and are acting as his emissary, his hands! **(We don't direct His steps!)**

## II) Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem

Nehemiah 2:11-16 - *I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days <sup>12</sup> I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on. <sup>13</sup> By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire.*

<sup>14</sup> *Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through; <sup>15</sup> so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate. <sup>16</sup> The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.*

- A.) So Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem and immediately inspects the city to get a good perspective of what needs to be done; he starts nothing until has a good understanding of the work to be done!
- B.) **S12cd**: **Before embarking on a work, get to know the situation**
- 1) As a pastor/leader we need to have a vision? Who are we trying to reach? What work needs to be done? What is the objective? What resources are needed?
  - 2) PRAYERFULLY PLAN!
  - 3) Get to know the situation, the culture, the people, especially people
  - 4) Get to know their personalities, their worldviews, their hurts, their needs; This makes problem solving much easier
  - 5) Nehemiah inspected the scene and got to know the problem and how big the task was...but he knew God was bigger than the task and encouraged the people in it...he had the vision...*and he invited the people into it*
  - 6) **S12ef** - Have a God-ordained vision with an end-state in sight: it glorifies God and makes disciples

### III) Called to “edify”

**Nehemiah 2:18-19** - <sup>17</sup> Then I said to them, “You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace.” <sup>18</sup> I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, “Let us start rebuilding.” **4:6** - So they began this good work. So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.

- A.) This is our calling as pastors and leaders, we are called to be builders; to actively be in the business of construction...we are God’s construction workers (*mga manggagawa sa konstruksyon*)

- 1) What are we building?
- 2) Like Nehemiah, we are walking among a broken people, broken cities, a broken world
- 3) Communities full of lost and deceived people who are spiritually poor, helped captive by the world, and enslaved by the devil
- 4) So what do we do?

B.) We take these broken people and bring them to Jesus to be rebuilt, to be renovated (*inayos*), reconstructed (*muling itinayo*) into something new

- 1) By preaching the Gospel, by sharing truth with them, we are being used of the Holy Spirit to renew their thinking; with a new mind, they can accept Christ and learn the things of God
- 2) **S13** – This is a process called *edifying* believers (word study) - I **Thessalonians 5:11 – We are building!!**
- 3) How do we edify? How do we build up a people who are Spirit-filled and walking in their spiritual gifts?
  - a) Pour truth into your people; never compromise the truth, but speak it always in love and with humility...you must go deep and dig deep
  - b) Ensure your teaching is effectively bridging God's Word to their needs, with their life context...not lofty, but reaches where they are
    - 1) Jesus with the woman at the well (you have five husbands!)
  - c) Have a strong devotion life and encourage a strong devotion life in the people of your church; true Spiritual strength comes from devotion life
    - 1) As God pours into you, you pour into others
  - d) Fast, pray and intercede...encourage your congregation to do the same...**demolish strongholds** and set an environment where people know God is at work in your church

- e) Disciple believers with the objective of making them builders – people who contribute to the Kingdom
- 4) Finally, help them discern and use their gifts – never let your people be satisfied with being seat warmers (*mga pampainit ng upuan*) – pray that God will stir them up
  - a) Your calling is not to operate a church, to run a ministry, to keep the church doors open and lights on.
  - b) We are building up builders; disciples of Christ who will eventually be teachers, evangelists, exhorters, prayer warriors...not just seat-fillers

1 Corinthians 12:8-11 - *To one person the Spirit gives the ability to give wise advice; to another the same Spirit gives a message of special knowledge.<sup>9</sup> The same Spirit gives great faith to another, and to someone else the one Spirit gives the gift of healing. <sup>10</sup> He gives one person the power to perform miracles, and another the ability to prophesy. He gives someone else the ability to discern whether a message is from the Spirit of God or from another spirit. Still another person is given the ability to speak in unknown languages,<sup>[d]</sup> while another is given the ability to interpret what is being said. <sup>11</sup> It is the one and only Spirit who distributes all these gifts. He alone decides which gift each person should have.*

- 5) **S14** - Every one of you has these gifts

### **III) Stir up the gifts...flame the passion for Christ and His work**

A.) Listen to what Paul tells his son in the Spirit Timothy

2 Timothy 1: 6-8 - *For this reason I remind you to fan into flame the gift of God, which is in you through the laying on of my hands. <sup>7</sup> For the Spirit God gave us does not make us timid, but gives us power, love and self-discipline. <sup>8</sup> So do not be ashamed of the testimony about our Lord or of me his prisoner. Rather, join with me in suffering for the gospel, by the power of God.*

B.) Timothy was a young believer who grew up under the OT teachings of his grandmother and mother who were Jews; his father was a Greek.

- 1) Paul likely led Timothy and the women in His family to Christ during his first missionary journey through modern-day Turkey
- 2) The young man joined Paul on his second missionary journey, and then became Paul's messenger to churches in Greece, such as in Thessalonica and Philippi
- 3) Timothy eventually became leader of the church in Ephesus.
- 4) This was a huge responsibility, given the church was the Roman Empire's capitol city in Asia; Ephesus was an important seaport and commerce center, so it had a large international population
  - a) It was also steeped in pagan religion and mysticism; the city's economy was closely connected to worship of Diana and making/selling her idols

C.) As leader of the church, Timothy had much to contend with

- 1) Pagan influence, hostility from Roman authorities and Jewish communities, and the typical challenges of leading a young, but growing church
- 2) What we gather from the Scripture is Timothy was a gentle man and likely a loving and caring shepherd
- 3) Perhaps, however, his gentle ways caused him stress because he couldn't deal well with conflict and was not as bold as he needed to be in evangelizing, confronting and correcting
- 4) We get a clue to this in Paul's advice for Timothy to take wine for his stomach ailments perhaps caused by anxiety

D.) Paul essentially tells him: Listen, Timothy, I know the Lord is at work in your life, and he's given you the gift of leadership

- 1) However, your timidity (*pagkamahiyain*) is making you less effective as a minister, less fruitful, hurting your ability to build!

- 2) Right now, your gift is like the slow-burning embers of a weak fire (image)
- 3) There's smoke (*usoak*) there, and I see sparks (*butil*), but where are the flames (*apoy*) (*alab*)?
- 4) Where's the boldness and the passion! stir it up, fan it into flames, let the fire burn!

E.) How should Timothy do that? How do we and our people do that?

- 1) Put feet to our faith! Discern our gifts and put them to work building the kingdom...a passion, something driving you (lack of passion is a faith and spiritual problem)
- 2) Be confident that, despite our unworthiness, God has called and equipped us to do the task
- 3) Don't let laziness, distraction, worldliness or personality flaws cause us to neglect our gifts; it's too important! (S15)

**David Guzik** reminds us that *"God does not work His gifts through us as if we were robots. Even when He gives a man or woman gifts, He leaves an element that needs cooperation of their will, of their desire and drive. The problem is some are waiting passively for God to move them like a puppet, or some flush of fighting from heaven to blast through them. God wants us to choose-to, will-to employ them. **It honors Him when we revere him enough to use his gifts boldly without holding back.**"*

F.) Why should we? Because God has not given us a Spirit of fear; don't be afraid to operate in the gifts that every Christian has because he has given us: (S16)

- 1) Power - moral excellence, confidence, ability to do supernatural acts
- 2) Agape - unconditional love grounded in God's love for us that move us to love even our enemies
- 3) Sound Mind - calmness based on trust in God's calling, His equipping, His provision, His protection; the peace of God which surpasses all understanding.

4) And in this peace, we have boldness because we know God gives us all that we need, and we strive to please Him and not man

John 16:33 - *I have told you these things, so that in me you may have peace. In this world you will have trouble. But take heart! I have overcome the world.*

#### IV) Summary **S17**

- A.) Ensure your work as a pastor is grounded in the Lord's approval and provision; don't do things simply because they're a good idea or worked elsewhere, seek the Lord's specific authority and calling for you
- B.) Get to know the work and the people to which you are called...we call it situational awareness (*kamalayan sa sitwasyon*)
- C.) We are called to edify – to build up – disciples of Christ who are operating in their spiritual gifts
- D.) God has given us a spirit of boldness to use those gifts to glorify Christ and build His kingdom