

## Kingdom Builders 3

### I) Introduction – S18

A.) In session 2, we addressed our calling as builders...we are tasked to pour into the people in our congregations and build them up in the faith

- 1) The objective is to see them become effective workers...fruitful disciples of Jesus Christ
- 2) Now, as you know, this work is full of joy, but it can also be very difficult and requires strong faith and dependence on the Lord

B.) S19 - Remember what Nehemiah saw when he inspected the city:

- 1) The city walls and towers had been torn down and were lying in ruins
- 2) The gates of the city were burned
- 3) To rebuild the city, the people would have to work with large, heavy stones that had been broken, crushed, ripped apart and burnt
  - a) Many smaller rocks and very large rocks had to be reassembled and placed precisely to ensure the walls had no gaps in them
- 4) They had to rebuild large wooden gates and recreate their metal frames, hinges and supports, and then hang them securely
- 5) The work was tedious and strenuous (*nakakapagood*), and their enemies were becoming increasingly angry

[Nehemiah 4:7-12](#) - *But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. <sup>8</sup> They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. <sup>9</sup> But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat.*

**S20** - *Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall. <sup>11</sup> Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work." <sup>12</sup> Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us."*

C.) Two things are happening here:

- 1) The people are tired; they're looking at all the work that needs to be done, and think the task is too big
- 2) Secondly, their enemies are threatening violence; these unbelievers were likely riding around the border of the city mocking and threatening violence
  - a) They wanted Jerusalem to remain in ruins and God's people to remain poor, oppressed and unfruitful – to keep God's light in them hidden and dark
  - b) Sound familiar? Sounds a lot like the work of the flesh, the world and the devil against Christians!
- 3) The flesh can easily be discouraged if we put our eyes on the largeness or difficulty of the task rather than on the God for whom all things are possible
  - a) **S21** - Christians must face the task moment by moment, step by step, **patiently**...put the puzzle together piece by piece
  - b) Don't rush and think the puzzle must come together right now in one large, fast effort
  - c) Wait upon the Lord and accomplish his daily tasks, which lead to a work only He can accomplish in His time
- 4) Further, the world and the devil will do everything they can to make you discouraged and fearful

- a) You're not strong enough, everybody's against you, you won't last; you will be defeated!

## II) The answer to opposition and discouragement

- A.) Nehemiah has a wonderful, incredible, faith-filled response to both problems:

Nehemiah 4:14, 17-20 - <sup>14</sup> Then as I looked over the situation, I called together the nobles and the rest of the people and said to them, "Don't be afraid of the enemy! Remember the Lord, who is great and glorious, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes!" <sup>17</sup> The laborers carried on their work with one hand supporting their load and one hand holding a weapon. <sup>18</sup> All the builders had a sword belted to their side. The trumpeter stayed with me to sound the alarm. <sup>19</sup> Then I explained to the nobles and officials and all the people, "The work is very spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. <sup>20</sup> When you hear the blast of the trumpet, rush to wherever it is sounding. Then our God will fight for us!"

- 1) Hear the confidence in Nehemiah's reply; he is fully trusting in God's call despite the intense difficulty of the trial...he is ready to go to war if needed

- B.) As you can see here, we are not only called to build, but to defend...to stand guard and fight against forces that oppose the Christian and the church – **S22**  
**Quote**

- 1) So we as Christians leaders must build up through preaching, teaching and discipling with one hand, but hold a spear or sword in the other hand to defend

- 2) How do we do that?

Paul says it best in Ephesians 4:11-15 - *So Christ himself gave the apostles, the prophets, the evangelists, the pastors and teachers, <sup>12</sup> to equip his people for works of service, so that the body of Christ may be built up <sup>13</sup> until we all reach unity in the faith and in the knowledge of the Son of God and become mature, attaining to the whole measure of the fullness of Christ.*

*<sup>14</sup> Then we will no longer be infants, tossed back and forth by the waves, and blown here and there by every wind of teaching and by the cunning and craftiness of people in their deceitful scheming. <sup>15</sup> Instead, speaking the truth in love, we will grow to become in every respect the mature body of him who is the head, that is, Christ.*

3) What is Paul calling us to do? Pastors and leaders build a church where the people are: **S23**

a) Being equipped and employed for works of service...they are operating in their gifts

b) Unified in the faith because they are growing in the knowledge of Christ and are confident in what they believe

c) Your responsibility is to keep going deeper and take them with you!

d) They are active in service and in sharing and defending the TRUTH!

**e)** Satan's greatest weapon is deception (LGBTQ, INC, etc) – truth is our greatest counter-weapon – our sword and spear - **SV24, SV25**

C.) Don't be passive in this...don't be lazy or distracted, or allow your people to be bench warmers

1) Too many churches fall prey to false teaching, sin, and worldly distractions – and they bear little or no spiritual fruit - because the people became passive...they aren't serving or growing...you be active in both!

2) TRUTH!

### **III) Resting**

A.) Something that's vitally important to effectiveness in ministry is "rest."

1) A servant, a builder, a soldier works very hard, but cannot work without rest; even Jesus and the apostles rested from their labor

- 2) God “rested” on the 7th day – He didn’t need rest, but He wanted to give man an example to follow because we would have limitations
- 3) There are three types of rest we will look at: rest from labor, rest in the labor, and the rest of Christ

B.) Rest from Labor - this is simply taking a break from our tasks as ministers and servants to renew and refresh our minds and bodies

- 1) We simply must. God did not intend for us to drive ourselves into the dirt with fatigue and stress; never apologize for taking time away from the church and people to rest
- 2) "Well, wait! 'I'm a pastor, a trusted leader, I must be accessible all day, every day
- 3) Really?! Are you a holy superman? Are you stronger than Jesus?

[Mark 6:30-31](#) - *The apostles returned to Jesus from their ministry tour and told him all they had done and taught. <sup>31</sup> Then Jesus said, “Let’s go off by ourselves to a quiet place and rest awhile.” He said this because there were so many people coming and going that Jesus and his apostles didn’t even have time to eat.*

a) In John 4, we see Jesus has separated from the apostles and is resting alone near Jacob’s well in Samaria; in Mark 4, we see him in deep sleep aboard a boat in a storm...even the storm doesn’t wake him

b) If Jesus needed rest, you need rest! Signs that you need rest:

- 1) Your frequently tired
- 2) You have little alone time with God; your devotions are quick and lack substance and meditation
- 3) You’re discouraged or depressed because you feel like you’re lacking
- 4) You have little patience for people and lack empathy

C.) How rest? It's simple...do what Jesus did...isolate yourself, sleep and pray.

- 1) Keep this in mind that the work and the congregation and the community BELONG TO GOD!
- 2) Part of the discipling process is to build to build up leaders to stand in for you when rest is needed
- 3) Remember, you are a shepherd; you tend to the sheep, you protect them, but they belong to the divine shepherd Jesus Christ; they are the body of Christ, not the body of Jesse or Rick or...
- 4) This will help you let go, realizing they are in God's hand.

D.) Rest in the labor

- 1) Resting in work is the process of trusting in our Lord to do the work through us
- 2) Again, it's important to remember, the work is the Lord's, not yours; we are a partner in the work empowered by the Holy Spirit
- 3) **S26**- Hudson Taylor was a missionary to China who suffered and sacrificed much to bring the Gospel to inland China
  - a) He reached a point where he grew tired spiritually and mentally
  - b) He tried to be disciplined in prayer, but constant interruptions and pressures of ministry left him drained and overly conscious of his sin
  - c) He found it increasingly difficult to control his nerves, hard thoughts, and unkind words
  - d) Instead of growing stronger, he felt he was getting weaker; he felt like a failure and questioned his own salvation
  - e) As peace eluded him, he tried harder to please God, but peace wouldn't come; the harder he worked the more troubled he became

But then Jesus spoke to him about abiding: [John 15:5](#) - *I am the vine; you are the branches. If you remain in me and I in you, you will bear much fruit; apart from me you can do nothing*

Jesus also said in [John 5:19,30b](#): " *So Jesus explained, "I tell you the truth, the Son can do nothing by himself. He does only what he sees the Father doing. Whatever the Father does, the Son also does...I do not seek my own will but the will of Him who sent Me!"*

E.) We must have a good devotional life; dedicated, uninterrupted time with the Lord

- 1) In that time, listen, rest, meditate, learn to hear God's voice in prayer
- 2) Learn to listen in life's circumstances...what doors is He opening, what doors is He closing; move when you have peace...that you are confident God is calling you in a certain direction
- 3) This is rest "in the work:" knowing that He is the strength behind it, not you; you are merely trusting in His grace and His provision and guidance
  - a) I constantly remind myself that it is Him, not me when I teach; He must give the increase...put myself aside

F.) Here's what it looks like

[Philippians 4:11-13](#) – *I am not saying this because I am in need, for I have learned to be content whatever the circumstances. I know what it is to be in need, and I know what it is to have plenty. I have learned the secret of being content in any and every situation, whether well fed or hungry, whether living in plenty or in want. I can do all this through him who gives me strength.*

- 1) Keep in mind that Paul achieved great things while in Roman captivity and in chains
- 2) He wrote the epistles to the Philippians, Colossians, Philemon, Ephesians all while in bondage and headed to execution

- 3) His mind and spirit were not overwhelmed by tasks and trials because they were at rest in Christ's provision

#### IV) Finally, there is rest in Christ

- A.) The saving work of Jesus makes all who put their faith in Him righteous before God.

[Ephesians 2:8-9](#) - <sup>8</sup> God saved you by his grace when you believed. And you can't take credit for this; it is a gift from God. <sup>9</sup> Salvation is not a reward for the good things we have done, so none of us can boast about it.

- 1) We are set free from striving to impress God.
- 2) We aren't working to earn our salvation; He already took care of it on the cross; putting faith in Christ's death and resurrection allows us to rest from religious works
- 3) We are free to minister and to love people because God has already secured our eternity...now we work to ensure other people can join us in Heaven with the Lord

- B.) What does it look like when a pastor is at rest in all three areas? **Go Outline 3**

- 1) A follower of God, not a creator of "programs"
- 2) Glorifies the Lord rather than himself
- 3) Knows the Lord will complete any work He starts
- 4) Preaches boldly because he is confident in the Lord's provision and calling
- 5) Knows when to say "NO"
- 6) Loves people rather than condemns them
- 7) Is content in every situation, even when amid fiery trial
- 8) Is patient...can wait upon the Lord and not rush His work

9) Is willing to do the hard thing because he is fully dependent on Jesus

**V) Summary – S27**

- A.) The task of Christian ministry can seem overwhelming
- B.) There is often much work to do and great opposition to it, even within your church
- C.) The key to being an effective pastor or leader is focus on making disciples, motivating your people to walk in their gifts, be active in taking a stand against false teaching and attacks on the church
- D.) Rest...Rest...Rest (Abide in the Lord and realize the work is His...always!)