Doing a Great Work: Praying for a Great Work

Introduction

Timeline

Ray C. Stedman: Nehemiah is the story of the ________________ of the walls of Jerusalem

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Who, What, Where, When, Why

Who: ________________

What: Rebuilding the wall

Where: Shushan and ________________

When: +/- 444 B.C.

Why: Ray C. Stedman: This book is also the story of the restoring of a ________________

This entire series is one big promo for Easter at Coolidge (EAC). As we go through today’s lesson, look at the pieces and see if you see yourself. We will talk more about them at the end.
Nehemiah 1 (NKJV)

1 The words of Nehemiah [Jehovah comforts]

2 Hanani . . . came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews . . . and concerning Jerusalem. [Josh Hunt: Godly people, at times, ________ for trouble. They look for problems that God can use them to solve. . . . They expose themselves to the pain that is in the world.]

4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting [abstaining from food] and praying [praying on behalf of someone] before the God of heaven.

7 We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments [things ______________ to be done], the statutes [_____________ or boundaries], nor the ordinances [judicial _______________] which You commanded Your servant Moses.

Apply (So what is the point?)
1. Communication is part of the work
2. Prayer is part of the work
3. Volunteering is part of the work

Personalize (Now what do I do?)
1. Communicate ______
2. Pray for ______
3. Volunteer for ______

Sermon blanks
I. Reverencing God
   A. His person
      1. Commitment to God
         a. Not a religion
         b. But a relationship
      2. Character of God
         a. General revelation
         b. Special revelation
   B. His Plan
      1. Covenants – the blessings
      2. Commandments – the judgments

II. Requesting God
   A. Petition to God
   B. Praise to God
      1. For redeeming us
         a. Great power
         b. Strong hand
      2. For hearing us
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Nehemiah 2 (NKJV)

9 Then I [Nehemiah] went [_______ miles from Shushan to Jerusalem] to the governors in the region beyond the River, and gave them the king’s letters. Now the king had sent captains of the army and horsemen with me. 10 When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard of it, they were deeply disturbed that a man had come to seek the well-being of the children of Israel [Why would Sanballat and Tobiah be fearful of help for Jerusalem?].

Ray C. Stedman: Whenever a man like Nehemiah says, “I will arise and build,” Satan always says, “Then I will arise and ______________.”

The greater the work, the greater the ______________
11 So I came to Jerusalem and was there three days. 12 Then I arose in the night [What did Nehemiah do for three days? He needed to rest so he ____________], I and a few men with me; I told no one what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem; nor was there any animal with me, except the one on which I rode. 13 And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. 14 Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King’s Pool, but there was no room for the animal under me to pass. 15 So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned [David Guzik: We must look at the broken down towers, and carefully study what is wrong—but only if we have the heart, the prayer, the vision, the passion to be used of God to ______ it right.]. 16 And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I had done; I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, or the others who did the work.

Apply (So what is the point?)
1. Brokenness is all around us
2. Expect opposition in God’s work
3. Time spent resting and reflecting is well spent

Personalize (Now what do I do?)
1. Engage with the brokenness (invite people to ______)
2. Rise up and confront opposition (don’t tolerate negative speak about ______)
3. Rest and reflect on the brokenness and the possibilities of restoration

Sermon blanks
I. The adversity in a great work (the greater the work the greater the adversity)
   A. Getting there
      1. Set back
         a. Distractions
         b. Detours
         c. Discouragement
      2. Set ups
         a. Authority
         b. Army
   B. Arriving there
      1. The world
      2. The flesh
II. The approach to a great work
   A. Prepare yourself physically
      1. Burn out
      2. Rust out
      3. Live out
   B. Prepare yourself mentally
   C. Prepare yourself spiritually
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Nehemiah 2 (NKJV)

17 Then I said to them, “You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach 18 And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me [Nehemiah used what God ______ done to encourage the people to do what God ___________ done], and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me.

So they said, “Let us [they were _______________] rise up [they were ____________] and build [they were ______________].” Then they set their hands to this good work. [Haddon Robinson’s daughter]
Warren Wiersbe: It takes both the hands of leadership and the hands of partnership to accomplish the work of the Lord.

When was the last time God put you in a situation when you had to work together?

19 But [____________________ is one of the few constants in the universe] when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official, and Geshem [rain] the Arab heard of it, they laughed at us and despised us, and said, “What is this thing that you are doing? Will you rebel against the king?” [Ray C. Stedman: It is the opposition that makes the players dig in and __________ through]

20 So I answered them, and said to them, “The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build, but you have no heritage or right or memorial in Jerusalem.” [In essence, Nehemiah told them, “You do not __________”]

Apply (So what is the point?)
1. Be encouraged by what God has done (and remind others)
2. Opposition will be relentless and growing
3. Join together to do the great work

Personalize (Now what do I do?)
1. Tell others about your past positive experiences with ______
2. Encourage others that are facing opposition as we get closer to ______
3. Winston Churchill: Never, never, never give up

Sermon blanks
I. These are the facts
   A. There is a work for we
      1. There is physical work
      2. There is public work
         a. What is our reputation
         b. How are we perceived
   B. There is a word to me
      1. From the Lord
      2. From the leaders
II. There are the faithful
    A. They say the right thing
    B. They do the right thing
III. This is the fight
    A. Our adversaries
       1. The world
       2. The flesh
       3. The devil
    B. Our ally
       1. The powerful God
       2. The personal God
       3. The prospering God
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Nehemiah 3

In Nehemiah 3, Nehemiah sets out to __________________ for posterity and the official records the names and accomplishments of the people who worked on the wall (Warren Wiersbe).

8 David Guzik: These men were not trained for this kind of work. . . . The most important ability in the work of the Lord is __________________

26 The Water Gate needed ____ repair

Ray C. Stedman: Nehemiah is the story of the __________________ of the walls of Jerusalem. . . . also the story of the __________________ of a people from ruin and despair to a new walk with God. Remember that this entire series is one big advertisement for EAC.
Nehemiah 4
6 for the people had a mind [__________, inclination, resolution, courage] to work.

15 David Guzik: This is the victory. Defending against the attack was not the victory; the people of God would not be at peace and security until the wall was rebuilt. Getting on with the work is the ___________.

Nehemiah 5

Nehemiah 6
9 Josh Hunt: The best answer to opposition is to _______ working

So, what was Nehemiah about? It is about you and me. It is about the walls in our lives that need to be built up and the gates that need to be repaired. It is about the process of restoration and how each one of us plays a role.

Apply (So what is the point?)
1. God cares about individuals
2. God remembers individuals and their contributions
3. There is always a job to do in the body of Christ

Personalize (Now what do I do?)
1. Care about individuals and invite them to ______
2. See every person as being able to contribute
3. Find my job and serve as needed/gifted at ______

Sermon blanks
I. The placement of the people
   A. Serve where you are gifted
   B. Serve where you are needed
II. The perseverance of the people
   A. The contempt on the people
      1. They were taunted
      2. They were threatened
   B. The courage of the people
      1. They prayed and worked
      2. They prayed and watched
III. The praise of the people
   A. They finished their work
   B. They glorified their God