

On the Move: Legacies of Faith, On the Move Together, Nehemiah 2-3, 3/1/26

We are in a 3 part vision series On the Move: Legacies of Faith. Kendra is building a living legacy and our church gets to play a major role in that. All of us are building a legacy, the question is what kind of legacy is it? Is it built upon the legacy of Jesus and his church or self? Last week in Genesis 12 we learned from Abraham that legacy begins with movement...with risky, obedient faith that trusts God enough to leave the comfortable for the promised. This morning we want to move from one man to the legacy of a whole community working together to accomplish God's mission.

From Genesis 12, fast forward about 1,400 years in biblical history to the year 445BC. The promise that began with one man stepping out of a tent has become the nation of Israel, but now that nation lies in ruins. The descendants of Abraham have a land, they have a name, they have a story... but their city, Jerusalem, is broken, their walls are torn down, and their future feels fragile. And into that moment of discouragement, God raises up another leader, not to start a nation this time, but to rebuild one. His name is Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was not living in Jerusalem at the time; he was serving as cupbearer to the Persian king Artaxerxes in the capital city of Susa. Cupbearer sounds like a menial title...like when I was a dishwasher at the Crackerbarrel in High School...although the free biscuits were a perk...but back then Cupbearer was a position of both influence and affluence. One day, a messenger from Jerusalem visits Nehemiah in the comfort of the palace and tells him that Jerusalem's walls were still in ruins and the city was in a vulnerable place. In that moment something broke in Nehemiah. But what began as devastating news became a divine burden to do something about his city and his people.

So in chapter 2, after months of prayer, Nehemiah appears before King Artaxerxes visibly troubled. When the king asks why he is sad, **Nehemiah 2:2 I was very much afraid, 3 but I said to the king, "May the king live forever!**

Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king

and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it."

Not only this but Nehemiah boldly requests the king to supply timber for construction on his dime! Against all odds, the king grants everything he asks and even provides military escort. Nehemiah knows this isn't just his lucky day, this doesn't happen- **v.8 because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests.**

Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem. He spends his first three days quietly inspecting the broken walls at night without telling the officials or the people this divine burden he has. And then he brings in the community to share the vision God has given him.

Nehemiah 2: 17 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."

18 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." So they began this good work.

Nehemiah casts the vision that God put in his heart and God's people are united around the vision. But notice, they don't just say, "Sounds awesome Nehemiah, we'll pray for your success...good luck with that, let us know when it's done and we'll come for the ribbon cutting." They are all engaged. Vision became shared ownership.

And that's exactly what we see happen in chapter 3. What looks at first like a long list of names is actually a powerful picture of unified all-in participation in the vision for God's house: priests, goldsmiths, perfumers, rulers, merchants, families, sons and daughters, young and old, each rebuilt a section of the wall next to someone else. No one rebuilt the entire wall, but everyone rebuilt their part.

Summary in *Nehemiah 4:6 So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart.*

Because Nehemiah stepped out in faith to follow the vision God put in his heart, and because God's people were all-in to accomplish the vision, they left a legacy. When those families picked up stones in Nehemiah 3, they weren't just rebuilding a wall, they were protecting a promise. They were preserving the people through whom the Messiah, Jesus would come. Four centuries later, Jesus would walk those streets, teach in that city, and give His life just outside those gates. And today, we sit here as recipients of that promise. They became players on the field of salvation history and their legacy is etched forever in God's Word for us to see.

But Nehemiah's story isn't just about an ancient community in Jerusalem. It's about every community, every church God calls to rise and build a gospel legacy. I want to show you two legacy principles that leap off the pages of history in Nehemiah for us today.

#1 God will supply whatever it takes to accomplish his mission.

Isaiah 46:9-10 "I am God, and there is none like me... My purpose will stand, and I will accomplish all my good pleasure."

God promised through the prophets of the Bible that Jerusalem would again be rebuilt and the Jewish people would again return to the land. How does a broken city 800 miles away get rebuilt? Using a Jewish cupbearer in a comfortable Persian palace and lumber from pagan king!

- When God purposed to save Noah and his family, he supplied the materials and instructions for the ark.
- When God purposed to deliver the Israelites from slavery in Egypt he supplied Moses and Aaron, miracles, and the gold of the Egyptians and manna in the wilderness.
- When God purposed to take the gospel across the Roman world he supplied the church to carry the message from city to city, and when the church was kicked out of public meeting places and synagogues, God provided homes of wealthy merchants like Lydia and deacons like Phoebe.

And church we can trust him to supply what we need to accomplish the purposes he has for us. Sometimes the church can slip into a scarcity mindset. I'm all for responsible money management and we do careful budgeting... Sometimes we can put limits on God. And limit our vision. And limit our dreams so that they look more like something man can do instead of what God can do. But God is limitless in his resources. One of my favorite verses in the entire Bible- **2 Chronicles 16:9 For the eyes of the Lord range throughout the earth to give strong support to those whose hearts are fully committed to him.** We commit to God and his mission, and watch God move mountains to make it happen.

50 years ago when our fledgling church was meeting at Friends School with no land, no building, no pastor, and their future seemed uncertain, but the church families were united and trusted God would make a way. God supplied this very property and called Pastor Bo.

When our church was facing millions in debt from building this sanctuary and the classrooms downstairs, and there was economic hardship and we trusted that God would supply his work and we've been debt free for 5 years.

We are trusting God to provide the fullness of his supply for our On the Move vision- We are trusting God to supply the servants we haven't met yet. The elders and deacons not yet affirmed. The disciple-makers not yet trained. The city-servants not yet called. The missionaries not yet sent. And the financial partners, great and small, who will build a legacy that will bless future generations.

This leads us to legacy principle #2

#2 God's mission moves through the power of unified commitment

Why did Nehemiah take an entire chapter to give us a detailed list of all the families who participated in the building project and what specific ways they contributed? Because God wants you to see that His mission is never a solo project. It takes everyone pulling together to accomplish his purposes. Here's what else is remarkable- the wall was rebuilt in 52 days. Nearly three miles of wall.

20-40 ft. high in places. Under threat of attack. Finished in 52 days. How? Not because a few early adopters showed up, but because everyone took a section, grabbed a brick and said, "I'm in."

You know **Clydesdale horses**, the Budweiser horses? One Clydesdale can pull 8,000 lbs, 4 tons. What could two pull? Well, the simple logic would be if one could pull 8,000 lbs, two could pull 16,000 lbs. That would be obvious, right? That's the wrong answer. That's not what they found. They found that if one can pull eight, two can pull 24,000 lbs. But you know what they found further? If these two horses, this is going to sound strange... if they know each other, which means they were trained together...they are doing life together. They can pull 32,000 lbs, 16 tons, 4x what one can pull alone. Unity multiples strength.¹

This is exactly what happened with the community of God in Jerusalem and what God can do when our whole community is all-in, joined together with the vision. Because **God's mission moves through the power of unified commitment.**

What does that look like Nate? Well it looks like more than just saying, "Great vision Nate, I love being part of a church that is On the Move...hope it goes well!" It looks like every one of us, young and old, men and women, great and small grabbing a brick! It's investing your resources in the work of God's house, this outpost of God's Mission here at Brandywine Valley Church.

Let me give you three resources you can invest.

Invest your **TIME: Ephesians 5:15-16 *Look carefully then how you walk, not as unwise but as wise, making the best use of the time, because the days are evil.***

Redeem the time...the idea is that we can buy back the time so it's not lost by investing in something eternal. Lorraine Dunn, Nikki McIntosh, Jacquelyn Kirk- MomCo. Building a living legacy with your time.

What would it look like to prioritize some of your time by serving in the church? Serving our children on Sunday mornings. Making coffee in the morning. Hosting a life group. Helping in the community through one of our partners. Redeem the time!

Invest your **TALENTS- 1 Peter 4:10 *Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms.***

God has given us all different gifts, skills, passions, experiences, abilities to use for his kingdom. Each of us has a section of the wall. Shout out Kevin Dombrowski. Kevin grabbed Len's section of the wall. Do you have the ability to communicate effectively? Teach in Brandywine Kids or facilitate a group. You like cameras and are pretty adept with technology? Join our production team. Are you an encourager? Join our prayer team or care team that visits people in the

¹ Thanks to Cal Jernigan for this illustration.

hospital or calls those who are lonely. You can use a serve card to help you find your section of the wall.

Invest your **TREASURES** your money and possessions. Unified commitment to the mission at Brandywine means that we aren't only grabbing bricks we are supplying bricks. How are you financially investing here? **Primary Goal 100% participation.**

Secondary Goal: \$500k Committed over the next 24 months.

Close with this: in Nehemiah there were **Three Responses to God's Work.**

1- Stand Against

In Nehemiah 2 we meet Sanballat, Tobiah, Geshem who mocked and ridiculed the work of God, and eventually even threatened its demise. But despite their opposition, God's work went right on going. These three men end up on the wrong side of salvation history as cautionary tales of those who oppose what God is building.

2- Sit Out.

Nehemiah 3:5 The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors.

They watched. They stayed comfortable. They let others carry the weight. And history records it. Not because of what they did but because of what they refused to do. Neutrality is still a decision. And because they sat out, they missed out on the blessing of being part of the legacy.

3- Join In.

All those families, those men and women and children who were all-in. They grabbed stones. They sweat. They sacrificed. They stood guard. They built side by side. And they became part of a legacy bigger than they understood. Five centuries later, Jesus would walk through those gates. Two thousand years later, we sit here because they said yes.

So what will we do? Oppose it? Sit out? Or join in? Because God is building something here. Not just square footage. Not just classrooms. Not just a renovated cafe. He is building disciples. He is building future leaders. He is building space for salvation stories that haven't happened yet. And one day someone will walk through these doors because we grabbed a brick and built our section of the wall.

Communion

We've talked today about rebuilding walls. About grabbing bricks. About unified commitment. About leaving a legacy. But before we ever build anything for God... we remember what God built for us.

Nehemiah rebuilt a wall to protect a city. But Jesus came to tear down a wall. Paul tells us in Ephesians 2 that Christ has “broken down the dividing wall of hostility.” The wall between us and God. The wall between sinner and Savior. The wall that our sin had built.

The wall in Jerusalem was completed in 52 days. The wall our sin built was torn down in six hours on a cross. Jesus said it is finished.

And today we don't come to this table first as builders and financial givers. We come as recipients of the gift of grace.²

² Some formatting and language improvements were assisted by ChatGPT.