“Let Us Rise and Build”

Main Idea: When God revives his people, they are willing to inspect the walls, acknowledge what’s broken, move from apathy to inspiration, and mobilize for the work.

Inspection (Nehemiah 2:12-16)

1. After three days of rest, verse 12 states that Nehemiah arose at night and with a few trusted companions inspected the wall. He did his inspection quietly and let no one know what God had put in his heart.
   a. The reason for his secrecy is understandable. There were people who didn’t want the walls to be rebuilt. If those opponents found out about his plans before he assessed the situation and rallied support, they might organize opposition and halt rebuilding.
   b. Nehemiah was a man of faith, but he was also wise to the ways of men. He knew how people thought and how easily a plan could be undermined by a poorly executed rollout.

2. Honestly inspecting the broken walls of our lives and of the church is essential to strengthening the church. We will never be strong as God’s people if we’re unwilling to admit where we are weak. And we can never rebuild unless we acknowledge that weakness.
   a. The moment we become more concerned with preserving our own reputation, opinion or legacy, we have made it about us and not about the glory of Jesus Christ.

3. We can also learn from Nehemiah’s motivation: He inspected for the purpose of rebuilding. He wasn’t inspecting to demean or criticize God’s people. He wasn’t inspecting so he could gripe and complain. He was inspecting so that he could help build.
   a. It’s not wrong to see weaknesses and problems in the church. The question is what is the goal of our inspection? Constructive criticism means that we are willing to work to make it right—to pray, to serve, to offer our time and be the solution. We should inspect for the sake of rebuilding.

Inspiration (Nehemiah 2:17-20)

1. Nehemiah is an excellent example of godly leadership.
   a. He defines the problem and completely identifies with those he’s been called to lead out of it. It’s not “your trouble”—it’s “the trouble WE are in.”
b. Then he imparts faith and vision and points them to a better future. They had stopped believing and hoping that their circumstances could change. They had learned to live with broken walls, derision and shame. God used Nehemiah’s words and his experience of God’s grace to jolt their faith and confidence in God. They responded, “Let us rise and build” (v. 18).

2. The greatest good of godly leadership is to call and inspire others to fulfill God’s will, to seek, obey, trust and glorify him. Nehemiah inspired the people by pointing them back to God’s activity and God’s power.
   a. We often think of leadership only in terms of formal positions—CEO, coach, captain, boss, pastor. But what Nehemiah models speaks to all of us. We are all exerting leadership and influence in some setting, e.g., home, school, work, neighborhood, among friends, family, etc.
   b. Regardless of whether or not we have a title, our words, example and faith influence other people. If we are people of prayer who love the glory of God, we can influence others like Nehemiah.

Mobilization (Nehemiah 3:1-32)

1. In chapter 3, the people rise up and start the work of building. This is a powerful image of what the church of Jesus Christ is supposed to look like—side by side, every member playing a part.

2. How does this chapter speak to our own participation in the church today?
   a. First, there’s diversity. The priests work alongside, goldsmiths and perfumers. Civic leaders and laborers next to farmers. City folk work with country folk. There are men and women. That kind of diversity is what makes the church strong today. God’s church works when every part, every member is working.
   b. Second, while many people worked on the wall opposite their own home, others came from outside the city and worked on parts that didn’t benefit them directly. It is a helpful reminder that we are to help strengthen parts of the church even when there’s not an immediate personal benefit, like older couples or singles serving the children, or married couples reaching out to singles.
   c. Third, they worked together. Over and over in this chapter, we read the phrase “and next to him … and next to him.” As each of these families or groups worked on their part of the wall, they would look to the right and to their left and be profoundly aware that their labor was just a small part of the greater work and purpose. We need the
same reminder in the church. We’re building something together. It’s not just about me, my life and my family. It’s about us and what God is doing in all of us together! And that gives a greater meaning to the labor we’re engaged in. Our little part of the wall matters to the whole.

Fellowship Starters

Care Group Leaders: Take time to read through the passage, remind folks of the main points, and remind them of Nehemiah’s historical setting (see the Nehemiah Part 1 and 2 outlines for historical background).

1. Josh taught us that honestly inspecting the broken walls of our lives and of the church is essential to strengthening the church. Where is God calling you to honestly and humbly inspect the walls of your life (e.g., relationship with the Lord, friends, marriage, parenting, work, etc.)? Where might repentance and growth be needed?

2. What were Nehemiah’s motives for inspecting the walls? How should his example guide observations or concerns we bring to fellow believers and to the church?

3. After inspecting the walls, Nehemiah used his experience of God’s grace to influence and inspire the people. In what relationship (e.g., home, work, neighborhood, friends, etc.) is God calling you to utilize your influence? How might you draw attention to God’s goodness and grace?

4. Josh noted that the diversity of the laborers in rebuilding the wall is a principle for the church: God’s church works when every member is working. Have you taken your place at the wall of Covenant Life Church? Are you laboring to build?