

How to Rebuild?

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:11 – 18

It was nighttime when the leader set out by horseback to inspect the work that lay ahead. As he toured the destruction all around him, he saw the city walls in pieces. They had been destroyed and the large gate that was the main entry into the city was burnt to a crisp. In some areas, the vast debris made it tough for his horse to get through. The rider was deeply saddened as he turned toward home! This is the scene we find in Nehemiah – we find a city in ruin; we find the Holy City in ruin!

When it came time to report the damage to the officials of the city, the leader began by saying – ‘You see the trouble we are in!’ He reported that the city was in ruins and the protecting city walls had been rendered useless. What a troubling report but a true report. But then he made a statement that energized the troubled citizens. He told them about the gracious hands of God and immediately the people replied – ‘Let us start rebuilding!’ And they did! What a wonderful scene this must have been. In the face of utter destruction and devastation – the people proclaim – Let us start rebuilding!

With faith in God and an all-out effort, a seemingly impossible task is taken on. Despite enemy opposition, the people of Jerusalem, under Nehemiah leadership, rebuilt the wall in just 52 days!

Some years ago I lead a church youth group with many youth to a local amusement park – Knoebels Grove. When we first got there, it was a beautiful day and the park looked great! But as the day progressed, thunderstorms rolled in and rain came pouring down! I mean – it was a cloud burst! Some youth and I were on the far side of the park planning on riding a roller coaster called the Phoenix. As we were in line the storm broke and many got out of line, but me and the youth were determined to ride the coaster which had excellent ‘air time’. As we boarded the coaster, the footwell of the car we got in was filled with water and as we headed up the first big hill, the water poured out of our car. Also heading up the first hill, the rain was hitting our faces so hard, it hurt – It was GREAT!

After completing the ride with hands in the air and screaming, we pulled up to the loading area but the brakes were so wet we slide past our loading position. So, the operator said – ‘Well I guess we will have to go ahead and send around again!’ Cheers broke and off we went again!

Soon after we final got off the Phoenix, the park announced it was closing. It continued to pour the rest of that day and night, and the next day the local paper had pictures of the park. The park had severe flooding and the park was destroyed. The owner of the park said in the paper – ‘We will rebuild!’ And in two weeks the park was up and running again. He said ‘Let us start rebuilding’ and they did!

As you consider your circumstances during this pandemic and systemic racism, is there something that looks difficult but you know God wants you to do? Have your walls crumbled and does your life look like it is in ruin? Is the fun in your life flooded by the problems of the world? Is there a sin you cannot seem to get rid of? Is there a relationship rift that is not God honoring? Is there a task you need to do that looks too hard? What are a couple of 'destroyed wall' situations that are troubling you?

As we consider our circumstances during this pandemic and systemic racism, is there something that looks difficult but we know God wants us to do? Have our walls crumbled and does our life together look like it is in ruin? Is the fun in our shared life flooded by the problems of the world? Is there a sin we cannot seem to get rid of? Is there a relationship rift that is not God honoring? Is there a task we need to do that looks too hard? What are a couple of 'destroyed wall' situations that are troubling us?

My advice and Nehemiah's advice are – Ask God for guidance! Analyze the problem and recognize God's involvement. Ask for God's help in the rebuilding process.

Then start rebuilding – Then start rebuilding!

This is not a message for the trustees of the church. I am not addressing them about our church being in ruin. I am speaking to each member and friend of the BBCC (DOC), that as we come out of this difficult time of coronavirus and systemic racism, we need to hear Nehemiah's words to the people in his day.

Let us start rebuilding and so they began God's good work. So, what part of the 'walls' of the church are you willing to work on? What part of the ministry of the church are you willing to apply your talents to rebuilding? What does God want you to do to support the ministry of our church? What do you need to get rid of so that you can move forward as we rebuild our church?

Oh yes, I understand the task we have before us looks hard, but I feel we are up to this task; I hope and pray you feel the same way?

Let us pray:

God, we need your help. We cannot fix these problems alone. Help us to understand the situation and then to seek your help and guidance in resolving the challenges before us. AMEN.