

## **God Opens The Door**

### **Nehemiah 2:1-8**

INTRO:

When we left Nehemiah last time, he was praying. Four months have passed when **chapter 2** opens. These months were months Nehemiah filled with prayer about the situation in Jerusalem. These were also months in which it appeared as if God wasn't listening. For four solid months Nehemiah prayed and for four long months the door remained closed. Then finally, God opened the door and Nehemiah got a hearing from the king.

We tend to be interested in open doors. We pray for open doors to ministry, open doors to promotions in our jobs, open doors to influence those in our world for the LORD. What do we do when the door opens? Nehemiah taught us some lessons to help us with the open doors in our lives.

*I. We Must Learn to Wait upon God (1-2)*

*II. We Need to Learn the Way God Works (2-6)*

*III. We Must Learning To Step Through Open Doors  
(7-8)*

*I. We Must Learn to Wait upon God (1-2)*

**Nehemiah 2:1-2** *“And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. Therefore the king said to me, ‘Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart.’ So I became dreadfully afraid.”*

A. One unavoidable aspect of God opening a door for us is the necessity of waiting upon Him to open the door. Nehemiah has much to teach us. Whenever I come upon places in the Bible where we are exhorted to wait upon God, my heart always cries out and says, *“Why! Why must I wait upon God?”*

1. Sometimes we must wait because it is not God's time to give us the blessing. The LORD told Abraham He would give Canaan to the Jews, but they would have to wait 430 years before it would happen because the sin of the Amorite was not yet full. Sometimes we too have to wait because it is not yet God's time for this to happen.

2. Sometimes we have to wait because God is busy doing something we don't understand. Habakkuk found himself in a situation like this. He said to God, *“Why aren't you doing something, LORD?”* God replied, *“I am. Look at the Chaldeans. I am going to allow them to invade to punish Judah.”*

3. Sometimes we have to wait because God is doing something in us through the waiting. Abraham waited 25 years for Isaac to be born. The LORD taught Abraham faith in the process.

4. A fourth reason we may need to wait like Nehemiah did because, there is nothing else we can do except pray and wait.

B. While we are waiting, what are we to do? This is where Nehemiah is particularly helpful. What did Nehemiah do while he waited?

1. Did he say, *“God called me to work in Jerusalem and not to this crummy job serving the king, so I’m not going to do much in this job any more until I get to Jerusalem?”* No. Some people say things like, *“The Lord called me to be a missionary (or preacher) and I am not going to get my hands dirty teaching a junior boys class in the interim. When I get to the place (or position) God wants me to have, then I will work!”*

2. This was not Nehemiah's attitude. He continued doing his job at the palace with all of his heart. In fact, he did his job so well, the first question the king asked was, *“How soon will you be back?”* (v.6).

C. Here is a corollary to this matter of waiting on God. The Lord will grant us the big responsibility with all of its blessing, when we prove ourselves faithful in the little things He gave us to do right now. In **Luke 16:10**, the Lord Jesus Himself laid down the principle.

***“He who is faithful in a very little thing is faithful also in much; and he who is unrighteous in a very little thing is unrighteous also in much.”***

Because Nehemiah's faithfully served as cupbearer, God opened the door to greater service.

So, we learn that we must at times wait upon God and that in waiting we must remain faithful in the task is ours to do where we are.

## ***II. We Need to Learn the Way God Works (3-6)***

**Nehemiah 2:3–6** *“And said to the king, ‘May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers’ tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?’” Then the king said to me, ‘What do you request?’ So I prayed to the God of heaven. And I said to the king, ‘If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers’ tombs, that I may rebuild it.’ Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), ‘How long will your journey be?’*

***And when will you return?’ So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.”***

A. While he was working something was showing in Nehemiah’s manner and face. Nehemiah's heart was showing. God used this opening to answer Nehemiah's prayer and to open the door for his going to Jerusalem.

1. Nehemiah could not contain the sorrow in his heart concerning the condition of God’s people anymore. Although he sought to hide his feelings in his heart, his face betrayed him and the King saw his sorrow.

2. Remember as you read this, "raining on the King's parade" often was a capital offense. Still, God used an unguarded moment to open a door for ministry. Have you ever considered the importance of the unguarded moments in our lives? We need to be so under the control of the Spirit, that in the moments we can’t control and aren’t actively thinking about, God still work through us. When we allow Him to control our hearts God can use our “unguarded moments” for great blessing.

C. When we pray, we need to realize God can and will use many different methods to open doors for us. Quite often the method that He likes to use best is the one we least expect. I don't know how Nehemiah expected God to answer his prayer.

D. We learn from Nehemiah's experience, God will open the door in His time and in His way.

### ***III. We Must Learning to Step Through Open Doors (7-8)***

***Nehemiah 2:7–8 “Furthermore I said to the king, ‘If it pleases the king, let letters be given to me for the governors of the region beyond the River, that they must permit me to pass through till I come to Judah, and a letter to Asaph the keeper of the king’s forest, that he must give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel which pertains to the temple, for the city wall, and for the house that I will occupy.’ And the king granted them to me according to the good hand of my God upon me.”***

A. The final thing we need to learn is how to step through when God opens the door. Here again Nehemiah can teach us something. We step through open doors by prayer (v.4). Notice when Nehemiah paused to pray. He prayed after the King asked him what he wanted. When the door opens we need to make sure that we are on praying ground. A door opened by prayer cannot be entered except by prayer.

B. We step through open doors with preparation (v. 8-9). Notice Nehemiah knew what specific provisions he needed to ask from the king to get the job done. He was

prepared to ask specifically because he had prayerfully considered the situation for months. Nehemiah submitted these plans to God beforehand for blue penciling. When we plan, let us make sure we give them to God first. Then we can be sure the end result is a plan the Lord can bless.

C. Finally, we step through open doors recognizing God's part in the blessing (v.9b). The King granted the request. Yet, Nehemiah realized it was because God blessed him. This assurance was to be Nehemiah's strength through the project.

**vs.12 & 18** *“Then I arose in the night, 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.”*

*“And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me, and also of the king’s words that he had spoken to me. So they said, ‘Let us rise up and build.’ Then they set their hands to this good work.”*

***Are we ready to walk through the open doors in our lives?*** Let us review what we have learned from Nehemiah.

1. We must learn how to wait for God to open the door in His time.
2. We must learn how God works in us and in others to open doors.
3. Finally, we must by prayer, and preparation be ready to walk through the door when God opens it. And in all of this we must remember Who opened the door and Who owns the work.

**Hymn #379 *Take My Life and Let It Be***