

**Subject: *Doing God's Work***  
**Scripture: *Nehemiah 2:17-20***

The first six chapters of Nehemiah tell us how to do the Lord's work. God has a work that only He can do and then He has work that we take part in. We are co-workers with Him in this great work. It's not that God needs us to get His work done, but He chooses to do His work by using us and others. A man bought a house with a large corner lot that had been overgrown with weeds and the hedges were halfway up to the roof. Over time this man worked on the yard and had it spruced up so that it was manicured like a golf course. Someone remarked: "You and the Lord sure do have that lot looking nice." "Thank you. You should have seen it when the Lord had it all by Himself."

### **1. A Desire to Do God's Work**

Let's go back to chapter 1 and Nehemiah's desire to get involved and do something for God. It all began when Nehemiah asked some questions and received some information from his brother. Nehemiah was living in Shushan, the winter palace of the Persian kings, after the captivity. His desire to do God's work came from the answer to two questions: What is going on back in the homeland? What needs to be done?

Then Nehemiah prayed about the situation. He poured out his heart and cast his burden on the Lord (vs. 5, "O Lord God of heaven" is a title found only in Ezra, Nehemiah, and Daniel). He repented and confessed his sins and the sins of his people Israel, and he submitted entirely to the Lord (vs. 11). Notice that he first desired to fear God's name (honor God) and then he desired to do God's work.

### **2. A Decision to Do God's Work**

Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer, a very important and trusted job. After prayer, he told the king about his concern for Jerusalem and the homeland. He knew that God could influence the king.

- **Proverbs 21:1** *The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will.*

Nehemiah asked the king for three things: 1) permission to go; 2) protection; and 3) provisions (supplies). The king agreed to let him go. The key was God's good hand of blessing (2:8). When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem he looked around and surveyed the situation. Then he told the people what God laid on his heart about rebuilding the walls and they decided they wanted to be a part of this great work. So far so good.

### **3. A Determination to Do God's Work**

When Nehemiah and the people said, "Let us rise up and build," the devil's crowd said, "Let's rise up and stop them." Wherever there is opportunity to work for God, there will always be opposition.

- **1 Corinthians 16:9** *For a great door and effectual is opened unto me, and there are many adversaries.*

Beginning with 2:19, we see the struggles and opposition that Nehemiah and the workers faced and how they stayed on the job. You can tell a person's character by what it takes to stop him. Nehemiah and the people would not be stopped. Let's look at some of the things they encountered and how they stayed strong to finish the work.

- Dislike (2:10) – they were grieved that Nehemiah was concerned
- Derision (2:19; 4:1-3) – mockery, laughter
- Danger (4:7-8, 11) – they threatened to attack and kill them
- Discouragement (4:10) – some of the Jews said the work was too hard
- Distraction (6:1-4) – they wanted to have a meeting with Nehemiah in the plain of Ono, but he said, “Oh, no!” He refused to be distracted because he was doing a great work. It was God’s work and it was too important to leave it.
- Discredit (6:5-8) – they attacked Nehemiah’s motives and accused him of being self-serving.
- Deception (6:9-14) – God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power, and of love, and of a sound mind (2 Tim. 1:7).

What was the outcome? See 6:15-16. The enemies were defeated and had to admit that God’s work had been accomplished. God was glorified and His work was done. Whenever God’s work is done He is glorified.

- **John 17:4** *I have glorified thee on the earth: I have finished the work which thou gavest me to do.*

Nehemiah used his time, effort, and resources to do God’s work on earth. It started with a burden, then he prayed, and that led to action. He did something. Some of us have a burden, but we don’t pray about it. Some of us pray about the burden, but then we don’t do anything about it. After all is said and done, more is said than done. Thank God for those who feel the burden, then pray about it, and then actually get involved and do something to help.

There’s no greater work in the world than God’s work. Today the church of Jesus Christ needs some work done. The walls and gates need to be rebuilt. Who will rise up and build?