

Welcome and Introduction (Joan Cherry)

Good morning! Hope you had a good week and that you are keeping yourself safe in this challenging world we are living in. After the service this morning, Pr. Claudio and his family will need to go and wait outside for a little while and we will have a short meeting and then we will call them back to let them know about our decision.

Scripture Reading

Romans 8:18, 28-39

¹⁸ I consider that our present sufferings are not worth comparing with the glory that will be revealed in us. ²⁸ And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, who^[i] have been called according to his purpose. ²⁹ For those God foreknew he also predestined to be conformed to the image of his Son, that he might be the firstborn among many brothers and sisters. ³⁰ And those he predestined, he also called; those he called, he also justified; those he justified, he also glorified. ³¹ What, then, shall we say in response to these things? If God is for us, who can be against us? ³² He who did not spare his own Son, but gave him up for us all – how will he not also, along with him, graciously give us all things? ³³ Who will bring any charge against those whom God has chosen? It is God who justifies. ³⁴ Who then is the one who condemns? No one. Christ Jesus who died – more than that, who was raised to life – is at the right hand of God and is also interceding for us. ³⁵ Who shall separate us from the love of Christ? Shall trouble or hardship or persecution or famine or nakedness or danger or sword? ³⁶ As it is written: ‘For your sake we face death all day long; we are considered as sheep to be slaughtered.’^[ii] ³⁷ No, in all these things we are more than conquerors through him who loved us. ³⁸ For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons,^[k] neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, ³⁹ neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.

Open Prayer (Pr. Claudio Moises)

There is no one like you Jesus, and your name is above every name! We praise and worship you this morning for who you are; a great and awesome God, our deliverer and help in times of trouble. May your name be exalted, oh Lord! And we thank you for your great love for us and the assurance that nothing can separate us from your love.

Song 1 – Our God by Chris Tomlin <https://youtu.be/01Yj7H-eSjM> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

Water You turned into wine, opened the eyes of the blind
there's no one like You, none like You!
Into the darkness You shine, out of the ashes we rise
there's no one like You, none like You!

*Our God is greater, our God is stronger
God, You are higher than any other
Our God is Healer, awesome in power
Our God! Our God!*

And if our God is for us, then who could ever stop us?
And if our God is with us, then what could stand against?
And if our God is for us, then who could ever stop us?
And if our God is with us, then what could stand against?
Then what could stand against?

Song 2 – How Great is our God by Chris Tomlin <https://youtu.be/DVbRhK3emZ8> and **How Great Thou Art performed by Christ Rice** <https://youtu.be/Cc0QVWzCv9k> Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

The splendour of the King, clothed in majesty,
Let all the earth rejoice, all the earth rejoice
He wraps Himself in light, and darkness tries to hide
And trembles at His voice, trembles at His voice

*How great is our God, sing with me
How great is our God, all will see
How great, how great is our God*

Age to age He stands, and time is in His hands,
Beginning and the end, beginning and the end.
The Godhead Three in One: Father, Spirit and Son
The Lion and the Lamb, the Lion and the Lamb

Name above all names, worthy of our praise
My heart will sing how great is our God

Name above all names
You are worthy of our praise
And my heart will sing
How great is our God

Then sings my soul, my saviour God, to Thee
How great thou art, how great thou art

Preaching and Teaching

Introduction

Last week we talked about one of the four 'R' s; our need to Realign our lives to the fundamental values of our faith. We looked into four of those values: God's word, God's salvation, God's Mission and God's people. Today I would like us to go back to the book of Nehemiah as there are so many leadership principles we can learn through his life. It

is important to remember the background. God's people are returning to the promise land and they experienced a miracle as they returned to God. They managed to rebuild the wall in 52 days! It was something impossible to do without the help of God. We see that there were opposition to God's work. But God encouraged the people through Nehemiah. God used him and I believe God wants to use us to bring revival and encouragement to God's people. Nehemiah was a man of great passion, who had an unbelievable conviction and great purpose and vision. He was determined to see his vision come to reality. Today I would like us to look into four of these leadership principles and my prayer is that we can all apply it to our lives individually and as a church.

I – Vision

The first thing I would like us to look at this morning is that Nehemiah had a vision and a great purpose in his life. Vision is extremely vital! A purposed driven life is a focused and fruitful life. King Salomon wrote years ago ***“Where there is no revelation, people cast off restraint; but blessed is the one who heeds wisdom’s instruction.”*** **Proverbs 29:18** If you aim for nothing we will obtain nothing. With God's help we can get a picture of how things can look like in the future, and we set up small goals. Fishing with a boat in a river with my father at a young age I wanted to row the boat, but I was rowing without a direction. Then my father told me I needed to fix my eyes at a certain point. There was a huge tree at the bank of the river so I fixed my eyes on that tree and kept rowing till we reached our destination. ***“Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” Nehemiah 1:2-3*** Notice two things when his brother came with the report: The report contained news about God's people and God's place. God's people in the Old Testament were the Jewish people and today God's people are those who believe in Jesus. God's place in the Old Testament was Jerusalem. God's place today is our local church. I am not talking about the building, but the people who are the temple of the Holy Spirit. If our vision doesn't include God's people and God's place, that vision is not from God. God's people were broken and discouraged. Do you have a vision for the church you are part of? Whatever vision God has for you must involve your local church. Nehemiah had a heart to help the people and to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem. Obedience is faith in action and he took courage and he spoke to the King. The king appointed him governor and gave him everything he needed. He shared his vision with the king and Nehemiah also went and saw the broken walls for himself, he prepared and planned with a few of the local people. ***13 By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal^[a] Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire. 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 2:13-18***

II – Prayer and Fasting

Another characteristic we see in the life of Nehemiah is that he prayed and fasted, which is two important Christian disciplines we should not take for granted. ⁴ ***When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. Nehemiah 1:4 “God will not despise a broken and contrite heart.” Psalm 51:17*** In a place of repentance he prayed God’s word and he remembered God’s promises. ³ ***“Call to me and I will answer you and tell you great and unsearchable things you do not know.” Jeremiah 33:3*** When you begin to spend time with the Lord in prayer he will begin to show us things you have never seen before. God will begin to do things in you and through you. Prayer is not talking to God but having a conversation with God. We need to stop and listen what God wants to speak to us. Our vision needs to be a part of His vision. Prayer needs to be our first response and not our last resort. We must get up and begin to talk with God throughout the day. Fasting is another Christian discipline. It is making a sacrifice of worship to God. We need to fast with a purpose, not for the sake of fasting. When Nehemiah looked at the situation of the people he felt God was calling him to do something about it. Prayer and fasting is the way for a vision to become a reality. He knew it would be impossible for him to move forward with such a big task without God’s help. And we see this repeating throughout the book

“...and I prayed before the God of heaven.” 1v4 “...Then I prayed to the God of heaven,” 2v4 “⁴Hear us, our God, for we are despised.” 4v4 ¹⁹“Remember me with favour, my God, for all I have done for these people.” 5v19 “But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands.” 6v9 We should soon set up a prayer meeting during the week. I would like to give you homework for next time we meet. Could you please bring a piece of paper with your name on it and write down one or two prayer points. I would like to bring these points before the God of heaven and I will take it home and I will be praying for you.

III – Opposition

¹⁰ ***“When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.” Nehemiah 2:10*** We should expect, accept and embrace opposition. If what we are doing matters eternally and if our vision comes from God, opposition will take place. For Nehemiah there were death threats and it didn’t stop him because he found purpose and he had a vision. ⁴ ***“When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews,² and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, “What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are? ³Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, “What they are building—even a fox climbing up on it would break down their wall of stones!”.”’ Nehemiah 4:1-3*** They did not only treat to kill him but they ridiculed God and God’s people. “What on earth are they doing”, they asked. “Will they worship this impotent and powerless God? There is no way he will help them”! These were people from outside of the camp. Opposition can also come from the inside. This negativity from outside can affect the people inside. Those who had committed to the rebuilding got tired and weary to the point that they wanted to put their tools down and give up. When there is opposition, we need to fix our eyes on God and on the task he has given us. Like Nehemiah we need to see an obstacle as an opportunity. An opportunity to trust God for greater things and he continued to encourage the people to build the walls. Even in the midst of opposition and death

threats, Nehemiah set up a 24/7 working schedule. The people were working with tools in one hand and with a weapon in the other. Nehemiah encouraged his brothers saying that they were going to make an impact in their city, and no matter what they were going to trust God. Today God is challenging us to have a vision for his people.. this church. God has placed us here to rebuild this church, "this wall". Would you write your name in one of the bricks? It is in God's heart to rebuild our lives and restore our church. What is in your heart? What is your vision? What is your part in the rebuilding of this wall? I am confident that if you open your heart, God will reveal it to you, because his heart is to bring His kingdom here on earth. No weapon against us shall prosper and if God is for us who can be against us? Greater is he, who is in me than the one who is in the world. ⁴***"You, dear children, are from God and have overcome them, because the one who is in you is greater than the one who is in the world."*** I John 4:4

IV – Give God the Glory

Nehemiah started with a prayer and he finished with praise. **15 "So the wall was completed on the twenty-fifth of Elul, in fifty-two days. 16 When all our enemies heard about this, all the surrounding nations were afraid and lost their self-confidence, because they realized that this work had been done with the help of our God."** Nehemiah 6:15-16 We need to give God all the glory no matter what. He is the one who is working in us and through us. You may think this was easy for Nehemiah they were able to complete the wall. However, no matter what, we need to give God the glory. Daniel and his friends were taken to the furnace of fire. **16 "Shadrach, Meshach and Abednego replied to him, "King Nebuchadnezzar, we do not need to defend ourselves before you in this matter. 17 If we are thrown into the blazing furnace, the God we serve is able to deliver us from it, and he will deliver us from Your Majesty's hand. 18 But even if he does not, we want you to know, Your Majesty, that we will not serve your gods or worship the image of gold you have set up."** Daniel 3:16-18 In Acts 16:16-28 Paul and Silas were put in prison because they were proclaiming the gospel with boldness. There were some people who didn't like their message and they were beaten just like Jesus was before he went to the cross. They were flogged beyond recognition, their hands and feet were bonded and they were put in to prison. They could have asked: --- Why are we in this situation? We were doing what Jesus had said for us to do, instead the Bible tells us they were singing hymns and they were praising God, they were giving God the glory. Then, the earth shook and the prison door was open. It's really beautiful to see how Nehemiah finished his work. There was real revival in the heart of the people and they gather together in the town square and they asked Ezra to read them the law of Moses as they listen they wept. But Nehemiah told them to celebrate and praise God instead. ¹⁰***"Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength."*** Nehemiah 8:10

Conclusion

We can learn with Nehemiah that we need a vision for our lives, which includes our local church, that through a life of prayer and fasting we can see God's miracles and our vision become reality. In the process we should expect opposition and we need to accept and embrace it and no matter what we should always give God the glory. Because God is the one who is working in us and through us. We are only his instrument.

Response Prayer

Father we thank you for the life of Nehemiah and the leadership principles we can learn with his life. Father we pray for a fresh vision to each one of our lives. May our vision always include your people and our local church. Help us not to give up in the face of opposition and challenges. May we fix our eyes in Jesus and be filled with hope in this challenging times we are living in. God, we are your instruments, and we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us. Help us to always praise and give all the glory to you. Encourage your people through your word. In Jesus holy name, we pray, Amen

Song 3 – I surrender all (All to Jesus) by Judson W. Van DeVenter and Winfield S. Weeden, 1896 <https://youtu.be/SW8EA7DEQ2M> - Click on the link or copy and paste to your browser in order to hear and follow the song on YouTube.

All to Jesus I surrender, all to Him I freely give
I will ever love and trust Him, in His presence daily live

*I surrender all, I surrender all
All to Thee, my blessed Saviour, I surrender all*

All to Jesus I surrender, humbly at His feet I bow
Worldly pleasures all forsaken, take me Jesus take me now

All to Jesus I surrender, make me Saviour wholly Thine
May Thy Holy Spirit fill me, may I know Thy power divine

All to Jesus I surrender, Lord I give myself to Thee
Fill me with Thy love and power, let Thy blessings fall on me

All to Jesus I surrender, now I feel the sacred flame
Oh the joy of full salvation, glory glory to His name

Final Prayer and Apostolic Blessings

Let's finish our service this morning praying the Lord's prayer together:

*Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name;
thy kingdom come; thy will be done; on earth as it is in heaven.
Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses,
as we forgive those who trespass against us.
And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.
For thine is the kingdom, the power, and the glory
for ever and ever. Amen.*

Have a blessed week and see you all next Sunday!