

“THE PEOPLE HAD A MIND TO WORK”

INTRODUCTION.

- A. Scripture text: **Nehemiah 4:3-6**. From Roy H. Enoch (05-21-1995).
- B. Thesis: To show some principles on how to build the church.
- C. A study of God’s people in the OT reacting to God’s mission for them has many parallels with God’s people and His work today.
 - 1. John lists all temptations under three classes (1Jn. 2:15-17).
 - 2. God’s people today are subject to worldly distractions, discouragement’s, and of falling away as they were.
 - 3. Also, the same principles of successful service are applicable today.
- D. Therefore, we want to study from this incident the characteristics of those who “have a mind to work” that we may develop the attitude. We want to:
 - 1. Study those under Nehemiah’s’ direction.
 - 2. Apply these principles to the church today.

I. LET US STUDY THOSE UNDER NEHEMIAH’S DIRECTION.

- A. The walls of Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.
 - 1. After 70 years of exile, Zerubbabel led the first 50,000 exiles back in 536 B.C.
 - 2. About 80 years later, Ezra led about 1750 men to restore the worship and to teach the people.
 - 3. About 14 years after Ezra, Nehemiah led another group to rebuild the walls of the city.
 - a. Neh. 2:17-18
 - b. Nehemiah was their Governor as Ezra was priest and scribe (Neh. 8:9).
- B. Nehemiah was motivated by the NEED rather than the EASE of the job.
 - 1. When he heard of the plight of the city, he had great sorrow (Neh. 1:3,4).
 - a. Great leaders have a great love of the work and great sorrow for sin.
 - b. He was the cupbearer of the King, yet, he had a greater concern for the city of God than his own comfort.
 - c. So, he went to sacrifice in primitive conditions for 12 years.
 - 2. He even dared to ask the king for permission to go and rebuild the city.
 - a. He asked for timber for beams and gates from the king’s forests.
 - b. He also asked for letters of authority for the governors of the region that the work be permitted.
 - c. God gave him favor in the eyes of the king and all was granted.
 - 3. He was self-sacrificing and for 12 years he did not use the kings provisions, but provided for himself and 150 of the leaders of the Jews.
- C. Before going to the people, he investigated the problem at night.
 - 1. Then he called the leaders of the people together and told them how God had blessed him and wanted the work done (2:18).
 - 2. He admonished them to “Let us rise up and build” (2:18).
 - 3. “Then they set their hands to do this good work” (2:18).
- D. As we studied two weeks ago, he did not let the opposition stop the work.
 - 1. They ridiculed and mocked (2:19).
 - 2. They became angry when they started to build (4:1-3).
 - 3. They threatened to attack suddenly and kill them (4:11).
 - 4. When the gaps were filled in the walls, they spread rumors and demanded that they discuss it in the Plains of ONO (6:1-6)
- E. They continued faithfully until they finished the job.
 - 1. They continued to adjust to the opposition and did not stop.
 - 2. They worked in spite of some brethren not working, and others taking advantage of their brethren

- and enslaving them.
- 3. See Neh. 3:5; 5:5.
- 4. Shemaiah was a secret informer for the enemies and tried to get Nehemiah to hide for his life, and he would not (6:10-14).
- 5. The wall was completed in 52 days (6:15).

II. WE WANT TO APPLY THESE PRINCIPLES TO THE CHURCH TODAY.

- A. The church is often described w/ the analogy of a building.
 - 1. Jesus said that He would build His church (Mt. 16:18).
 - 2. Peter says that the church is a spiritual house (1Pet. 2:5,6).
 - 3. Paul described the starting of a congregation as like building.
 - a. He identified him self as a master builder (1Cor. 3:10).
 - b. He describes the foundation as X (1Cor. 3:11).
 - c. He described Xians as materials used to build upon the foundation (1Cor. 3:12).
 - d. Each man's work or life will be tested (1Cor. 3:13).
The work of a man here were converts and they would be tested by fire.
 - 4. A church needs to continue to be built up.
 - a. It is built up by adding or restoring members.
 - b. It is also build up by strengthening the existing members.
- B. There are the same kinds of problems as Nehemiah had in building the walls of Jerusalem.
 - 1. The work needs leaders who grieve over sin and its consequences.
 - 2. There needs to be much prayer and diligence in preparing for the work.
 - 3. The work needs to be investigated and planned.
 - 4. There will be some who do not want the church to be strong spiritually because they are worldly: they will criticize, complain and condemn.
 - 5. The needs need to be pointed out and a plan for caring it out should be presented.
 - 6. The people must know what God has said about it and "have a mind to work."
 - 7. There will be opposition. Some will:
 - a. Ridicule and mock.
 - b. Become angry when the truth is taught.
 - c. Not be willing to help.
 - d. Want to talk about it rather than work.
 - e. Hinder by taking advantage of brethren.
 - 8. Attention will have to be given to how the work can continue in spite of opposition.
 - 9. One or two leaders cannot carry on the work for the rest.
 - 10. The church will increase to the extent that ALL do what they can (Eph. 4:16).
- C. Success in building the church is not in doing what is popular.
 - 1. If we leave the doctrine of X, we have not God. 2 John 9
 - 2. If we please men, we are not the servants of X. Gal. 1:10
 - 3. If we sow other seeds besides the word of God, we do not get Xians (Lk. 8:11).
 - 4. All guides but X are blind and will perish.
 - 5. We must continue to test teaching by God's word.

CONCLUSION AND INVITATION.

- A. There were many keys to Nehemiah's success.
 - 1. They focused on God's will.
 - 2. They all did what they could.

3. They “had a mind to work.”
- B. If Nehemiah had no more to show up on a “work day” than some churches they may not have ever finished the job.
 - C. Motivation comes from our devotion to God’s will in fervent gratitude.
 - D. The wall was finished because it was the work of God.
 - E. If every member of this church “had a mind to work” just like me, what kind of church would this church be?
 - F. Plan of salvation for non-Xians; erring Xians.