

RUBBLE DWELLER OR PROPHECY FULFILLER

Are you living with the curse or pursuing the blessing?

Nehemiah 3

Eliashib the high priest and his fellow priests went to work and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They dedicated it and set its doors in place, building as far as the Tower of the Hundred, which they dedicated, and as far as the Tower of Hananel. ² The men of Jericho built the adjoining section, and Zakkur son of Imri built next to them. . . . ⁵ The next section was repaired by the men of Tekoa, but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work under their supervisors. . . . ²⁸ Above the Horse Gate, the priests made repairs, each in front of his own house. ²⁹ Next to them, Zadok son of Immer made repairs opposite his house.

Nehemiah 3.1-2, 5, 28-29 NIV

Finally the work begins!

When the hearts of people finally align with the heart and purposes of God, things begin to happen! It had been 92 years since the first group of exiles returned and 13 years since the second group arrived back in Jerusalem—and all the while, the walls remained broken, the people living in disgrace amid the rubble. And yet in just six months since Nehemiah heard the news and began to seek God, the rebuilding is underway. Ninety-two years vs. six months!

There were one and a half miles of wall to be repaired; Nehemiah's record shows that the project was undertaken in _____ sections. Some sections needed repair; others needed to be rebuilt. The project began with the priests rebuilding the Sheep Gate. Side by side, the people worked: priests and political officials; artisans, merchants, and pharmacists; a father and his daughters; people from the suburbs and distant towns. Some repaired more than one section. A frequent description is: "'So-and-so' repaired the section in front of his house."

Living with the curse—

Behind the words, "repaired the section in front of his house" is this sobering reality: parents had raised their children and people had lived all their lives ***with the sight of rubble outside their front door!*** As a result of the inaction of their parents, kids had played on piles of rubble and had no idea what it was like to see "shalom" (peace, wholeness, nothing missing or broken). God wanted to give them great blessing but they settled for rubble as their portion. Why didn't someone do something, anything? Move one block . . . make one repair? When we don't have a _____ for God's purposes, when we can't _____ beyond where we are living, when we aren't striving for the _____—

we reduce our lives to being managers of rubble and giving our children a legacy of rubble.

Being a “Difference-Maker”—

While people were living with literal rubble, and even worse, spiritual defeat and disgrace, Nehemiah, 900 miles away, was interceding for God to turn things around. Nehemiah didn't just know the Bible—he saw his life in light of the Scriptures, prayed for the purposes of God revealed in the Scriptures to be accomplished, and took action to do what he could to be used by God to make a difference. In doing so, Nehemiah became a “_____ - _____”.

The calling to rebuild—

What passages of Scripture was Nehemiah reading, interpreting, praying? Through the prophets Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, Daniel, and Amos, God had repeatedly promised to restore His people and rebuild Jerusalem. Remember—

- God is always at work, in every generation, pursuing His mission of redemption;
- God is always looking for those whose highest priority is to fulfill His ambitions.

How are you interpreting your life and understanding your purpose in light of Scripture? Nehemiah knew, from Scripture, the prophetic will of God and made himself available to fulfill those plans and purposes. He was fully aligned with God's heart and will.

*Your people will rebuild the ancient ruins and will raise up the age old foundations;
you will be called Repairer of Broken Walls, Restorer of Streets with Dwellings.* (Isaiah 58.12)

This was not just Nehemiah's calling; it is the calling of the Church and the calling of every follower of Christ. God's mission is our life-mission: rescuing people from the disgrace of sin, seeing them reconciled to God, helping to restore them to wholeness of life in Christ.

Eliashib, the Sheep Gate, Jesus, and us—

The first section of rebuilding involved Eliashib and the rebuilding and consecration of the Sheep Gate. These details are significant for understanding our calling as Christians—

- Eliashib was the high priest; his name means: “_____”.
- The Sheep Gate was the first gate to be repaired. It was significant because this was the entrance where sheep were brought to the Temple for sacrifices for sin.
- Consecrate means “_____.” (see 2 Timothy 2.19-21)

These details beautifully present the gospel of Jesus Christ in summary—

- Jesus is the true _____, the Mediator of our salvation (Hebrews 4.14; 7.26-28);
- He is the _____, the only way to salvation (John 10.7-8; 14.6);
- He is the _____ (John 1.29; Hebrews 9.11-12; Revelation 5.6, 9-10).

You and I have been “purchased by the blood of Christ” and made to be “a kingdom and priests to serve our God” (Revelation 5.10). We are a holy priesthood (1 Peter 2.5, 9), set apart for the priestly ministry of reconciling people to God (Romans 15.16; 2 Corinthians 5.18-20). Don't settle for a life of rubble, unconsecrated and disconnected from God's calling. Make certain that you will be known in heaven as “difference-maker” and “prophecy fulfiller” for God.