

Rebuilding with God: Broken Hearts for Broken Walls

Nehemiah 1:1-4 || Pastor Paul Hahn || 19 September 2021

*To CARE for one another in truth and in love,
To GROW together as followers of Jesus,
To SERVE those God has placed in our path.
– CG Mission Statement*

Icebreaker: “When walls become windows” is a cool starting point for a conversation. What’s an example of a time when you or someone else transformed a wall (barrier or obstacle) into a window (an opportunity)?

Worship: [Rev. 21:5-7](#) (*Remain a few moments in worship with this passage. What is God’s invitation?*)

Sermon Summary for [Nehemiah 1:1-4](#) (*Read the passage aloud before reading the sermon summary.*)

The book of Nehemiah is the personal journal of a man who led an entire nation of people in starting over again with God. Here, as Israel sought to rebuild as it returned from exile, God is giving us insight into what it means to restart, build, and sustain our life with Him. And all of this begins with a broken heart. A broken heart can feel like an odd place to begin in starting over with God... but it’s where God points us through Nehemiah.

Nehemiah’s heart breaks for the ruins of Jerusalem, specifically its walls. In ancient times, walls defined a city; they offered defense and protection, and established the space inside as a place of blessing and flourishing ([Rev 21:12](#)). They defined the space of a community. Without walls, a city lost its defense, its dignity, and its definition ([Prov 25:28](#)). For Nehemiah, rebuilding therefore starts with caring about Jerusalem’s walls – being broken over their brokenness and understanding what that meant for the city.

What’s the equivalent for us today? What are the “walls” of Christ’s church? At its core, the congregation and their commitment to Jesus are the living stones of His church. And when we become hurt or scattered, what was once a place of great flourishing can then appear hurt and even broken. We, like Nehemiah, need to be broken-hearted over these things, to mourn them, and then to ask and learn about the current state of things (v2-3). This will lead us as a church to prayer and fasting (v4), begging God for renewal. And these prayers will lead us to action: to move toward the suffering and to engage with it.

As our hearts are moved and we seek God in prayer, we will be drawn to sacrificial involvement. This is where the rest of Nehemiah’s memoir goes. What consumes him is not the brokenness of his own life; it is the extreme pressure and difficulty his fellow believers had with the broken walls of Jerusalem. And Nehemiah engaged with this – to the point of great sacrifice.

We must ask ourselves if this will be true of us. Are we personally being called to engage with our hearts and lives in these next phases of renewal as a church? Because as we commit to moving forward, we will become sources of strength and hope to those around us. And as they also seek to rebuild the walls of the church, they too will be a source of Christ’s presence, life, and blessing back to us. Because one thing we know with absolute certainty is that we are not alone! The Creator of the universe is with us and in us, revealing His plan that we as a church will intimately experience the intermingling of beauty and brokenness of life in the Spirit.

Discussion Questions (You will not be able to discuss all the questions. Pick the ones you like. Some are personal perspective and application questions for life-transforming discussions.)

Rebuilding Starts With Caring and Asking (Inquiry)

- What was Nehemiah's inquiry and why? What was his deep longing for his fellow countrymen?
- What do you think motivated Nehemiah to desire to rebuild the wall?
 - What are the needs of your community in general that break your heart?

Rebuilding Begins With Mourning (Prayer)

- How did Nehemiah react to the report of Jerusalem's walls being destroyed?
 - Have you ever mourned/fasted/prayed for days? If so, what was that like?
 - If not, is this a practice you would consider incorporating into your life? ***Please consider as a group Paul's call to monthly fasting as a church on the first Thursday of the month and discuss***
- What are some ways prayer can change a person's attitude towards life's difficulties?
 - God promises that He blesses those who continually turn to Him in prayer. Read [Luke 18:1-8](#). Discuss the widow's heart. Do you relate to the widow at all?
 - The Lord also tells us to "have faith like a child." Where do you see child-like faith in this parable?

Rebuilding Involves Engagement (Sacrifice)

- What do you think would be the equivalent of "broken walls" today in our city and society?
 - This can be both a societal and personal application question: For you personally, what might God be laying on your heart to do about those walls?
- How could the report of Jerusalem's walls being destroyed and gates being burned describe someone's spiritual condition or personal situation?
 - What action should this type of report spur us toward?
- Do you feel God's nudge to engage with all your heart and life in a phase of rebuilding something?
 - What is your heart's desire about this?

Prayer

Prayer Guide click [HERE](#).

Engage & Experience: Generous Service

Service Opportunity with Greek InterVarsity – October 1-3

Christa Samaha is a member of PCC and works full time for Greek InterVarsity, reaching students who come through Greek life at UCLA and most of the major universities in the LA area. There is a big student conference happening October 1-3 and Christa is looking for PCC members to get involved in these areas:

- prayer ministry on-site
- Intercession (via Zoom) during the weekend
- providing snacks for students
- covering the cost of student scholarships

For more information, and to get involved, please contact Christa: christa.samaha@intervarsity.org