

Establishing His Kingdom (Nehemiah Chapter 3)

Sunday, September 22, 2024

What does it mean to Establish The Kingdom of God?

In this study of Nehemiah, we have used Matthew 16:13-19 as the lens through which we see what Nehemiah has to teach us about establishing the Kingdom of God

Matthew 16:13-19

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

Last week we made it clear that Establishing His Kingdom is not just about the outward work of building churches, or leading ministries, or evangelism, or giving to or being personally involved in Kingdom work. It can and does involve those things.

But first and foremost, Establishing His Kingdom takes place in our own hearts

You are Peter and, on this Rock, *(your personal recognition and confession that Jesus is the Christ, the Son of The Living God)*, that's where I want to build my church, in your heart, and the gates of Hell *(The kingdom of darkness, the bondages of sin)* will not prevail *(stand up)* against it. He wants to establish His Kingdom in our hearts.

So let's keep both of these aspects of Establishing His Kingdom in mind as we continue our journey through the book of Nehemiah and let's remember that before we can do the outward work of establishing His Kingdom in this world, we must allow The Holy Spirit to do the inward work of Establishing His Kingdom within our hearts

In Chapter 1 we said that Establishing His Kingdom begins with The FIRE being IGNITED or REIGNITED in our hearts... The Fire of

Of Passionate Concern

Of Confession and Repentance

Of Prayer and Fasting

Of Obedience (no matter how far away you may be)

Of Taking Action

In Chapter 2 we learned that we must

PROTECT THAT FIRE

- From DOUBT and FEAR
- By TRUSTING God for the PROVISION of all that I need
- From the RESISTANCE of the enemy
- Through times of WAITING
- From the DISCOURAGEMENT of others
- While ASSESSING the SCOPE of the work to be done
- While ACKNOWLEDGING the DIFFICULTIES that lie ahead
- By STARTING the work
- By REMINDING ourselves and others about the TESTIMONIES of what God has already done
- From The DISCOURAGEMENT of the enemy

CHAPTER 3 - In Chapter 3 we will learn that Establishing His Kingdom requires TEAMWORK

THE POWER OF UNITY IN CHRIST

Psalm 133

1 How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity! 2 It is like precious oil poured on the head, running down on the beard, running down on Aaron's beard, down on the collar of his robe. 3 It is as if the dew of Hermon were falling on Mount Zion. For there the Lord bestows his blessing, even life forevermore.

Unity is described here as "good and pleasant" it has the power to bring the Anointing of God for service, refreshing from God, blessing and even life

But I want to show you another passage, that God showed me years ago that, believe it or not, teaches us about the power of Unity.

Genesis 11:5-6

5 But the Lord came down to see the city and the tower the people were building. 6 The Lord said, "If as one people speaking the same language they have begun to do this, then nothing they plan to do will be impossible for them.

Now, we all know that this was not a good thing the people were doing. But out of a negative situation, God's own words teach us a positive truth...

And what I heard God speak to me so many years ago was that if unity has that kind of power for those who are not seeking me; how much more power does it have for those who love me and are serving me.

Finally, I want us to look at what Paul says in Romans Chapter 12

Romans 12:3-8

3 For by the grace given me I say to every one of you: Do not think of yourself more highly than you ought, but rather think of yourself with sober judgment, in accordance with the faith God has distributed to each of you. 4 For just as each of us has one body with many members, and these members do not all have the same function, 5 so in Christ we, though many, form one body, and each member belongs to all the others. 6 We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; 7 if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; 8 if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully.

Romans 12:10

10 Be devoted to one another in love. Honor one another above yourselves.

Let's look at what Nehemiah Chapter 3 teaches us about The Power of Teamwork (Unity) in establishing the Kingdom of God

Nehemiah 3

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.

3 The Fish Gate was rebuilt by the sons of Hassenaah. They laid its beams and put its doors and bolts and bars in place. 4 Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired the next section. Next to him Meshullam son of Berekiah, the son of Meshezabel, made repairs, and next to him Zadok son of Baana also made repairs. 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.

6 The Jeshanah Gate was repaired by Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah. They laid its beams and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place. 7 Next to them, repairs were made by men from Gibeon and Mizpah—Melatiah of Gibeon and Jadon of Meronoth—places under the authority of the governor of Trans-Euphrates. 8 Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired the next section; and Hananiah, one of the perfume-makers, made repairs next to that. They restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. 9 Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section. 10 Adjoining this, Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house, and Hattush son of Hashabneiah made repairs next to him. 11 Malkijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-Moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. 12 Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of a half-district of Jerusalem, repaired the next section with the help of his daughters.

13 The Valley Gate was repaired by Hanun and the residents of Zanoah. They rebuilt it and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place. They also repaired a thousand cubits of the wall as far as the Dung Gate.

14 The Dung Gate was repaired by Malkijah son of Rekam, ruler of the district of Beth Hakkerem. He rebuilt it and put its doors with their bolts and bars in place.

15 The Fountain Gate was repaired by Shallun son of Kol-Hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah. He rebuilt it, roofing it over and putting its doors and bolts and bars in place. He also repaired the wall of the Pool of Siloam, by the King's Garden, as far as the steps going down from the City of David. 16 Beyond him, Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of a half-district of Beth Zur, made repairs up to a point opposite the tombs of David, as far as the artificial pool and the House of the Heroes.

17 Next to him, the repairs were made by the Levites under Rehum son of Bani. Beside him, Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, carried out repairs for his district. 18 Next to him, the repairs were made by their fellow Levites under Binnui son of Henadad, ruler of the other half-district of Keilah. 19 Next to him, Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section, from a point facing the ascent to the armory as far as the angle of the wall. 20 Next to him, Baruch son of Zabbai zealously repaired another section, from the angle to the entrance of the house of Eliashib the high priest. 21 Next to him, Meremoth son of Uriah, the son of Hakkoz, repaired another section, from the entrance of Eliashib's house to the end of it.

22 The repairs next to him were made by the priests from the surrounding region. 23 Beyond them, Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs in front of their house; and next to them, Azariah son of Maaseiah, the son of Ananiah, made repairs beside his house. 24 Next to him, Binnui son of Henadad repaired another section, from Azariah's house to the angle and the corner, 25 and Palal son of Uzai worked opposite the angle and the tower projecting from the upper palace near the court of the guard. Next to him, Pedaiah son of Parosh 26 and the temple servants living on the hill of Ophel made repairs up to a point opposite the Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower. 27 Next to them, the men of Tekoa repaired another section, from the great projecting tower to the wall of Ophel.

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. Next to him, Shemaiah son of Shekemiah, the guard at the East Gate, made repairs. 30 Next to him, Hananiah son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. Next to them, Meshullam son of Berekiah made repairs opposite his living quarters. 31 Next to him, Malkijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and the merchants, opposite the Inspection Gate, and as far as the room above the corner; 32 and between the room above the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and merchants made repairs.

How can we create and maintain Unity in the Body of Christ

- **ACKNOWLEDGE** that **EVERYONE** is **NEEDED**

If you read Nehemiah 3 carefully you will see that there are all different kinds of people. Rich people, poor people, strong people, weak people. Politicians, religious leaders, groups of people, individuals. People who did lots of work, people who did smaller amounts of work, people who focused on projects that directly impacted their lives, people who took a much broader approach and focused on projects that extended well beyond their own little circles. Old, young, men, **WOMEN**, (quite a statement within the culture from which it took place). Governors, Goldsmiths, Merchants, Perfumers. People, I am sure that had different skills and different ways of doing things. I'm sure if you were to have inspected

the wall after it was complete you would have been able to tell by the way it looked where one group left off and another started.

Nehemiah Chapter 3 is such a New Testament book. Teaching us about the importance of the Body of Christ and the power of Unity within that body. And the first thing it teaches us is that EVERYONE is NEEDED.

Ephesians 4:16

16 From him the whole body, joined and held together by every supporting ligament, grows and builds itself up in love, as each part does its work.

1 Corinthians 12:12-27

12 Just as a body, though one, has many parts, but all its many parts form one body, so it is with Christ. 13 For we were all baptized by one Spirit so as to form one body—whether Jews or Gentiles, slave or free—and we were all given the one Spirit to drink. 14 Even so the body is not made up of one part but of many.

15 Now if the foot should say, “Because I am not a hand, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 16 And if the ear should say, “Because I am not an eye, I do not belong to the body,” it would not for that reason stop being part of the body. 17 If the whole body were an eye, where would the sense of hearing be? If the whole body were an ear, where would the sense of smell be? 18 But in fact God has placed the parts in the body, every one of them, just as he wanted them to be. 19 If they were all one part, where would the body be? 20 As it is, there are many parts, but one body.

21 The eye cannot say to the hand, “I don’t need you!” And the head cannot say to the feet, “I don’t need you!” 22 On the contrary, those parts of the body that seem to be weaker are indispensable, 23 and the parts that we think are less honorable we treat with special honor. And the parts that are unpresentable are treated with special modesty, 24 while our presentable parts need no special treatment. But God has put the body together, giving greater honor to the parts that lacked it, 25 so that there should be no division in the body, but that its parts should have equal concern for each other. 26 If one part suffers, every part suffers with it; if one part is honored, every part rejoices with it.

27 Now you are the body of Christ, and each one of you is a part of it.

- APPRECIATE the UNIQUE SKILLS, GIFTINGS, and PERSONALITIES that God has called to be a part of the TEAM

Similarly, Chapter 3 teaches us that creating and maintaining UNITY means that we need to APPRECIATE (notice I didn't say be ANNOYED with) the UNIQUE SKILLS, GIFTINGS, PERSONALITIES that God has called to be a part of the TEAM

1 Corinthians 12:4-6

4 There are different kinds of gifts, but the same Spirit distributes them. 5 There are different kinds of service, but the same Lord. 6 There are different kinds of working, but in all of them and in everyone it is the same God at work.

So they don't have the same skills you have... You don't have their skills either... So they have a different personality type than you do... That doesn't mean God hasn't called them to be part of the team... So they do things differently than you do... That's o.k. Do you believe that God wants them on the team? Can you learn to appreciate the differences and see the value they add to doing the work of Establishing His Kingdom

- WORK TOGETHER through RELATIONSHIP, RESPECT, HUMILITY, LOVE, PATIENCE, KINDNESS and FORGIVENESS

Psalm 133

1 How good and pleasant it is when God's people live together in unity!

1 Corinthians 1:10

10 I appeal to you, brothers and sisters, in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ, that all of you agree with one another in what you say and that there be no divisions among you, but that you be perfectly united in mind and thought.

Let's work through this...

- Relationship
- Respect
- Humility

1 Peter 3:8

8 Finally, all of you, be like-minded, be sympathetic, love one another, be compassionate and humble.

- Love
- Patience

- Kindness
- Forgiveness

Colossians 3:13-14

13 Bear with each other and forgive one another if any of you has a grievance against someone. Forgive as the Lord forgave you. 14 And over all these virtues put on love, which binds them all together in perfect unity.

*You can't possible know what others have been dealing with in addition to the work they are doing for the kingdom of God... Give them a break, give them the benefit of the doubt, give them extra grace and mercy

- LEADERSHIP is a part of God's PLAN for the team
 - God wants us to respect them, follow them, protect them and pray for them

1 Thessalonians 5:12-13

12 Now we ask you, brothers and sisters, to acknowledge those who work hard among you, who care for you in the Lord and who admonish you. 13 Hold them in the highest regard in love because of their work. Live in peace with each other.

Hebrews 13:17

17 Have confidence in your leaders and submit to their authority, because they keep watch over you as those who must give an account. Do this so that their work will be a joy, not a burden, for that would be of no benefit to you.

1 Timothy 5:17

17 The elders who direct the affairs of the church well are worthy of double honor, especially those whose work is preaching and teaching.

- Nehemiah (leaders) have to care about each individual part of the work and the work as a whole...
- They carry the burden of the work and the burden of the people doing the work...
- They are the ones who first encounter the resistance and attacks of the enemies...
- They need to hear clearly from God and be led of the Spirit
- Much of what they do happens behind the scenes

- Be AWARE of WOLVES in sheep's clothing; but also know that sometimes what appears to be a TARE might actually turn out to be WHEAT

Matthew 13:24-30

24 Jesus told them another parable: “The kingdom of heaven is like a man who sowed good seed in his field. 25 But while everyone was sleeping, his enemy came and sowed weeds among the wheat, and went away. 26 When the wheat sprouted and formed heads, then the weeds also appeared.

27 “The owner’s servants came to him and said, ‘Sir, didn’t you sow good seed in your field? Where then did the weeds come from?’

28 “‘An enemy did this,’ he replied.

“The servants asked him, ‘Do you want us to go and pull them up?’

29 “‘No,’ he answered, ‘because while you are pulling the weeds, you may uproot the wheat with them. 30 Let both grow together until the harvest. At that time I will tell the harvesters: First collect the weeds and tie them in bundles to be burned; then gather the wheat and bring it into my barn.’”