Building With Purpose

Nehemiah 2:1-10

Text:

Introduction:

In Nehemiah chapter one, Nehemiah hears about the condition of the city of Jerusalem, and although he had never lived there, his heart became extremely burdened for his homeland.

His burden led him immediately to prayer and fasting.

We are not truly burdened about our home, our nation etc. until we consistently pray.

Nehemiah first heard the distressing news of Jerusalem and now four months later as chapter 2 begins he is still praying.

Even though Nehemiah was 800 miles away, his burden and prayer led to a purpose in his heart.

His purpose was the welfare of the children of Israel. (vs. 10)

I have found that when I pray about a need, often God directs me to help fulfill the need.

**1. Purpose Consumes the Person of Prayer (vs. 1-5)**

**Nehemiah 2:1-5**   
**1** And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, *that* wine *was* before him: and I took up the wine, and gave *it* unto the king. Now I had not been *beforetime* sad in his presence. **2** Wherefore the king said unto me, Why *is* thy countenance sad, seeing thou *art* not sick? this *is* nothing *else* but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, **3** And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire? **4** Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven. **5** And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

Note: Nehemiah had not stopped working. (vs. 1)

A. The King detects (vs. 2)

B. Nehemiah describes (vs. 3)

C. Nehemiah depended on God before making his request (vs. 4)

D. Nehemiah declared his purpose (vs. 5)

This purpose consumed Nehemiah. It caused him to:

* Pray more that the ordinary person
* Risk more than the ordinary person
* Plan more that the ordinary person
* Observe more that the ordinary person
* Expect more that the ordinary person

**2. Purpose Counts the Cost**

A. He sets a time (6b-5:14) There was 112 years

B. He states his needs

1. Sent (vs. 5)

2. Safety (vs. 7)

3. Supplies (vs. 8)

Illustration:

A man or a woman without a goal is like a

ship without a rudder. Each will drift and not drive. Each will end up on the beaches of despair, defeat and despondency.

John Henry Fabre, the great French naturalist, conducted a most unusual experiment with some Processionary Caterpillars. These caterpillars blindly follow the one in front of them.

Fabre carefully arranged them in a circle around the rim of a flowerpot, so that the lead caterpillar actually touched the last one, making a complete circle. In the center of the flowerpot he put pine needles, which is food for the Processionary Caterpillar. The caterpillars started around this circular flowerpot.

Around and around they went, hour after hour, day after day, night after night. Finally, they dropped dead of starvation and exhaustion. With an abundance of food less than six inches away, they literally starved to death, because they confused activity with accomplishment.

Many Christians make that same mistake.

**3. Purpose Conquers Criticism (vs. 10)**

**Nehemiah 2:10**   
**10** When Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, heard *of it*, it grieved them exceedingly that there was come a man to seek the welfare of the children of Israel.

The enemies of Jerusalem were grieved.

Every Christian with a godly purpose will face some opposition.

A. David

**1 Samuel 17:22-30**   
**22** And David left his carriage in the hand of the keeper of the carriage, and ran into the army, and came and saluted his brethren. **23** And as he talked with them, behold, there came up the champion, the Philistine of Gath, Goliath by name, out of the armies of the Philistines, and spake according to the same words: and David heard *them*. **24** And all the men of Israel, when they saw the man, fled from him, and were sore afraid. **25** And the men of Israel said, Have ye seen this man that is come up? surely to defy Israel is he come up: and it shall be, *that* the man who killeth him, the king will enrich him with great riches, and will give him his daughter, and make his father's house free in Israel. **26** And David spake to the men that stood by him, saying, What shall be done to the man that killeth this Philistine, and taketh away the reproach from Israel? for who *is* this uncircumcised Philistine, that he should defy the armies of the living God? **27** And the people answered him after this manner, saying, So shall it be done to the man that killeth him. **28** And Eliab his eldest brother heard when he spake unto the men; and Eliab's anger was kindled against David, and he said, Why camest thou down hither? and with whom hast thou left those few sheep in the wilderness? I know thy pride, and the naughtiness of thine heart; for thou art come down that thou mightest see the battle. **29** And David said, What have I now done? *Is there* not a cause? **30** And he turned from him toward another, and spake after the same manner: and the people answered him again after the former manner.

B. Paul

**Acts 19:23-28**   
**23** And the same time there arose no small stir about that way. **24** For a certain *man* named Demetrius, a silversmith, which made silver shrines for Diana, brought no small gain unto the craftsmen; **25** Whom he called together with the workmen of like occupation, and said, Sirs, ye know that by this craft we have our wealth. **26** Moreover ye see and hear, that not alone at Ephesus, but almost throughout all Asia, this Paul hath persuaded and turned away much people, saying that they be no gods, which are made with hands: **27** So that not only this our craft is in danger to be set at nought; but also that the temple of the great goddess Diana should be despised, and her magnificence should be destroyed, whom all Asia and the world worshippeth. **28** And when they heard *these sayings*, they were full of wrath, and cried out, saying, Great *is* Diana of the Ephesians.

C. Moses

**Numbers 16:3**   
**3** And they gathered themselves together against Moses and against Aaron, and said unto them, *Ye take* too much upon you, seeing all the congregation *are* holy, every one of them, and the LORD *is* among them: wherefore then lift ye up yourselves above the congregation of the LORD?

Illustration:

“It is not the critic that counts; not the man who points out how the strong man stumbles, or where the doer of deeds could have done better. The credit belongs to the man who is actually in the arena, whose face is marred by dust and sweat and blood; who strives valiantly, who errs, and comes short again and again, because there is no effort without error and shortcoming; but who does actually strive to do the deeds.” Theodore Roosevelt

**4. Godly Purpose Gives Credit to God (vs. 8b)**

**Nehemiah 2:8**   
**8** And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which *appertained* to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

The reason the king granted the request was the hand of God on Nehemiah.

When the heart is right, and when we labor in prayer, we know the victory is from God.

**Revelation 4:11**   
**11** Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are and were created.

Close:

If your purposes in life are born from a godly burden, then as you prosper, God will get the glory.

What are you living for today?

What godly purpose consumes you?