

Broken Down Walls
Nehemiah Chapter 9
August 21 & 22, 2010

So on October 2 the wall was finished—just fifty-two days after we had begun. When our enemies and the surrounding nations heard about it, they were frightened and humiliated. They realized this work had been done with the help of our God.

Nehemiah chapter 6, verses 15-17 (375)

- They accomplished a huge task.
- Repairing over 4 miles of 150 ft. thick walls.
- The rebuilding process changed lives
- End results are important to God but they must have a spiritual impact.

And Nehemiah continued, “Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don’t be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!”

Nehemiah chapter 8, verse 10 (377)

- Justice (God’s law) brings sorrow but God’s joy (grace) brings strength.
- When I experience God and His word it should produce joy and strengthen my life.
- Don’t be afraid of the Bible!

On October 31 the people assembled again, and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. They remained standing in place for three hours while the Book of the Law of the Lord their God was read aloud to them. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshiped the Lord their God.

Nehemiah chapter 9, verses 1- 3 (378)

- The people went from feasting to fasting.
- Whether things are good or bad, we need to take time to be alone with God.
- No matter how skilled, Godly leaders know they are always dependent upon God’s goodness.
- There is always a need for confession and repentance.

Confession is only half the story.... Repentance is the other half.

- Repentance means turning from sin and turning to God.
- To the woman caught in adultery in John chapter 8.... “*Where are your accusers? Didn’t even one of them condemn you?*” “*No, Lord,*” she said. And Jesus said, “*Neither do I. Go and sin no more.*” *John chapter 8, verses 9-11 (816)*
- Confession and Repentance bring joy not sorrow!

- We expect that if we confess our sins God will show his goodness to us...
But if we confess our sins to him, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all wickedness. 1 John chapter 1, verse 9 (941)

- It's the goodness of God that leads to repentance....
Don't you see how wonderfully kind, tolerant, and patient God is with you? Does this mean nothing to you? Can't you see that his kindness is intended to turn you from your sin?
Romans chapter 2, verse 4 (858)

Repentance isn't complete without reflection.

- Nehemiah chapter 9, verses 7-38 is the longest prayer in the Bible.
- It's a prayer of reflection.
- Reflection - "*a calm lengthy consideration*"

Reflection...

- Is like looking in a rear view mirror.
- Reminds of the greatness of God.
- Can be painful because of past sin, hurt and trouble.
- Should be a reminder of God's goodness and grace.
- Shows me where I've been and reminds where I am headed.
- Should be regular but not constant.
- Is necessary.

Next Week: *Leaders help others to realize their full Potential!*