

PP Nehemiah: *Repairing Our Gates!*

Text **Nehemiah 3:20-28**

Part 11-7/21-22, 2012

Intro...Fall plans with Saturday evening services and coffee house...

PP Illus When the Japanese mend broken pottery, they magnify the damage by filling the cracks with a resin that looks like solid gold
They do this believing that when something's suffered damage and has a history it becomes more beautiful
It is an art form called *kintsugi*, which means golden joinery

When I read of this procedure, I immediately thought of those whom I know whose lives have been restored by the grace of God, whose rebuilt walls are strong and enduring, and testaments of God's power

Our aim in this series is that together we might rise up and build these walls, in our own lives, in our church and in the east-end of the Lehigh Valley
For three weeks we have been on a tour around the wall looking at the Gates of Jerusalem, starting with the ***Sheep Gate***

*The majority of Christians get stuck at this gate!

We get through that gate, saved at the cross of Christ, but then they never progress any further

We don't move to the ***Fish Gate***, testifying of the saving power of the Gospel of Jesus Christ
We neglect to get established on the Word of God at the ***Old Gate***

When we inevitably arrive at the ***Valley Gate*** of trials and difficulties, we don't see its good purpose to apply heat and pressure to our hearts allowing sin to surface

If we don't see the sin in their hearts, there will be no real need for the ***Dung Gate*** to confess

There will be no urgency to agree with God and cast those sins down into the Valley below

And until we are broken at the Dung Gate, confessing our sin, we will never truly experience the ***Fountain Gate*** of the Spirit's filling

Our enemies want to keep us from rebuilding our walls & the weakest part of the wall is its gates
In ancient warfare, the gates of the city was where the attack was most directed

If we are to be secure in our salvation, we must repair and use these Gates that Nehemiah shows

As we get ready to move to the 7th gate on this tour, let's pause to meet two workers

In verse **20** we meet an incredible servant by the name of "***Baruch the son of Zabbai***"

PP The ESV doesn't translate an important word, so here it is in the NASB: "***After him Baruch the son of Zabbai zealously repaired another section***" **3:20**

PP '***zealously***' is a Hebrew verb that means to burn or glow

Baruch burned with a passion to rebuild the wall of Jerusalem

Nehemiah is in effect saying to us, *I want you to watch Baruch work and let's honor him, for he gives everything he has every day to rebuild this wall!*

PP He would never have shared British humorist Jerome K. Jerome's sentiment: "*I like work, it fascinates me. I can sit and look at it for hours.*"

Baruch is even more amazing because in we read that *“the people had a mind to work”* 4:6 tells us all were working hard, but among them Baruch stood out from the rest
PP He lived out **Ecclesiastes 9:10**, *“Whatever your hand finds to do, do it with your might”*
But the truth of the matter is when God’s people won’t step up to the wall, they are actually passively assisting the enemy to harm the body of Christ

PP *“Whoever is slack in his work is a brother to him who destroys.”* **Proverbs 18:9**

The Baruchs among us are those who serve with everything they have, who recognize that the church, the body of Christ, should never get what they have left over from their busy, tiring weeks, but their best, their most excellent work!

We don’t serve to *get* saved, we serve because we’ve *been* saved by the blood of Christ
Christian, if you want Jesus Christ look you in the eyes and say in front of the multitude of witnesses, *‘Well done, good and faithful servant’*, then serve with all you have to the end of your life

And while Baruch burned with a zeal to work on the wall, follow Nehemiah’s finger as he points out someone we’ve already met, who is now working in his second portion of the wall:

“Meremoth the son of Uriah” (21)

Meremoth finished the portion between the Fish and Old Gates, and signed back up to do more
Do you know any Meremoths in our church?

Who serve Jesus at their full-time jobs, and then you find them serving in the church as well?

Who are as busy in the lives of their neighbors as they are in the lives of their Christian family?

Who once they complete one assignment, are asking where they can serve next?

Some in the church burn hot, others burn slow but never go out, but all of us must work

Nehemiah continues on in our tour and we see the next gate approaching, the Water Gate

PP 7-*“the Water Gate”*

“After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh and the temple servants living on Ophel repaired to a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower.” **3:25-26**

The *‘the temple servants living on Ophel’* were called the *Nethinims*, foreign slaves who assisted the priests, whose job it was to fill water jars for the purification in the temple
Before priests performed the temple services, they had to be purified in baths of living water
These *‘temple servants’* went to the *Water Gate* to fill these jars with water, the same water that filled the pool of Siloam at the *Fountain Gate*

Friends, water for drinking symbolized the life-giving power of the Holy Spirit, water for washing symbolized the cleaning power of the Word of God

At the *Water Gate*, the Holy Spirit fills us with the Word of God to sanctify and purify our hearts

PP *“How can a young man keep his way pure? By guarding it according to your word.”*

Psalm 119:9

The Apostle Paul prayed that Jesus Christ would sanctify and cleanse the church of all impurities

PP by the Word of God: *“...Christ loved the church and gave Himself up for her, that He might sanctify her, having cleansed her by the washing of water with the word”*

Ephesians 5:25-26

At the **Old Gate** we were established on the infallible, eternal Word of God

At the **Water Gate**, the same Word of God works in us daily to sanctify us and make us holy

Our minds are renewed at this gate, as the Holy Spirit flows God's truth into us as we read and meditate on the living Word of God

Let's back up for just a moment to see how this Gate should be operating in our lives

At the **Valley Gate**, trials squeezed our hearts forcing sin, unbelief and impurities to the surface

We threw those sins through the **Dung Gate** of confession, and locked the bars behind us

PP Immediately, at the **Fountain Gate**, the truth of **1 John 1:9** applies: *“If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.”*

Illus D.L. Moody once held up a glass and asked, "How can I get the air out of this glass?"

One man shouted, "Suck it out with a pump!" Moody replied, "That would create a vacuum and shatter the glass." After numerous other suggestions Moody smiled, picked up a pitcher of water, and filled the glass. "There," he said, "all the air is now removed." He then explained that victory in the Christian life is not accomplished by "sucking out a sin here and there," but by being filled with the Holy Spirit.

And what the Holy Spirit fills us with is the purifying water of the Word of God, renewing our minds with truth, scrubbing away the appeal of sin and giving us new desires

The **Water Gate** purifies God's people from the old desires to give us right and holy desires

PP Jesus said to His disciples in the Upper Room at Passover, *“Already you are clean because of the word that I have spoken to you.”* **John 15:3**

PP Right after that He prayed, *“Sanctify them in the truth; Your word is truth.”* **John 17:17**

At the **Water Gate**, we learn to study and meditate on God's Word, daily immersed in the beauty and depths of God's voice that speaks directly into our minds and hearts

PP (**Nehemiah 8**) Ezra conducts a revival meeting right in front of this gate, where he read and explained the Scriptures to the people

Notice that this is the 7th gate, the biblical number that represents perfection

PP *“The law of the Lord is perfect, reviving the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple”* **Psalms 19:7**

Even more, as we again look at verse 26, notice that the wall to the **Water Gate** was repaired, but no mention is made that the Gate itself needed repairing

The Water Gate of God's Word is indestructible, it will never perish regardless of the attacks

PP *“The grass withers, and the flower falls, but the word of the Lord remains forever.”*

1 Peter 1:24-25

Satan has exerted no greater effort than in attempting to undermine and destroy God's Word

The very first sin of humanity was brought about by this successful plot

PP *“Now the serpent was more crafty than any other beast of the field that the Lord God had made. He said to the woman, “Did God actually say...”* **Genesis 3:1**

PP God's Word is absolutely indestructible: *"Forever, O Lord, your word is firmly fixed in the heavens."* **Psalms 119:89**

PP Listen to the power of the Water Gate: *"All Scripture is breathed out by God and profitable for teaching, for reproof, for correction, and for training in righteousness, that the man of God may be complete, equipped for every good work."* **2 Timothy 3:16-17**

Friends, as we rebuild the wall of our salvation, we have to confront ourselves with the necessity of the Water Gate

While our enemies cannot destroy this gate itself, they can influence us to let it lapse into disrepair and neglect

If that is true of you, or this church, the enemy will pour into us with lies and deceptions

This is the gate of truth, and as we draw the water of the Word daily into the minds of our hearts, we are overcoming the lies of our enemy, exactly what the Apostle John taught

"...the word of God abides in you, and you have overcome the evil one." **1 John 2:14**

Let me ask you, can it be said of you that you are among the *Nethinims*, the temple servants?

Who were once foreigners hostile to God, but now making that daily trip filling the jars of our minds with the renewing, purifying, reviving water of God's Word?

There was a man who said to a preacher that he had received no inspiration from the Bible despite the fact that he had "gone through it several times."

The preacher responded, "Let it go through you once, then you will tell a different story!"

As we each look inward to our own hearts, let's ask ourselves, *Have I neglected the **Water Gate**?*

Pray