Leadership Lessons from Nehemiah

Lesson 3: Secrets to Motivating God's People
Nehemiah Chapter 3, the Value of Vision

Background: The high priest Eliashib was the grandson of Jeshua, the high priest in the days of Ezra. Eliashib's grandson married Sanballat's daughter.

Prepare for Chapter 3: Nehemiah left the palace with letters from King Artaxerxes and traveled to Jerusalem. He saw the destruction and met opposition. After inspecting the ruins secretly at night with a few good men, he shared that he had the favor of God and the king, and the men agreed to build with him.

Nehemiah motivated multitudes of people from far and near. Men and women from all walks of life came together to accomplish God's purpose. Great things happen when we come together in unity for one purpose.

Deuteronomy 32:30 *How should one chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight, except their Rock had sold them, and the Lord had shut them up?*

Matthew 9:36 *But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.*

Proverbs 14:28 *In the multitude of people is the king's honor: but in the want of people is the destruction of the prince.*

I. Keep the first things first: remember the cause. Live for a cause larger than yourself.

1 Samuel 17:29 *And David said, What have I now done? Is there not a cause?*

A. The sheep gate, Nehemiah 3:1.

    1. The first priority of godly leaders is to "feed the sheep." God wants the sheep to be taken care of. Jesus is the Good Shepherd of the sheep.

    2. After Jesus had resurrected, the disciples returned to fishing, and He prepared a meal for them. Jesus told Peter to "feed my sheep."

John 21:15–17 *So when they had dined, Jesus saith to Simon Peter, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me more than these? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my lambs. [16] He saith to him again the second time, Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? He saith unto him, Yea, Lord; thou knowest that I love thee. He saith unto him, Feed my sheep. [17] He saith unto him the third time,*

Simon, son of Jonas, lovest thou me? Peter was grieved because he said unto him the third time, Lovest thou me? And he said unto him, Lord, thou knowest all things; thou knowest that I love thee. Jesus saith unto him, Feed my sheep.

1 Peter 5:2 *Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight thereof, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind.*

B. The fish gate, Nehemiah 3:3.

    1. Each gate tells a story. The first priority is the sheep, but the second priority is the "fish."

        a. First, you spend time ministering to Jesus, then you get in a body, a church. When you minister to Jesus, you're built up to minister to one another in the body. When you stay built up and ministered to in the body, then you can go to the world.

        b. True ministry: exalt Jesus, edify the body, and then evangelize the world.

    2. We are to be "fishers of men" (Matthew 4:19), meaning to go into the world and evangelize.

    Mark 16:15–18 *And he said unto them, Go ye into all the world, and preach the gospel to every creature. [16] He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned. [17] And these signs shall follow them that believe; In my name shall they cast out devils; they shall speak with new tongues; [18] They shall take up serpents; and if they drink any deadly thing, it shall not hurt them; they shall lay hands on the sick, and they shall recover.*

    Matthew 28:18-20 *And Jesus came and spake unto them, saying, All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth. [19] Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost: [20] Teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you: and, lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world. Amen.*

C. The old gate, Nehemiah 3:6, indicates a foundation.

    1. We need the foundations. Who God is, who Christ is, and who the Holy Spirit is. We need the foundations of the truth of the Word of God.

D. The valley gate and dung gate, Nehemiah 3:13.

    1. The valley gate went out to the valley of Hinnom, a bad place. The valley gate talks about the restoration of Jerusalem and the resilience of the Jewish people.

2. The dung gate refers to trash. To stay strong, we must take out the trash. Spiritual trash can be envy, strife, offenses, and unforgiveness.

E. The fountain gate (Nehemiah 3:15) speaks of eternal life and salvation.

1. When you're born again, a well springs up inside you, bringing eternal life and ministering life to you. You have a well of truth and a well of life inside you.

John 4:14 *But whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him shall never thirst; but the water that I shall give him shall be in him a well of water springing up into everlasting life.*

F. The water gate in Nehemiah 3:26 can represent the Holy Spirit in us.

G. The horse gate in Nehemiah 3:28 reminds us to be ready for battle.

H. The east gate (Nehemiah 3:29) brings hope.

1. Jesus will return, set his feet on the Mount of Olives, and then pass through the eastern gate (Ezekiel 44:1–2).

I. The Miphkad gate (Nehemiah 3:31) is a place of judgment, accountability, and gathering.

J. These gates all speak of different aspects of the Gospel.

II. Join forces - T.E.A.M. Together Everyone Accomplishes More!

A. Nehemiah gathered a team of men and women from near and far to work:

1. Men from Jericho came up to work (Nehemiah 3:2).
2. Goldsmiths and apothecaries (Nehemiah 3:8)
3. The ruler of half of Jerusalem and his daughters went to work (Nehemiah 3:12).
4. Shallum, ruler of part of Mizpah (Nehemiah 3:15).
5. The ruler of the other half of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 3:16).
6. Nethinim's servants of the priests were a help ministry. (Nehemiah 3:26).
7. Priests (Nehemiah 3:28).
8. Merchants (Nehemiah 3:31).

III. Someone is watching!

A. They noticed the nobles did not work (Nehemiah 3:5).

B. Baruch earnestly repaired (Nehemiah 3:20).

C. Do your best at all times because people are watching.

Colossians 3:17 *And whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus, giving thanks to God and the Father by him.*

Ephesians 6:5–8 *Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh, with fear and trembling, in singleness of your heart, as unto Christ; [6] Not with eyeservice, as men pleasers; but as the servants of Christ, doing the will of God from the heart; [7] With good will doing service, as to the Lord, and not to men: [8] Knowing that whatsoever good thing any man doeth, the same shall he receive of the Lord, whether he be bond or free.*

2 Chronicles 31:21 *And in every work that he began in the service of the house of God, and in the law, and in the commandments, to seek his God, he did it with all his heart, and prospered.*

Conclusion: Who and what prospers when we serve with all our hearts? Those who serve the purpose of God.

Go Deeper
In 1 Samuel 17:29, when all of the children of Israel were shaking in their boots because of Goliath, David said, "Is there not a cause?" Nehemiah was devoted to the cause of rebuilding the walls. We need to live for a cause larger than ourselves.

- What causes motivate you?
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The gates Nehemiah repaired had doors, locks, and bars. They needed to be strong and defend against the enemy's attack. The gates were also where they did business. Gates were the city's protection.

- Are there some gates in your life that need repairing? Are there places where the enemy attacks you easily?
- What can you do to fortify those gates?

Declaration: I exalt Jesus; I edify the body, and I will participate in evangelizing the world.