



2021

RENEW. REBUILD. REKINDLE.

Nehemiah 2:1-4

Neh. 2:1 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.**

Last year was most confusing and discouraging. This year appears to be continuing to be challenging, but in spite of the confusion, this year is an opportunity to move past the past and *RENEW, REBUILD, and REKINDLE.*

By God's grace we will **renew our strength, rebuild our steadfastness, and rekindle our spirit.** That is our theme for 2021...

RENEW. REBUILD. REKINDLE.

I. RENEWING: THE CONCERN

A. The Personal Conviction

1. The Interruption of the Routine

- Nehemiah was living and working in the palace of the king – the routine was comfortable.
- Nehemiah already new about the challenge at Jerusalem – v. 2 “...and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.”
- **Nehemiah’s concern is an indication of unstirred spirituality – concern without conviction.**

- Many believers are concerned about spiritual growth, the need for ministries, the state of world evangelism...BUT...there is no conviction that leads them to pray, read the Bible, serve in ministries, give to missions, or even attend church.
- Many believers today are dormant and need something to renew their spirits.

1 Thess. 5:5 **Ye are all the children of light, and the children of the day**: we are not of the night, nor of darkness.

6 **Therefore let us not sleep, as do others**; but let us watch and be sober.

- The report was grim – v. 3 “And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province *are* in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also *is* broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.”
- **The Holy Spirit used the information to convict Nehemiah’s heart.**
- **Nehemiah’s routine in his “comfort zone” was about to be shaken forever.**

2. The Ingredients for a Renewal

- **Before anyone does anything of eternal value for the glory of God, the heart must be spiritually convicted to move from complacency to commitment.**
- God initiates the conviction, but the believer is responsible to act upon on it.
- The pattern for a renewed spirit is as follows:

- The holy conviction by the Holy Spirit regarding God's concern;
 - The humble submission to God and His will via prayer;
 - The honest confession of sin;
 - The honorable desire to be God's servant, to do His will.
-
- Consider David's example and his heart of repentance:

Note the order in Psa. 51:

1. Conviction, 51:1-2
2. Confession, 51:3-6
3. Cleansing, 51:7-12
4. Commitment, 51:13-19

- David, like Nehemiah, needed spiritual renewal. The path to renewal begins with conviction that leads to commitment.

This morning, we will observe Nehemiah's path to...

RENEW. REBUILD. REKINDLE.

- When the Lord begins working in someone's heart, the **conviction** leads to **confession** of sin, which produces **cleansing** of the heart in preparation for a **commitment** to service.
- This spiritual process of renewal is private and personal, but it has public ramifications.
- Such renewal includes commitment which leads to service, and that service necessitates public conversation.

B. The Public Conversation

Neh. 2:1 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,

1. The Continual Concern – “...Why *is* thy countenance sad, seeing thou *art* not sick? **this is nothing else but sorrow of heart...**”

- Nehemiah could not hide his heart's concern:

Prov. 15:13 A merry heart maketh a cheerful countenance: but **by sorrow of the heart the spirit is broken.**

- Spiritual renewal changes the routine of life and others notice it.

2. The Critical Consideration – “...Then I was **very sore afraid,**”

- Accomplishments are done in spite of fear – walking by faith!

“I didn't have time to entertain fear when I knew God's promises had given me permission to be brave.”

— Missy Maxwell Worton, [Don't Mess with This Mama: Risking It All to Rescue Our Daughter](https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/overcoming-fear)
<https://www.goodreads.com/quotes/tag/overcoming-fear>

- When facing Goliath, David confronted the image of all the Israelites' fear. He took five stones in case the first assault failed.

Psa. 56:3 What time I am afraid, I will trust in thee.

- **Courage is not the absence of fear; it is motivation to do what needs to be done regardless of the unknown factors perceived to be hindrances.**
- When a burden moves from consideration to commitment, a myriad of challenges must be anticipated and overcome.

3. The Cautious Confession

Neh. 2:3 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?

- Nehemiah proceeded to speak to the king in spite of his fear – “...And said unto the king...”
- The burden of concern was greater than the fear of repercussions – “...**why should not my countenance be sad**, when the city...*lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?”
- Expression of a ministry-oriented burden is inevitable.

4. The Casual Curiosity

Neh. 2:4 Then the king said unto me, **For what dost thou make request?...**”

- Never underestimate the leadership of God when He is stirring your heart.
- The king’s reply may have startled Nehemiah.

Phil. 2:13 For **it is God which worketh in you both to will and to do of *his* good pleasure.**

5. The Crucial Cry – “...**So I prayed** to the God of heaven.”

❖ Serving the Lord often has times requiring immediate prayer for guidance.

❖ The Scriptures encourage believers to pray:

Jeremiah 33:3 Call unto me, and I will answer thee, and shew thee great and mighty things, which thou knowest not.

Philippians 4:6 Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.

James 5:16b – “...The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.”

6. The Construction Considered

Neh. 2:5 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.**

6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) **For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.**

7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

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.**

- Nehemiah expressed his burden to go to Jerusalem and rebuild the city.
- Nehemiah was prepared to answer pertinent questions:

- How long is the journey?
- When will you return?
- Nehemiah set a schedule – “...and I set him a time.”

7. The Covert Calculations

- After Nehemiah secured letters of authorization from the king, along with military escort (2:7-9,) he went to Jerusalem. Upon arriving, Nehemiah’s enemies were grieved regarding the new mission to rebuild the city.
- After God’s servants are renewed in spirit, enemies to the ministry are to be expected.
- Nehemiah was not deterred regarding his mission:

Neh. 2:11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

12 And **I arose in the night, I and some few men with me; neither told I *any* man what my God had put in my heart to do at Jerusalem:** *neither was there any* beast with me, save the beast that I rode upon.

13 And **I went out by night** by the gate of the valley, even before the dragon well, and to the dung port, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem, which were broken down, and the gates thereof were consumed with fire. ...

15 **Then went I up in the night** by the brook, and viewed the wall, and turned back, and entered by the gate of the valley, and so returned.

16 And the rulers knew not whither I went, or what I did; neither had I as yet told *it* to the Jews, nor to the priests, nor to the nobles, nor to the rulers, nor to the rest that did the work.

17 **Then** said I unto them, **Ye see the distress that we are in**, how Jerusalem *lieth* waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

18 **Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me**; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, **Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for *this* good work.**

Summary

- Before rebuilding, Nehemiah needed to observe several issues:
 1. Nehemiah needed his heart revived;
 2. Nehemiah's renewed spirit and strength = burden for spiritual service.
 3. Nehemiah's opportunity for service included God's power of provisions.
 4. Nehemiah evaluated the challenge;
 5. Nehemiah led others to see what he saw = leadership;
 6. Nehemiah gave testimony of God's provisions;
 7. Nehemiah coordinated others to join the effort for rebuilding.

Conclusion

1 Cor. 16:13 Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.

1. Stay vigilant.
 2. Determine to stay faithful in fellowship with the Lord.
 3. Finish the job.
 4. Stay strong.
- Spiritual renewal leads to rebuilding our strength which opens a door to new challenges and experiences in the life of a believer.

Jn. 10:10 “...I am come that they might have life, and that they might have *it* more abundantly.”