

## Rebuilding Your Life - Nehemiah 2:1-2:20

In Acts chapter 9 we find a disciple of Jesus named Ananias arguing with God about the apostle Paul. The Lord commanded him to go and pray for him, but he did not want to because Paul was a bad man who imprisoned and killed Christians. It was hard from him to believe that God could change a man like Paul and make him an instrument to take the gospel! But God made possible what Ananias thought impossible because on the road to Damascus Paul had an encounter with God and became a Christian.

In Galatians 1:17 we read that during the following years Paul went to the region of Arabia where he stayed while God rebuilt his life. The Lord gave him a new perspective and a new purpose. There God prepared him to live a new life. That's how Paul became the greatest Christian leader we've ever had. And we read in the scriptures that God did the same with many others and He can also do it in your life.

Perhaps at this stage in your life you are trying to rebuild something. It may be your relationship with God or trust in your marriage, maybe your career, family, finances, ministry. But perhaps you feel that your situation is so difficult that you think it is impossible to rebuild. Do not be discouraged because Luke said **that nothing is impossible for God! God recovers the things that the devil steals and God restores what the devil destroys!**

How can we rebuild something that was destroyed? Let's look at the steps observing what happened in city of Jerusalem that was destroyed in 586 BC. One hundred and forty years after this incident, God called Nehemiah, an immigrant Jew living in Iran, to tell the Jews that together, with God's help, they would be able to rebuild the city and its walls. They could become a great nation again! But there are conditions to rebuild and the first one is:

**1. You must want to rebuild.** In Nehemiah 2:3-5 we read that while Nehemiah was serving the king of Persia he noticed that Nehemiah was sad and asked him why. And although he was afraid, he explained to the King that he was sad because **the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"** The king said to me, "What is it you want?" Then I prayed to the God of heaven, and I answered the king: **If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it.** Nehemiah was determined to rebuild the city, to do something that seemed humanly impossible to achieve. Wanting to rebuild is the beginning of the miracle.

A. There are people who live in the past and because they know that nothing will ever be same they "stay" in the past without seeking to rebuild the future. Perhaps you can't have what you had before but God can you give something even better.

B. Others focused on what happened, what was done or said about them, and do not move forward. They remain trapped in the pain and lies of the past. **But you must believe that God is a God of new beginnings and you must want to rebuild your life.**

What the enemy wants is for you to stay focused on the ruins of the past while God wants you to be focused on rebuilding a new future. What are you are focusing on? Who are you listening to? What are you embracing, the past or the future that God has for you? When your world is destroyed you still can control your attitude knowing that **we know that God makes all things work together for the good of those who love Him.** Romans 8.28

If you want to rebuild you have to believe that things can be better! You have to say with conviction, *"I am not satisfied with the direction that my life is taking. I want this or that to change and I'm ready to start rebuilding."* That's how Nehemiah responded.

It is impossible to start over if you do not want to rebuild. I recommend that you begin by rebuilding the smaller things of your life and that will encourage you rebuilding the bigger things. The second condition to rebuild is:

**2. You must do what's necessary to rebuild.** Some people have the desire to rebuild but lack the willingness and discipline to do what is needed. They may even seek prayer, but are not ready to do their part to cooperate with God in the rebuilding process. They ask: *"Build with what? I have nothing!"*

Nehemiah had nothing when he started but was willing to do what was necessary to do it. He sought the favor of men, he wrote letters to the governors asking for wood donations. He asked the king of Persia protection and horses to work. Although he had nothing, Nehemiah received what he needed because he had God's favor. *Whenever you are trying to do God's will for your life and obeying His word, you can expect God to give you what you need to rebuild.*

I want you to notice that in on one hand, Nehemiah had God's favor but on the other hand he received favor because of the testimony that he had before men. *If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight...* Let's not forget that what you do today to others may grant you favor tomorrow. The testimony you give, your honesty and hard work will open doors in the future. The opposite is also true. Be faithful in small things and in God's time you'll receive favor.

Nehemiah focused on what he wanted for his future and not what he didn't have in the present. Do not focus on what you don't have, but in what you need to rebuild. If we are really determined to rebuild, the Lord will provide what we need but it will cost us something.

*Example: Pastor Gordon McDonald is a much admired Christian writer. In 1985 he had a case with a woman and left the ministry. He almost lost his marriage, but promised his wife that he would do everything necessary to rebuild his marriage and his life from the ashes. He ask the forgiveness of his wife and told her that he couldn't do it without her help. She forgave him, but the rebuilding process was long. It took years of counseling, prayer and support from family and friends. In 1988 his marriage was restored and he returned to ministry. Some may say that he shouldn't be a pastor again, but I can only show respect for a person who recognizes his sins, confesses them and rebuilds his life with God's help!*

We read in Proverbs 24:16 that *The godly may trip seven times, but they will get up again.* We may fall, but we don't have to remain fallen. We must do everything possible to rebuild. It will take time and it will cost us but we will succeed. *The Lord is able to make something beautiful over the ruins of your life, but strength and determination are necessary to achieve it.*

Thank God for all who are determined to rebuild. Thank God for people who say: *"I will not give up. With the Lord's help I will rebuild the walls of my life!"* The third condition to rebuild is:

**3. You must seek help.** To believe that we can rebuild without the help of others is a trap of the enemy. Nehemiah knew he couldn't do it alone and it was God who led him to seek the help of his people. In the same way that pastor Gordon McDonald needed the help of his wife, counselors, friends and the prayer of others.

Seek the specific help you need to lift the walls that are needed in your life. Whether it is through counseling, training, whatever is needed. But to seek help, one needs to be transparent and vulnerable. Trying to keep up appearances is the beginning of further destruction because pride is an obstacle to rebuild. The fourth condition to rebuild is:

**4. You must seek and trust God by following His instructions.** Nehemiah trusted God and had no doubt that he was going to do something and that's why he stated that **The God of heaven will give us success** v.20. The king of Persia was very strict and Nehemiah was afraid. That's why when the king asked what he wanted, he prayed before asking.

This step was very important because prayer is essential in the rebuilding process. If you are going to rebuild the walls of your life it is because God will give you success and you need to seek him first. **You cannot pray without trust, you cannot trust without praying.**

Another reason why we need to pray, it is because if what you are doing is God's will surely the enemy will attack you. That's what happened to Nehemiah and the people who were helping him. Many were upset that someone had come to help the people of Israel to rebuild the city.

Nehemiah didn't argue with his enemies, but patiently waited for the deliverance of God. He maintained confidence in God at all times and that's how the job was done. Prayer and work go hand in hand in the rebuilding process. Are we doing both?

The other thing Nehemiah did was to rebuild the city gates. It doesn't matter how high and robust are the walls if your gates aren't tall and strong. The gates represent the entrance into our lives. **What we are allowing to enter through the doors of our lives? Through our eyes, heart, relationships. Is the enemy behind those things or those people?** In the same way they rebuilt the gates of the city we must rebuild the gates in our own lives.

After the wall was rebuilt, we read in chapter 8 that they came together. Ezra led them in worship to God and it says that **"there was great joy!"** Great joy is what happens when we surrender to Christ and allow Him rebuild our lives.

No matter the difficulty, there is nothing that God cannot rebuild. We all have been touched by sin, tragedy and personal failure. But thank God, that doesn't have to be the end of the story. Give your life to God and let Him rebuild it.

1. Today God wants to infuse us with hope and encouragement to rebuild.
2. He asks you not live in the past but to do everything possible to rebuild.
3. Do not worry about what seems to be impossible.
4. Seek the help you need to rebuild because you cannot achieve it alone.
5. Be willing to be honest and transparent.
6. While you rebuild seek God and follow what His word teaches.
7. God wants to reveal Himself to you in a new way during the process.

**As Christians, when something is destroyed in our personal lives, whatever it is, we must be determined to start anew because God is a God of new beginnings and second chances!** As God helped Nehemiah rebuild Jerusalem and the life of Paul, God can rebuild the ruins of anyone's life. What happened in this city shows us the way forward.