

The 52 Day Nehemiah Experiment

A 52 Day Plan for Revival in Our Church

Days 8-14

Sunday, February 12 - Saturday, February 18

***For the Members of Church at the Mall
Lakeland & Auburndale, Florida***

By Pastor Jay Dennis

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Day 8

Sunday, February 12

READING

Nehemiah 3:13-21

¹³ Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate. They built it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars, and a thousand cubits of the wall to the Refuse Gate.

¹⁴ Malchijah the son of Rechab, the official of the district of Beth-haccherem repaired the Refuse Gate. He built it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars.

¹⁵ Shallum the son of Col-hozeh, the official of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate. He built it, covered it and hung its doors with its bolts and its bars, and the wall of the Pool of Shelah at the king's garden as far as the steps that descend from the city of David. ¹⁶ After him Nehemiah the son of Azbuk, official of half the district of Beth-zur, made repairs as far as *a point* opposite the tombs of David, and as far as the artificial pool and the house of the mighty men. ¹⁷ After him the Levites carried out repairs *under* Rehum the son of Bani. Next to him Hashabiah, the official of half the district of Keilah, carried out repairs for his district. ¹⁸ After him their brothers carried out repairs *under* Bavvai the son of Henadad, official of *the other* half of the district of Keilah. ¹⁹ Next to him Ezer the son of Jeshua, the official of Mizpah, repaired another section in front of the ascent of the armory at the Angle. ²⁰ After him Baruch the son of Zabbai

zealously repaired another section, from the Angle to the doorway of the house of Eliashib the high priest.²¹ After him Meremoth the son of Uriah the son of Hakkoz repaired another section, from the doorway of Eliashib's house even as far as the end of his house.

TEACHING

God's work includes repair work. The Wall of Jerusalem was broken and now must be repaired. Nehemiah took the initiative to accomplish in 52 days what had not been done in 140 years. The wall had been destroyed by the enemies of God. When there is repair work that is needed, it is normally due to two realities: disaster and/or neglect. Spiritually, God's work is attacked in the same way—either through Satan's direct attack on a church through sinful words, actions, and/or attitudes; or through neglect, which is failure to do those things God has told us to do.

The word "repair" is used several times in chapter three. It has the idea of encouraging, making stronger, strengthening. The gates that were being repaired were entry points and exit points into and out of the city. Our church is God's house. It is essential that we protect what comes into our church and how people leave our church. We must make certain that anyone who leads, teaches, or has influence is someone who wholeheartedly embraces God's Word as the only authority for what we believe and how we live our lives; and one who has a heart for God, which includes humility. We have a membership class required for anyone who wants to become a member of Church at the Mall. This class informs on what we believe and why we believe it when it comes to both doctrine and how our church operates. So every member of our church has committed to be on the same page regarding both church doctrine and church operation.

A gate is also an exiting place. It is essential that each time after meeting together, people leave our church having heard God's Word and hopeful that with God, everything is possible.

Everyone in our church has an opportunity to get on the wall, and help us repair and build the wall for God's glory. What are the qualifications of one who is a Wall Builder, a Wall Repairer?

Committed to God's Word as our only authority.

Living in the center of God's will.

Uncompromising convictions and commitment to obeying God.

Living in forgiveness toward others.

Today as a member of Church at the Mall, determine that you will get on the wall and help us build a great church for the glory of God!

PRAYING

Pray that the Lord will help each of us get on the wall and repair relationships and address misunderstandings, misinformation, rumors, and gossip.

Ask the Lord to show us where we have neglected to do those things that He desires us to do.

Ask Him where we have not addressed places of vulnerability in our leadership, programs, structure, and plans.

Seek the Lord that He will show us the places that need to be strengthened.

Pray for the Nominating Committee as they nominate a Worship Pastor Search Committee to recommend a new Worship Pastor.

FASTING

I will fast:

___ One meal today

___ One meal this week

___ One meal each day

___ One meal in the 52 days

___ One day in the 52 days

___ Other: _____

Day 9

Monday, February 13

READING

Nehemiah 3:22-32

22 After him the priests, the men of the valley, carried out repairs.
23 After them Benjamin and Hasshub carried out repairs in front of their house. After them Azariah the son of Maaseiah, son of Ananiah, carried out repairs beside his house. 24 After him Binnui the son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah as far as the Angle and as far as the corner. 25 Palal the son of Uzai made repairs in front of the Angle and the tower projecting from the upper house of the king, which is by the court of the guard. After him Pedaiah the son of Parosh made repairs.
26 The temple servants living in Ophel made repairs as far as the front of the Water Gate toward the east and the projecting tower.
27 After them the Tekoites repaired another section in front of the great projecting tower and as far as the wall of Ophel.

28 Above the Horse Gate the priests carried out repairs, each in front of his house. 29 After them Zadok the son of Immer carried out repairs in front of his house. And after him Shemaiah the son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, carried out repairs.
30 After him Hananiah the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun the sixth son of Zalaph, repaired another section. After him Meshullam the son of Berechiah carried out repairs in front of his own quarters.
31 After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, carried out repairs

as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, in front of the Inspection Gate and as far as the upper room of the corner. 32 Between the upper room of the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants carried out repairs.

TEACHING

The people who were rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem were not professional contractors and builders. They were people from all walks of life, including priests and businessmen, politicians, husbands, and fathers. God wants all of us on the wall. One of the most outstanding characteristics of those who got on the wall is that they made themselves available to God to be used. For years I have heard this phrase: *The best ability is availability*. Today, make yourself available to be used of God in your church. Volunteer. Be part of the solution. Get in on God's work. Help us fulfill our Seven Missional Goals by 2020.

You will notice that these workers first paid attention to their own homes. It is commendable to help the church fulfil its purpose; however, your commitment must first begin at home. Make needed repairs at home.

The names of those on the wall have great significance, giving us insight into the character of the person. For instance Benjamin (23) means protector; Zadok (29) means integrity; and Meshullam (30) means reconciliation. Those who rebuild the wall need to be focused on protecting the wall, living in integrity, choosing to forgive. Notice in verse 31 the name Malchijah is mentioned. In Ezra 10:31 he was the one whom Ezra confronted for marrying someone not in God's will, and now you see him on the wall serving God. Maybe you have sinned and have made mistakes in the past. God is a God of grace and mercy. When you seek His forgiveness, He will forgive and give you a new beginning. God is the God of new beginnings.

PRAYING

Pray that God will reveal those areas in your home that need to be strengthened or repaired.

Pray for your marriage and your children for God's hedge of protection around them.

Pray that you will always have a spirit of being available to go anywhere God wants you to go, do anything God wants you to do, and to say "Yes" immediately to when God wants you to do it.

"Lord today, I make myself totally, unreservedly available to You. My answer is 'Yes.' All I am waiting on is Your instructions."

Also, pray for God's Hedge of Protection around our church. Pray for every place, every gate, through which people enter our church, that there will be an immediate sense of God's presence.

"God protect us from anyone who would come into our church with ill intent."

Pray for our Operations Department Staff and Leadership.

FASTING

I will fast:

___ One meal today

___ One meal this week

___ One meal each day

___ One meal in the 52 days

___ One day in the 52 days

___ Other: _____

Day 10

Tuesday, February 14

READING

Nehemiah 4:1-8

4 Now it came about that when Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became furious and very angry and mocked the Jews. ² He spoke in the presence of his brothers and the wealthy *men* of Samaria and said, “What are these feeble Jews doing? Are they going to restore *it* for themselves? Can they offer sacrifices? Can they finish in a day? Can they revive the stones from the dusty rubble even the burned ones?” ³ Now Tobiah the Ammonite *was* near him and he said, “Even what they are building—if a fox should jump on *it*, he would break their stone wall down!”

⁴ Hear, O our God, how we are despised! Return their reproach on their own heads and give them up for plunder in a land of captivity.

⁵ Do not forgive their iniquity and let not their sin be blotted out before You, for they have demoralized the builders.

⁶ So we built the wall and the whole wall was joined together to half its *height*, for the people had a mind to work.

⁷ Now when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, *and* that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry.

⁸ All of them conspired together to come *and* fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it.

TEACHING

Without doubt, I believe that discouragement is Satan's most effective tool. If he can get your eyes off of the Lord and doing His will and onto circumstances, issues, situations, problems, difficulties, and people, he can effectively get you off the wall of doing God's will and God's work. Satan's name means "adversary." Anytime a great work for God begins, Satan will immediately come after that work; and he will most often use discouragement as a way to thwart the progress and even stop the work.

Enter Sanballat and Tobiah, officials from Samaria who did not want the wall to be rebuilt. Jealousy and greed filled their hearts, and they lashed out at Nehemiah and the workers with discouraging words. Their goal was to get Nehemiah's eyes off of God's work and onto the overwhelming project of rebuilding the wall. Discouragement says, "It would be easier just to give up, quit trying."

We have a great work at Church at the Mall. Satan is threatened by our continual emphasis on winning lost souls. He will do anything possible to stop this work. We absolutely must not give into his discouraging words, which often come through people whose hearts are not right with God.

Satan will attempt to bring confusion to a work of God. Yes, it would be easier to not attempt God-sized goals; and yes, we would stop seeing the intensity of spiritual warfare if we let up. However, we must not do that! We must stay on the wall, stay on task, and fulfill what God has called us to do.

When we look at what Nehemiah did, we see clues as to how we should respond to discouragement and discouragers.

1. Nehemiah expected discouragement and discouragers.

Don't be surprised by discouragement. Satan will use people's words to dishearten God's people and make them feel inadequate.

2. Nehemiah immediately took this to God in prayer and laid it before Him.

When you get discouraged, go to God first.

3. Nehemiah asked God to deal with those who were discouraging towards those on the wall.

It is not wrong to pray against those who desire to hurt the work of God.

4. Nehemiah continued the work.

Continue the work! Real commitment will always overcome discouragement. There are times you simply must push through the pain, push through the criticism, push through the discouragement and keep doing God's work.

PRAYING

Pray that God would send great encouragement to our Church.

Pray that our pastors, staff, and leaders will not allow discouragement to derail all God has called us to do.

Pray against anyone who would intentionally come to our church and attempt to stop the great work that God is doing.

Take the time today to thank God that we are a threat to Satan and his army, and that we are on their attack list because of our passionate desire to win lost souls to Christ.

Pray for our Deacon Chairman, Kevin Lethers, and for our Deacons.

FASTING

I will fast:

One meal today

One meal this week

One meal each day

One meal in the 52 days

One day in the 52 days

Other: _____

Day 11

Wednesday, February 15

READING

Nehemiah 4:9-17

⁹ But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night.

¹⁰ Thus in Judah it was said,
“The strength of the burden bearers is failing,
Yet there is much rubbish;
And we ourselves are unable
To rebuild the wall.”

¹¹ Our enemies said, “They will not know or see until we come among them, kill them and put a stop to the work.” ¹² When the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times, “They will come up against us from every place where you may turn,” ¹³ then I stationed *men* in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, the exposed places, and I stationed the people in families with their swords, spears and bows. ¹⁴ When I saw *their fear*, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people: “Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses.”

¹⁵ When our enemies heard that it was known to us, and that God had frustrated their plan, then all of us returned to the wall, each one to his work. ¹⁶ From that day on, half of my servants carried on the work while half of them held the spears, the shields, the bows and the breastplates; and the captains *were* behind the whole house of Judah. ¹⁷ Those who were rebuilding the wall and those who carried burdens took *their* load with one hand doing the work and the other holding a weapon.

TEACHING

Nehemiah's response to criticism and discouragement was prayer. Prayer is always the right response. Go to God immediately! Before you talk to anyone else, talk to God. He promises to bring you joy, encouragement, insight, and strength.

Remember this, God wants His church to succeed more than you want it to succeed. He is with us! He will give us everything we need to accomplish what He has called us to do. He will provide for our every need as we stay on the wall, and stay in His will.

The workers were getting tired and discouraged. It is important to take time to rest, pray, and recharge as we undertake God's great assignment for us.

The workers told Nehemiah that "there is too much rubble." Rubble was the trash, the debris, left from the burning of the wall and the destruction. Rubble must be cleared away before repairs and rebuilding could take place. It is important that you deal with your own rubble—un-confessed sins, past unresolved conflicts, issues that are un-dealt with and still looming, unsolved problems that were neglected, or even toxic relationships. Nehemiah and the workers had to deal with the rubble, but not allow it to overwhelm them. Nehemiah's response was to speak encouragement. Look at Nehemiah 4:14:

¹⁴ When I saw *their fear*, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people: “Do not be afraid of them; remember the Lord who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives and your houses.”

As we work to accomplish God’s will here at FBC at the Mall, we must remember that God is greater than any attack the enemy can bring. We must focus on our great God, Who is all powerful, all-knowing, and everywhere-present at all times. You are doing this for your God, for your marriages, and for your children and their future. Nehemiah used the attack of the enemy to learn lessons on how to do things better. We need to learn from our mistakes and learn from our critics on how we can do things better.

In one hand, those on the wall had a weapon; and in the other hand, a building tool. That’s a great picture of what God has called us to do, which to Build and Battle.

PRAYING

Ask God to reveal to you any rubble of un-confessed sin, past unresolved conflict, or issues in your life not dealt with. These things will hold you back from being all God wants you to be.

Pray that we as a church will deal with any rubble standing in our way of moving forward as a church.

Pray, “Lord, please use those who are critical toward our church to teach us more about You, Your will, and what we need to work on as a church in order to serve You better and love You more.”

Pray for Keith Kimsey, Chairman of our Personnel Committee, and for our Personnel Committee.

FASTING

I will fast:

___ One meal today

___ One meal this week

___ One meal each day

___ One meal in the 52 days

___ One day in the 52 days

___ Other: _____

Day 12

Thursday, February 16

READING

Nehemiah 4:18-5:3

¹⁸ As for the builders, each wore his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me. ¹⁹ I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, “The work is great and extensive, and we are separated on the wall far from one another.

²⁰ At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us.”

²¹ So we carried on the work with half of them holding spears from dawn until the stars appeared. ²² At that time I also said to the people, “Let each man with his servant spend the night within Jerusalem so that they may be a guard for us by night and a laborer by day.” ²³ So neither I, my brothers, my servants, nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us removed our clothes, each *took* his weapon *even to* the water.

Usury Abolished

5 Now there was a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. ² For there were those who said, “We, our sons and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain that we may eat and live.” ³ There were others who said, “We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our houses that we might get grain because of the famine.”

TEACHING

Because the wall was so large, the men were spread out. The workers needed fellowship; they needed each other. In our busy schedules, it's easy to lose touch with each other. Nehemiah knew that there would be times when he needed to bring everyone together. In fact, that is a picture of what we do each Sunday as we gather to worship, hear teaching from God's Word, fellowship, pray, and do ministry. Nehemiah's plan was that when they heard the sound of the trumpet, they would rally to that place. The trumpet is sounding in our church to come and rally and get involved in this great work.

The workers were always ready to work. They were also always ready for an attack from the enemy.

In chapter five, a new problem arose. It's one thing for an attack to come from outside of God's people, but quite another when the attacks and complaints come from within. There were complaints, and some were legitimate. There was financial hardship on the workers. Because they were so involved in building the wall, financially some things were neglected. In addition, the wealthy among them were using this opportunity to take personal advantage to make money off the backs of God's people's situation and sacrifice.

Complaints are sometimes legitimate. Not every complaint is negative. Complaints give us an opportunity to seek God's wisdom to make sure we are following His plan. As a church we must pay attention to those who are complaining to determine if there is something we are doing or not doing that is contributing to the complaints. If legitimate needs are not being met, we must address those needs immediately.

If someone is complaining, make sure you understand why they are complaining. If there is no foundation to the complaint, encourage them to do two things: pray for our church and become part of the solution by getting involved. Through our attention to the Seven Missional Goals, it will be essential that as many people as possible get involved.

PRAYING

Pray that those who are complaining will have a heart to become part of the solution, not part of the problem.

Pray that our leaders will take every complaint to the Lord and ask, “God, is there any truth to this; and if so, what can we do to make things right?”

Pray that there will be a great unity within our church as we move forward to our most exciting days and closer to fulfilling our Seven Missional Goals.

Pray for our Finance Committee Chairman, Dave Curry, the Vice Chairman, Brad Rideout, and for the Committee.

FASTING

I will fast:

One meal today

One meal this week

One meal each day

One meal in the 52 days

One day in the 52 days

Other: _____

Day 13

Friday, February 17

READING

Nehemiah 5:4-11

⁴ Also there were those who said, “We have borrowed money for the king’s tax on our fields and our vineyards. ⁵ Now our flesh is like the flesh of our brothers, our children like their children. Yet behold, we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters are forced into bondage already, and we are helpless because our fields and vineyards belong to others.”

⁶ Then I was very angry when I had heard their outcry and these words. ⁷ I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, “You are exacting usury, each from his brother!” Therefore, I held a great assembly against them. ⁸ I said to them, “We according to our ability have redeemed our Jewish brothers who were sold to the nations; now would you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us?” Then they were silent and could not find a word *to say*. ⁹ Again I said, “The thing which you are doing is not good; should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies? ¹⁰ And likewise I, my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Please, let us leave off this usury. ¹¹ Please, give back to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive groves and their houses, also the hundredth *part* of the money and of the grain, the new wine and the oil that you are exacting from them.”

TEACHING

The workers were being taken advantage of by those trying to get rich, the opportunists, who were using their influence and money to take advantage of those who were in need. Some working on the wall were having to mortgage their homes just to buy food. Others were forced to sell their children into slavery. This should not be happening! Economic distress is one of the most stressful experiences a marriage, family, or church can endure.

Once Nehemiah understood that was happening, what did he do? Look at Nehemiah 5:7:

⁷ I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, “You are exacting usury, each from his brother!” Therefore, I held a great assembly against them.

He pushed “Pause.” He didn’t move ahead until he had cooled down and made sure that he had consulted God and that what he was about to say was from God. Only then did he address the issue. Whenever we are confronted with issues that anger us, Nehemiah’s example is worth emulating.

When there is a difficult issue facing a church, it is vital that the leaders first take it to God in prayer and get His wisdom. If we deal with problems out of anger, even more problems will be created.

After pushing “pause,” Nehemiah hit the problem, confronted the issue, head on. Problems will not get better by leaving them alone. In fact, they will grow and get worse. Just hoping things will

get better without confronting them gives Satan an opportunity to work.

The result of Nehemiah handling a problem God's way was that the interest charged was given back to the people, and there was unity and productivity. There is no problem that arises that cannot be solved when people are committed to God and to doing His will. Likewise, there is no challenge our church could ever face that cannot be solved when we the people of Church at the Mall determine to please God above all else.

PRAYING

Today, thank God that there is no problem we face that cannot be solved.

Thank Him that there is a solution to every challenge we face.

Ask God for wisdom to know how we can address issues as we move forward in the great work to which He has called us.

Pray for your Pastor and Staff Team, the Committees and Deacons, that we would have God's wisdom and favor.

Pray that financially, God will bless our church as more people commit to obeying God in giving tithes and offerings.

Pray that God would burden our people to be tithers.

Pray for our Children's Ministry and Programs.

FASTING

I will fast:

___ One meal today

___ One meal this week

___ One meal each day

___ One meal in the 52 days

___ One day in the 52 days

___ Other: _____

Day 14

Saturday, February 18

READING

Nehemiah 5:12-19

¹² Then they said, “We will give it back and will require nothing from them; we will do exactly as you say.” So I called the priests and took an oath from them that they would do according to this promise. ¹³ I also shook out the front of my garment and said, “Thus may God shake out every man from his house and from his possessions who does not fulfill this promise; even thus may he be shaken out and emptied.” And all the assembly said, “Amen!” And they praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise.

¹⁴ Moreover, from the day that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, *for* twelve years, neither I nor my kinsmen have eaten the governor’s food *allowance*. ¹⁵ But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people and took from them bread and wine besides forty shekels of silver; even their servants domineered the people. But I did not do so because of the fear of God. ¹⁶ I also applied myself to the work on this wall; we did not buy any land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work. ¹⁷ Moreover, *there were* at my table

one hundred and fifty Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. ¹⁸ Now that which was prepared for each day was one ox *and* six choice sheep, also birds were prepared for me; and once in ten days all sorts of wine *were furnished* in abundance. Yet for all this I did not demand the governor's food *allowance*, because the servitude was heavy on this people. ¹⁹ Remember me, O my God, for good, *according to* all that I have done for this people.

TEACHING

When problems arise, they must be immediately addressed head on and with love.

Those who were exacting interest on the workers, the wealthy, were called together by Nehemiah and told to stop what they were doing. He made the priests swear to insure that the right thing was done. To fail to do this meant they disqualified themselves from further involvement.

Nehemiah, who was governor, refused to take advantage of his position. He lived out what he was asking others to do. That is true leadership—leading by example. It's not, "Do as I say, not as I do." It is, "Do as I do." Nehemiah did the right thing because of the fear of God. He had a holy awe, a reverential fear of not doing what God told him to do. As we work to build our church, we must do so out of a fear of God, a fear of not pleasing God, a fear of disappointing Him.

Nehemiah sacrificed personally to rebuild the wall. We are told he persevered in the work (16). God's work is not easy nor is it convenient. However, it is the most rewarding and eternally significant work on earth. When you are involved in helping your

church, you are involving yourself in something that will contribute to people being saved, baptized, disciplined, encouraged, motivated, and transformed. You are involving yourself in something that will bring healing to marriages and families and will influence generations to come with God's Word. You are involving yourself in something that is touching every continent with the gospel message. This work is worthy of your time, energy, and financial sacrifice. Your tithe alone allows this great work of God to continue. Our motive must always be to do this for God's glory. We are in this for Him, not for us. It is all about Him, His will, and His glory.

PRAYING

Pray that you will live in a holy fear of God, a fear of not pleasing Him.

Pray that our church will experience a holy fear of God as we seek to build a structure in our leadership that would help us accomplish God's will.

If you are not presently tithing, confess that to God as sin, and commit today that you will begin now to obey Him in this area. Pray for a revival of radical generosity among our people.

Pray that in every worship service, we will see baptisms taking place and people being saved.

Pray that more people will make Church at the Mall their church home.

FASTING

I will fast:

___ One meal today

___ One meal this week

___ One meal each day

___ One meal in the 52 days

___ One day in the 52 days

___ Other: _____