

Vision and Values: Be Part of the Solution not Part of the Problem

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Key Text

Matt 5:14-16

God could have done it all by himself, however He has chosen us to help in the redeeming of the nations through the preaching of the Good News and discipling of others.

Background of Nehemiah

- In 587BC Jerusalem is destroyed, with the majority of the Israelites taken captive to Babylon.
- 539BC years later, Babylon is taken over the Assyrians. The Israelites pleaded with their new captors to go back to Jerusalem to rebuild the temple. The Assyrian king grants them permission to rebuild the temple.
- In 458BC, there is a restoration of worship through Ezra and the temple has been rebuilt. Jerusalem still lies in ruin
- 446BC the book the Nehemiah begins. Nehemiah knows that living in captivity is not God's ultimate purpose for the Israelites. He yearns to restore the city and its wall.
- Nehemiah is a Jew living in exile. He is the cup-bearer (and confidant) to the Assyrian King. It was one of the highest paid position in the land due to the inherent dangers in the job. He is trustworthy and wealthy.

Nehemiah 1:1-4;2:5-8;4:1-3

- *A passionate person*
He was a passionate person who wanted to be a part of the solution after becoming informed about the problem of Jerusalem. Even though he was wealthy and relatively comfortable, he desired the restoration of the city.
- *A prayer person*
Upon hearing of the state of Jerusalem, he wept and prayed. For 3 months he prayed, before an opportunity came to bring this matter before the Assyrian King. During the rebuilding of the wall, he faced opposition. This opposition caused him to turn to prayer.
- *A persevering person*
He stuck to the job at hand. Throughout the opposition he faced, he kept on working and praying. Even with the prospect of war, they kept on building the wall. [Eph 6:10-18] God has given us all we need to stand firm in the face of opposition.
- *A practical person*
He didn't just do spiritual things; he did practical things to achieve the solution.

Practical Application

1. Persevere in prayer for the problem, which God brings to your attention.
2. Look for opportunities to speak to others about the Good News.
3. Create opportunities by taking an interest in other people. Show them that you genuinely care about them.
4. Get involved in your community; perhaps by volunteering or joining a club. Get to know your neighbours.
5. Change the way you look at people. It's very easy to judge others, however it's better to view them as prospective Christians.

Be the light!