Sermon Notes

Mission Accomplished
Nehemiah 6:15-7:73

The Impossible Dream

- ❖ Daring to pursue the impossible

    - ■ how thrilling to tackle something that seems impossible and to keep at it until you finally achieve victory

    - ■ Nehemiah's "victory" is every bit as fresh and relevant as some of the recent stories from Pyeong Chang

- ❖ Despite overwhelming obstacles, daunting challenges and intense opposition, by God's grace, Nehemiah presses on and brings the rebuilding effort to completion in 52 days

- ❖ Unlike the attitudes and values prevalent in our day, Nehemiah takes none of the credit for this success

    - ■ all glory, honor, credit goes to God and God alone

    - ■ the amazing speed with which the job is finished is testimony to the fact that God is behind it

    - ■ such an observation makes a deep impact on Israel's enemies and the nations surrounding her

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Redeployed

- ❖ "The reward for work well done is the opportunity to do more." (Jonas Salk)

- ❖ Despite his achievement, Nehemiah knows there are continuing problems that he must face and deal with

    - ■ Nehemiah does not pretend his success is greater than it actually is

    - ■ Tobiah will continue to be a thorn in Nehemiah's flesh right until the end of the narrative

    - ■ a reminder to us that our work for the Lord in this world is not over until God calls us into His presence

A Long List of Names

- ❖ Reading through Nehemiah 7 is a little bit like reading a census report

    - ■ the Bible repeats this long list of names twice!

    - ■ why is this here? why is this important? who cares?

- ❖ Nehemiah uses this list to show how Jerusalem is repopulated and revitalized

    - ■ the life and safety of a city requires more than bricks and mortar

- only a thriving population can ensure that no outsiders will come in and pick them off as easy target for attack and takeover

- the list shows how Nehemiah organizes different people and groups of people to perform specific functions that are essential for daily life

❖ Gatekeepers, Singers, and Levites

- Nehemiah gives very strict/detailed instructions about when the city gates are to be open

- Nehemiah doesn't include job descriptions for singers and Levites because their duties are clearly spelled out in other portions of Scripture

❖ Two specific tasks

- Nehemiah appoints his brother Hanani as mayor

- Nehemiah appoints Hananiah as his chief of police

❖ Nehemiah enrolls the residents of Jerusalem according to their genealogy

- a list of people who said "yes" to God

- this list establishes continuity with the past as it shows the link between those who were part of God's original redemption at the first exodus and these who are part of Israel's "second exodus"

- vv. 6-65 are organized around a variety of serving roles

❖ Nehemiah outlines how the Temple and those serving at the Temple will be provided for

- vv. 70-72 are a record of giving

- the people give generously to God's work

- they recognize how important giving is for sustaining the ongoing work of God

  • giving is a sign of a healthy, functioning community

  • giving is a normal part of the Christian life

  • giving is something to which we all need to be attentive, disciplined and committed

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Personal Application

1. Are you currently engaged in any task or endeavor that seems impossible? How is God making His presence and His strength known to you in the midst of that?

2. How do we know when a project is truly finished? What are some signs that something is completed?

3. Nehemiah gives us an outstanding example of someone who gives complete glory to God for what has been accomplished. How can you put his example into practice in your life?

4. Think over your "spiritual genealogy" spending time remembering and thanking God for those whom God has used to shape who you are becoming in Christ. How does remembering the link you have with those whom God has used in your past inspire and motivate you to continue fulfilling His purposes for you in the present?