Crossroads International Church Dr. Rick Griffith

28 July 2013 Message 3 of 15

NLT 40 Minutes

**Restoring God’s Honor**

Title

***Nehemiah 2:11-20***

**Topic:** Restoration

**Subject:** How does God restore us?

**Complement:** God provides all we need to honor him.

**Purpose:** The listeners will support God’s plan to restore our church.

**Meditation:** God is a restoring God

**Reading:** Neh. 2:11-20

**Song:** “In My Life, Lord, Be Glorified”

# Introduction

### Interest: God is continually dishonored today.

• OMG

Dishonored

#### OMG is the new way to swear. Just abbreviate blasphemy!

#### The name of Jesus is never said in a reverent way in the media.

• Jesus

#### His basic building block of society––marriage––is continually battered with homosexual “marriage” increasing worldwide. Last month the newspaper read, “Gay Marriage Wins.” That means God no longer defines marriage in legal courts.

• Marriage

#### A pastor or church leader is never portrayed as doing anything good––only reported if there is a scandal.

• Pastor

#### Our church has taken another beating over the summer with low attendance.

• CIC

### Need: Do you sense an intense need to honor God so he can restore us?

Loose bricks

#### Our church is half the size of 2011 when I stepped down as pastor. We had 70 attending then and now have about 35 people.

• Our Need

#### God’s honor must be restored among us.

• Wall bricks

### Subject: How does God restore us?

• Subject

### Background: The book of Nehemiah shows God rebuilding broken dreams, which is the title of our present series.

Rebuilding Broken Dreams

#### Nehemiah lived 72 years after the temple rebuilding (explain slide).

Timeline

#### In 516 BC the book of Haggai shows how the temple was finished, yet the city itself was not restored. A city without walls then was like a country with no budget for defense and thus easily run over without an army, navy, or air force.

Haggai

#### The Jews had been back in the land for over a century—they had thus gotten used to God’s name being reproached.

Summary

#### We have already seen in 1:1–2:10 that he learned of Jerusalem’s broken walls while he lived far away.

Map

#### He was a professional cupbearer willing to become a building foreman.

Cup

• Hat

#### In chapter 1, God sovereignly led Nehemiah to have the information, vision and position to see Jerusalem’s walls rebuilt.

Neh 1 MI

#### Then God worked on the heart of the Persian King Artaxerxes to support the effort with protection and timber for the city gates.

Neh 2 burden

#### Maybe this was aided by the king’s wife’s compassionate heart!

Neh 2 queen

#### So by 2:10, Nehemiah has traveled to Israel and is on site and ready to serve.

Neh 2 map

#### But as we come to 2:11, many challenges still remain for the wall to be rebuilt:

Completed wall

##### Nehemiah needs to survey the situation.

##### The Jewish leaders need to buy into the plan.

##### The people need to be mobilized.

##### Finally, opposition is already mounting in 2:10 by the enemies of the Jews.

### Preview: Today we will see three ways God restores his people.

3 ways

### Text: Nehemiah 2:11-20 provides three ways that God rebuilds his people.

(The first way God restores his people is this…)

# I. God *informs* us of our sad state of affairs.

MP

[The Lord helps us realistically see our need––similar to God doing that for Nehemiah in 1:1-3.]

1:1-3

## God informed Nehemiah of the destroyed walls (2:11-15).

### Nehemiah settled into Jerusalem for three days before surveying the walls (2:11).

11-12

### God moved Nehemiah to restore his honor by having him secretly survey the situation at night with only a few men and one animal (2:12).

13

### The survey was so difficult that Nehemiah couldn’t see the entire destroyed wall (2:13-15).

14-15

## God is beginning to restore us by showing us our true situation at Crossroads.

### We are utterly dependent upon him without the typical structures of most churches.

#### We have a revolving door of people––over 500 have attended but most have moved to other countries.

• busy folks

• revolve door

#### We have busy people who are expected absolute loyalty to their employers.

#### We have part-time leadership.

• part-time

### We struggle with marriage separations, surgeries, etc.

• separations

(It could look hopeless––both for Nehemiah and us. But not so! God is the God who is committed to honor his name by restoring us! He has to inform us so we deal with reality, but the second way God restores his people is...)

MPI

# II. God *rallies* us to honor his name once again.

MP

[The Lord helps us see together that he is initiating his plan with us as his hands and feet!]

## God showed the Jews that He supported the rebuilding (2:16-18).

16

### Nehemiah had kept his plans secret up to this point (2:16).

### Nehemiah then presented both the problem of the ruins and God’s hand to end this disgrace (2:17-18a).

17-18

### The people agreed to rebuild (2:18b).

## God is raising up new leaders among us to honor him.

CIC

### Lewis is committed to lead a central home group.

• Lewis

### Leland has agreed to be Men’s Ministry Leader.

• Leland

### David has taken responsibility for the worship, assisted by Athan, Singpu, and Susan.

• David

### Susan will start the women’s Bible study once again.

• Susan

• Linda

• Valentin

### Linda is heading up the church retreat, assisted by Valentin and Jieun.

### Valentin has become the treasurer.

### We now have 3 women burdened for children’s ministry: Kim, Chanchan, and Yaopei.

• Kim

MPI

(But is being informed and rallied enough? Do you think God’s restoration process is without opposition? It never has been and never will be! After he informs and rallies his people, the enemy attacks. However, the third way God restores his people is...)

MPII

# III. God *defends* us against potential setbacks.

MP

[The Lord affirms that we are his servants amidst discouragements.]

## God defended the Jewish right to restore the city against his enemies (2:19-20).

### Nehemiah’s enemies accused him of rebelling against the king (2:19).

19-20

### Nehemiah appealed not to the king’s blessing but to God’s help and the Jewish right to Jerusalem (2:20).

### Every post-exilic work of God was met with opposition! The temple project was stopped for 16 years before completion, Ezra faced intermarriage years later, and Nehemiah had three enemies in influential positions fighting against him.

Post-exile

## God encourages us amidst difficulties.

### Salmon seek to spawn and start out in the millions. But it’s an upstream swim, often in shallow waters and facing predators––including us! We are salmon going against the current. If you don’t feel the current against you, you’re swimming the wrong way!

Salmon   
(6 slides)

### So do you think our road as a church is paved with a red carpet? (Yes, stained in blood!)

Red carpet

### The initial dozen people who bound together to form CIC reduced to 5 of us within two years (Rick, Susan, Lewis, Barbara & Miriam). The others all left, mostly for other countries!

CIC

### Others stayed in Singapore but switched to other churches, yet in 2013 God has replaced them with Leland and Linda, Robert & Geeta, Athan & Chanchan, Samuel & Eunice, Brad & Veronica, Christina, Kim, Amos, Yaopei, Doris, and David! God is defending us!

New folks

### In fact, our home group is too large and we have at least 16 people living in the central or east. Now we only need a consistent place to meet!

Central HG

(So I see God restoring us! And *how* does God restore us?)

# Conclusion

### God provides all we need to honor him (MI).

MI

### Why is this passage in the Bible?

#### God cares about his name being honored rather than disgraced, so we should also care about this.

#### It’s easy for Christians to get used to God being disgraced.

### He informs us, he rallies the troops, and he defends us to honor him (MI restated).

Elliott

### Jim Elliott said, “The world has yet to see what God can do with a man fully surrendered.”

### How specifically can you surrender so that God can restore us through you?

Hands & Feet

#### What has he *informed* you about to better honor him?

#### How is God stirring your spirit (*rallying* you) to restore this church?

#### How is he *defending* you and how can you trust him amidst discouragements?

### What tools has God given you to restore our church?

Tools

### Prayer

Black

# Preliminary Questions

**Verses Questions**

# Context: What did the author record just prior to this passage?

### In chapter 1, God sovereignly led Nehemiah to have the information, vision and position to see Jerusalem’s walls rebuilt.

### Then God worked on the heart of the Persian King Artaxerxes to support the effort with protection and timber for the city gates. So by 2:10, Nehemiah is on site and ready to serve.

### But as we come to 2:11, many challenges still remain:

#### Nehemiah needs to survey the situation.

#### The Jewish leaders need to buy into the plan.

#### The people need to be mobilized.

#### Finally, opposition is already mounting in 2:10 by the enemies of the Jews.

# Purpose: Why is this passage in the Bible?

### God cares about his name being honored rather than disgraced, so we should also care about this.

### It’s easy for Christians to get used to God being disgraced.

# Background: What historical context helps us understand this passage?

### In 516 BC the temple was finished, yet the city itself was not restored. A city without walls then was like a country with no budget for defense and thus easily run over without an army, navy, or air force.

### The Jews had been back in the land for over a century—they had thus gotten used to God’s name being reproached.

# Questions

### Why did Nehemiah survey the wall secretly (12, 16)?

### What’s the point about his donkey not being able to make the survey (14)?

# Tentative Subject/Complement Statements

The way God renews the church

# Possible Illustrations

### God is disgraced in many ways in our own day:

#### OMG

#### The name of Jesus is never said in a reverent way in the media.

#### A pastor or church leader is never portrayed as doing anything good––only reported if there is a scandal.

#### Our church is half the size of two years ago.

### People will follow a leader when they see God’s hand upon him.

# Possible Applications

### My trip to Lakeside Family Centre alone was a survey trip before trying to get the church involved.

### God wants to renew our church.

**Restoring God’s Honor**

***Nehemiah 2:11-20***

**Exegetical Outline (Steps 2-3)**

# *Exegetical Idea*: The way God sought to honor his name from the dishonor of Jerusalem’s destruction was by informing, rallying and defending his people.

# I. The way God began to honor his name was by *informing* Nehemiah of the destroyed walls (2:11-15).

## Nehemiah settled into Jerusalem for three days before surveying the walls (2:11).

## God moved Nehemiah to restore his honor by having him secretly survey the situation at night with only a few men and one animal (2:12).

## The survey was so difficult that Nehemiah couldn’t see the entire destroyed wall (2:13-15).

# II. The way God sought to honor his name was by *rallying* the Jewish leaders to believe that God supported the wall rebuilding (2:16-18).

## Nehemiah had kept his plans secret up to this point (2:16).

## Nehemiah then presented both the problem of the ruins and God’s hand to end this disgrace (2:17-18a).

## The people agreed to rebuild (2:18b).

# III. The way God sought to honor his name was by defending against his enemies the Jewish right to restore the city (2:19-20).

## Nehemiah’s enemies accused him of rebelling against the king (2:19).

## Nehemiah appealed not to the king’s blessing but to God’s help and the Jewish right to Jerusalem (2:20).

**Purpose or Desired Listener Response (Step 4)**

The listeners will support God’s plan to restore our church.

**Homiletical Outline** (Cyclical inductive form)

# Introduction

### Interest: God is continually dishonored today (examples).

### Need: Do you sense a need to honor God among us?

### Subject: How does God restore us?

### Background: The people of Nehemiah’s day needed to see God rebuild broken dreams.

### Preview: We will see three ways God restores his people.

### Text: Nehemiah 2:11-20 provides three ways that God rebuilds his people.

# I. God *informs* us of our sad state of affairs.

## God informed Nehemiah of the destroyed walls (2:11-15).

## God is beginning to restore us by showing us our true situation at Crossroads.

# II. God *rallies* us to honor his name once again.

## God showed the Jews that He supported the rebuilding (2:16-18).

## God is raising up new leaders among us to honor him (Lewis, Leland, David, Susan, Linda, Valentin, etc.).

# III. God *defends* us against potential setbacks.

## God defended the Jewish right to restore the city against his enemies (2:19-20).

## God encourages us amidst difficulties.

# Conclusion

### God provides all we need to honor him (MI).

### He informs us, he rallies the troops, and he defends us to honor him (MI restated).

### How specifically will God restore us through you?



**Rick Griffith**

28 July 2013

*Message 3 of 15*

**Restoring God’s Honor**

***Nehemiah 2:11-20***

# Introduction

### God is continually dishonored today.

### God was dishonored in Nehemiah’s day, so the people needed to see God rebuild broken dreams.

### How does God restore us?

# I. God *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* us of our sad state of affairs.

## God informed Nehemiah of the destroyed walls (2:11-15).

## God is beginning to restore us by showing us our true situation at Crossroads.

# II. God *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* us to honor his name once again.

## God showed the Jews that He supported the rebuilding (2:16-18).

## God is raising up new leaders among us to honor him.

# III. God *\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_* us against potential setbacks.

## God defended the Jewish right to restore the city against his enemies (2:19-20).

## God encourages us amidst difficulties.



# Conclusion

### God \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ all we need to honor him (Main Idea).

### He informs us, he rallies the troops, and he defends us to honor him (MI restated).

### Rick SSD:Users:griffith:Documents:All PPT:DVDs & CDs Burned:DVD 6 Sermon MSS & Sermon PPT & Songs:Sermon PPT: OT Sermon PPT:16-Nehemiah Sermon PPT:Nehemiah Images:Used Images:tools for building.jpgWhat tools has God given you to restore our church?

**Thought Questions:**

1. Read Nehemiah 2:11-20 aloud. How does Nehemiah’s view of Jerusalem’s state differ from that of those who lived there? Why?

He had to view the city at night so the walls must have been quite bad.

He had not become accustomed to living in an unprotected city (not complacent).

He had the vision but they didn’t have a good leader to follow.

The people looked only at their resources while Nehemiah saw God’s blessing

The people hadn't gathered together to rebuild prior to this (since Ezra 4:12)

1. What changed the perspective of Jerusalem’s leaders in verses 16-18? Is there a principle here?

Nehemiah said what no one had for years: “Let’s rebuild!”

Nehemiah told them how the Lord had already worked in the heart of King Artaxerxes.

They had the blessing of their human authority (the king)

Principle: God’s people will risk when they see God working through their leader.

1. What specific knowledge helped Nehemiah conquer the initial opposition (2:19-20)? Any lessons for you here?

He knew his enemies lacked a heart to rebuild the city (19-20)–no desire to change

Change threatens the authority of enemies.

His enemies saw him as a common enemy.

He knew the king himself!

He knew God would help them succeed.