

FINISHING WHAT WAS STARTED

Nehemiah 6:1-19; 7:1-73

Introduction: Lots of projects are started, but not all of them are finished. Some people have problems with completing what they think they want to be involved in and doing God's work is no exception. Pastors have those who volunteer to do this or that but for some reason never show up or quit before the project/work is completed. There will always be difficulties in doing God's work God's way and distractions will pop up from some of the most unexpected places and/or people. It must be remembered that whenever a person is trying to do God's work God's way God will provide all that is needed to finish what He gives that person to do for Him. Nehemiah was given the task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem and helping Israel get itself restored to being God's people in their land after being punished for several years by being moved to another land. Now God has assigned Nehemiah the task of helping restore Israel back to proper relationship with God and he was being troubled by some who didn't want things to change.

I. GOD WILL PROVIDE STRENGTH TO GET THROUGH DISTRACTIONS (6:1-14)

1. Anyone, even the most sincerest of all, can be led away from God's work, even though he/she/they are doing it as God wants for distractions will surely come.
 - Often the distractions at first seem to be accurate even though they are pointing in the opposite direction of what seems to be what God wants done.
 - Knowing exactly WHAT God wants and HOW God wants it done is a MUST!
2. Three men hated Nehemiah and had been trying to stop the wall from being rebuilt and have been unsuccessful so they try a different tactic, they send a message to Nehemiah wanting him to leave Jerusalem and meet them in a "remote" area. Of course Nehemiah didn't go.
3. Four attempts later, of trying to distract Nehemiah from his task, these three men send a letter to Nehemiah accusing him of plotting rebellion against the very king who had allowed him to come to Jerusalem in the first place, further stating that they were going in person to the king with their accusation.
 - Nehemiah refused to be intimidated by the letter, he "called their bluff."
4. In a last attempt to stop Nehemiah, these three men hired a "prophet" to go warn Nehemiah that enemies were coming to assassinate him and he really needed to run to the Temple and close all the doors for his safety.
 - Not just anybody had the authority to close the doors of the Temple, just certain priests, and it would anger God if the wrong person/people closed the doors.
 - Knowing the laws about closing the doors, Nehemiah went to God and asked God to remember what these men had been doing to him and to God's cause of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. God did remember!
5. The key to avoid stumbling when distractions come is to stand by the Lord and not try things by one's self.
 - Nehemiah got through the distractions, schemes and deceitfulness of the three men and was able to finish rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem.

6. In trying to do God's work God's way, how have you handled the distractions that came? Did you give up? Did you substitute God's way for another way?

II. DOING THINGS GOD'S WAY REQUIRES KNOWING WHAT GOD WANTS (6:15-7:3)

1. Anybody who assumes leadership of God's people must first of all be a Godly person who is constantly in communication with God.
2. With the walls finally up and the gates in place, it would seem that Nehemiah's work was done, yet God had something else He wanted done.
 - God wanted the place protected so guards were found and then Temple singers and Levites were placed along the walls.
 - Protected by the guards, with visible and audible symbols of prayer and joy were seen and heard as the Levites sang.
 - God wanted faithful, reliable leaders for the restored city of Jerusalem and they were found.
 - Then God gave specific instructions regarding the opening and closing of the gates to prevent enemies from slipping in.
 - The gates were to be opened only after the sun had been p for some time and were to be closed long before the changing of the guards at the end of the day.
 - All this was done through Nehemiah who was in constant communication with God.

III. IT IS GOD'S WAY TO RECOGNIZE THE CONTRIBUTIONS OF OTHERS (7:4-5; 66-73)

1. At last God's will was done God's way. The walls were up, guards posted, leaders had been appointed, the city was safe, secure, and leadership established, but no people.
2. Only a few families were living within the walls of the large city of Jerusalem.
 - The whole purpose of putting walls up was so that the city could be restored to the glorious place of God but people were needed.
3. Once again God spoke to Nehemiah and had him call the people together for a census, to register the people, to do a roll call.
 - After 70 years of captivity in Babylon, God had allowed Israel to return to their homeland.
 - The roll call and registration would reveal/demonstrate just how wide the involvement of the local people had been in the work of the Lord in rebuilding the walls of the city\ and securing the city from enemies and God wanted everyone recognized.
 - The people involved would be recognized and deeply moved at the extent of God's grace in using so many to do such a great work for Him through the Godly man, Nehemiah.

CONCLUSION:

1. God has work that He wants done today, but done His way. What is hindering God's people from getting involved in His work? Where are God's leaders?
2. How can we, here in our Church, honor God by showing the ways He is working with and among us?