

Getting Started

Nehemiah 2:11-20

January 31, 2017

One of the most significant building projects that I have been involved with **was traveling to Cameroon Africa in order to install windows** at a hospital compound in Garou Bolai.

We flew into Douala, then traveled by range rover about 400 miles to Garoua Boulai, **over the very worst roads you can imagine**. We spent 5 days at the hospital, removed the old windows and installed around 200 new windows, and sought to share God's love with the people of that region.

Some of the qualities we see in Nehemiah, served us well in that task, and would serve you well in your life and in the life of this church

Nehemiah was a man on a mission. He sensed God's call, he was passionate about the task, and was committed to succeed.

Nehemiah responded to God's call, **he embraced God's agenda**, he developed a God honoring plan, and the steps that he took as he began the project were very helpful. **It is a good pattern for us to follow.**

I. He Inspected before he started 11-16

He made the trip, then did not rush into action. "after staying 3 days..." (vss. 11, 12)

What do you think that he did during those 3 days?

Rested, got to know the people / area, sought God **Planned, moved forward carefully**

"He set out with a few men." In order to inspect the situation **Vs. 16** – not the men of Jerusalem, Men he brought with him, friends, advisors. **Intended to bounce ideas off.**

Inspection – "out through the **Valley Gate**, toward the Jackal Well and the **Dung Gate**, Examined the walls, toward the **Fountain Gate**, the **King's Pool (maybe Pool of Siloam)**, "Not enough room for my mount, (vs. 14) **there will be limitations and challenges**, Then he reentered through the **Valley Gate**.

He wanted to see the lay of the land, get an idea how his plan would work **A line in an old poem from the 1700s** "Only fools rush in where angels fear to tread." **He was no fool, He Inspected**

II. He Inspired when he spoke 17-18

He shared out of the depth of his own emotion. He cared about this task, This was not just a job.

Remember, he was passionate about God's work. **That came through.**

First he created a dissonance, a dissatisfaction He described the “Broken walls & crumbling gates” He described what he saw, And the need for change

This was the Key to his inspiration, He described what needed to be done, and why **Then he identified a solution,** “let us rebuild” “we will no longer be in disgraced” **This is a team effort, we are in it together**

“It takes both the hands of leadership and hands partnership to accomplish the work of the Lord.” Warren Wiersbe.

He painted a picture, he cast a vision – he described a preferred future **He shared his plan and why, Nehemiah inspired!**

III. He Invested himself in order to succeed

He goes on to tell his story “told about the gracious hand of God upon me.” He shares what God has placed upon his heart, **He was vulnerable, transparent**

He described his journey, where he came from, **how he ended up there, what he gave up.** They saw that he too was invested in this project. They were convinced, (18) **“Let us start rebuilding.” So they began this good work.**

To Nehemiah, this was not just a building project, **it was about people.** He has chosen not to just live comfortably and let his people suffer. He left the King’s court and **was willing to be used of God.** It was not his vision, **but God’s direction in his life.**

When we live a life that matters We pursue, **NOT our goals, but God’s goals.**

We followed a similar pattern in our project in Cameroon **The job was inspected –** Waylon was father to the Missionary nurse who ran the hospital, **and he had a window company.**

So on an earlier trip he looked carefully at the windows Measured & counted, determined how best to proceed.

There were 8 of us from the church who went on the trip After we arrived, we all walked around and examined the buildings and windows. Unloaded some of the materials from the container, **organized the windows.** Waylon and Byron, a construction guy did most of the planning out of how to proceed. **We were assigned tasks, some tore out the old windows,** put in new windows in very hot & humid conditions.

We saw God’s hand in it, **This was in support of our missionaries,** And it was a part of **sharing God’s love and grace** for the People of Garou Boli

There was much excitement in anticipation of us coming Our being there was a real novelty,

They saw very few white people. **They couldn’t understand why we would come from so far.**

After the job was finished and there was a great celebration **The Mayor of the city said** “Every time we look at those windows we will remember your sacrificial love, and the hand of God that reaches out to us, and meets our needs.”

I follow this same pattern when I come to a church as an Interim Pastor I see my task as that of rebuilding or renewing God’s house and **assisting God’s people towards increased health and effectiveness** in understanding and accomplishing God’s purpose in their midst.

I begin by gathering information I talk to people, ask questions, look around. **Eventually I identify & articulate the weaknesses**, the problems, and the opportunities as I see them.

Hopefully I find ways to inspire people to action. **Then I work with** the Leaders of the church How to solve the problems, **deal with the issues Consider how the church can move forward**

I help them to identify biblical and practical solutions I challenge them to consider a fresh vision. **Help them to see there are other ways** Sometimes, better ways to do things.

I believe that I set a church on a path, I continue the journey for a short while, **Then they call a Pastor, and I move on.**

In any area of our lives, these principles can apply. **Where do you need help in your life? Step back and examine what is happening.** Write it down, describe it. Ask for advice. Develop a plan to solve the problem. **Find biblical solutions, they always exist!**

What steps can you take? Dream, brain storm, be positive, not negative. **It can be solved.**

Make sure that God is an integral part of your life and of dealing with this problem. He wants you to be successful in this area of your life. **Improvement can take place.**

Apply this in your spiritual life Examine where you are at. Be honest, write it down. **Find a friend to go through this together.** Through Discipleship & Mentoring **Develop a plan to improve your spiritual Condition.**

More time in bible and prayer, more time serving God, Obedience in some area, dealing with sin in your life. **Live out God’s plan and direction.**

This applies here at Evangelical Free Church Bemidji. When I arrived, this was a pretty healthy church. **Not a perfect church, they don’t exist.** After a long and productive ministry **Pastor Fred retired.**

The church was going through a transition **that they have not experienced for 36 years.** The Elders saw the value in bringing in someone from the outside, who has **experience with this transitional season of ministry life.**

As I gathered information, as I looked with fresh eyes at the people and the ministry here, **God helped me to see some of the wonderful strengths of this fellowship of believers.** As well as some areas where there could be increased health and effectiveness.

There were some surprises to folks as I identified some of **those areas where there was room for improvement.** In many of the areas there were people who already understood those needs.

As I communicated my observations, I worked along with the Elders and other leaders of the church to identify some of the areas of greatest priority, which we would attempt to address. You can't do everything at once.

Some of those specific areas are **dealing with visitors and assimilation, overall congregational care, and small groups.**

Some of the other areas that we identified for future consideration is **improved fellowship opportunities**, reorganizing some of the administrative structures in the church that could help them to be more effective. I suggested that you may wish to consider **more diversity in worship** and ministry styles that may allow you to impact a broader constituency. Just to name a few.

As we commit together to pray for and support this church, let us also claim this promise and challenge found in

Philippians 1:6 "Being confident of this that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus.

We will rejoice as God continues to build His church in this place,
As you move into the next season of ministry life.