“Getting the Job Done”
Nehemiah 6:15-19

For six chapters now, we have watched with keen interest as Nehemiah has led the people of Jerusalem forward in a monumental rebuilding project as they set out to do what others said could not be done.

In order to get to this point, Nehemiah has had to overcome many obstacles and endure much opposition to the work. This has required him to be both determined and discerning.

Before we get to our text, I think it will be helpful if we take just a minute and review what we have learned from Nehemiah over these last several weeks:

- Getting a burden for the work of God (1:1-4)
- Getting serious about prayer (1:5-11)
- Getting still and learning to wait (2:1-8)
- Getting a vision and sharing it (2:9-20)
- Getting to work (3:1-22)
- Getting prepared to face opposition (4:1-6)
- Getting past the obstacles (4:7-23)
- Getting through relational difficulty (5:1-19)
- Getting some discernment (6:1-14)
- Getting the job done (6:15-19)

The project of rebuilding the wall had been a tremendous undertaking that required an “all in” attitude. Opposition had been faced and obstacles had been overcome, and now the people are standing on the precipice of victory.
Verse 15 sounds the cry of victory—“So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.”

4:6 - “So we built the wall…”

6:15 - “So the wall was finished…”

There had been a whole lot of prayer, hard work, and outright persistence in between these two verses!

For nearly a hundred years or so, the people had not been able to get the job done. This time around, however, the work was in their hearts, their hearts were in the work, and they had a determined leader who simply would not quit.

The enemy’s plans to stop the work from moving forward were overcome, but they do not give up. Tobiah will prove to be a thorn in Nehemiah’s side to the very end of the book.

Andrew Bonar - “Let us be as watchful after the victory as before the battle.”

This passage records the completion of the wall, and there are a few things that I want to point out to you about getting the job done.

1. The city was FORTIFIED

“So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.”

Not since before the days of Nebuchadnezzar and the siege of Jerusalem had the city known the protection of life behind walls.

Without walls, their families had been vulnerable. Without walls, Jerusalem had been nothing more than a byword among the nations. Without walls, the people had been living under a reproach. But now the city was fortified!

Verse 15 says, “So the wall was finished.” One can only imagine how sweet and satisfying those words must have been to the workers. Their prayers and persistence had paid rich dividends.
There is something thrilling about finishing a task, especially one in which we have to overcome great odds. And yet there can be no sense of accomplishment without some old fashioned elbow grease. This had been hard work!

What made this project so amazing was that it was the work of God, and yet it was also God working through His people.

**Alan Redpath** - “*There is a two-fold explanation of the success of Nehemiah in the work to which God had called him. The first is in the sixteenth verse: ‘this work was wrought of our God.’ The second is the subject of the whole chapter. There is always a two-fold explanation for the success of any work of God. The one is divine, the other is human. The first is the fact that it is wrought of God; the second is total, unreserved human cooperation.*”

Getting the job done means that God was working through His people. It was all by His power, but it demanded their total participation. This same principle applies within the church.

Nehemiah led the people to this point because he was determined that nothing would pull him off the wall. In fact, the enemies of the Jews had tried their very best to distract him:

- the enemy had tried to **deceive** his mind
- the enemy had tried to **discredit** his character
- the enemy had tried to **discourage** his soul

His mind had long since been made up. With Nehemiah, it was all a matter of principle. The work on the wall was God’s calling upon his life and for him to leave it even temporarily to pursue something else would be to forsake his first priority.

Stand guard against being sidetracked by fruitless issues!

2. The people were UNIFIED
“So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty-two days.”

The completion of the project demanded that the workers be unified in their efforts. If you remember back from chapter 5, dissension among the people had threatened to undo the whole project. While the people had become sidetracked, the work had come to a halt.

Nehemiah knew that the people must work together if the wall was to be finished, and work together they did.

Their unity is seen in the fact that the project was finished in just 52 days. That is less than two months! It has taken me longer to preach to this point than it did for the job to get done. Wow!

**Derek Kidner** - “The operation was, throughout, a triumph of concentration amidst every distraction.”

The people were focused and concentrated on the goal.

God is using Nehemiah to build the wall, but more importantly, God is using Nehemiah to build His people. The brick and mortar will pass away, but the people are His permanent possession.

Before God will ever do something through us, He must first do something in us.

**Philippians 2:12-13** - “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, so now, not only as in my presence but much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you, both to will and to work for His good pleasure.”

He gives us both desire as well as determination. God works in us both the resolve as well as supplies us with the necessary energy to work for His good pleasure.

**1 Corinthians 15:10** - “But by the grace of God I am what I am, and His grace toward me was not in vain. On the contrary, I worked harder than any of them, though it was not I, but the grace of God that is with me.”
The believer is equipped and empowered to do God’s will.

**F.B. Meyer** - “He may be working in you to confess to that fellow Christian that you were unkind in your speech or act. Work it out. He may be working in you to give up that line of business about which you have been doubtful lately. Give it up. He may be working in you to be sweeter in your home, and more gentle in your speech. So begin. He may be working in you to alter your relations with some with whom you have dealings that are not as they should be. So alter them. This very day let God begin to speak, and work and will; and then work out what He works in. God will not work apart from you, but He wants to work through you. Let Him. Yield to Him, and let this be the day when you shall begin to live in the power of the mighty indwelling One.”

The people were simply working out what God Himself had worked in them, and the wall was finished in 52 days.

God Himself worked, but notice that it involved their hard work!

**Charles Spurgeon** - “If by excessive labor we die before reaching the average age of man, worn out in the Master’s service, then glory be to God, we shall have so much less of earth and so much more of heaven! It is our duty and our privilege to exhaust our lives for Jesus. We are not to be living specimens of men in fine preservation, but living sacrifices whose lot it is to be consumed.”

In other words, your life is to be a sacrifice on the altar, not a specimen sitting on a shelf.

**3. The enemy was TERRIFIED**

“And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.”

What was the response of Sanballat and Tobiah and all those who tried to harass and intimidate Nehemiah and the Jews from rebuilding the wall?
Verse 16 says, “They were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem.” It means that the enemy was disheartened; it literally says that they lost their confidence and fell in their own eyes.

The reason they were afraid was that they perceived that the work had been accomplished by the power of God. They recognized that God was fighting for His people.

The enemies of Jerusalem concluded that the frustration of their plans could only be accounted for by the intervention of the God of Israel.

Satan fears and surrendered and unified church!

In C.S. Lewis’s The Screwtape Letters, uncle Screwtape gives his nephew Wormwood excellent advice about keeping his human “patient”—as he referred to him in the book—from making any spiritual progress. Screwtape writes:

“Keep his mind on the inner life. He thinks his conversion is something inside him…The great thing is to prevent his doing anything. As long as he does not convert it into action, it does not matter how much he thinks…Let him do anything but act. No amount of piety in his imaginations and affections will harm us if we can keep them out of his will. The more often he feels without acting, the less he will ever be able to act.”

The enemy fears because the people act in the power of God. The work that is accomplished was supernaturally empowered.

Psalm 126:1-3 - “When the Lord brought back the captivity of Zion, we were like those who dream. Then our mouth was filled with laughter, and our tongue with singing. Then they said among the nations, ‘The Lord has done great things for them.’ The Lord has done great things for us, and we are glad.”

The one hope of the world is a militant and mobilized church, totally abandoned to the will of God.

4. The Lord was GLORIFIED
“And when all our enemies heard of it, all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem, for their perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.”

The city was fortified, the people were unified, the enemy was terrified, and the Lord was glorified. The completion of the wall left the enemy scratching their heads. The work was not accomplished by the clever ingenuity of the people. Instead, it was done by the power of God working through the people of God all for the glory of God.

This remarkable feat was not without prayer, persistence, and much perspiration. The people had a mind to work, but they had to work at the right things.

They were motivated by God's glory.

4:14 - “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes.”

When it was all said and done, the surrounding nations knew that something supernatural had happened. They recognized that Someone supernatural was involved in order for the wall to be finished in just 52 days.

It was not explainable in strictly human terms.

As the church, I think we often forget that we are a supernatural people. So much of what we do can be explained. What is happening in the church that can only be explained in the terms of the supernatural?

We must pursue the HEAVEN SENT vs. MAN MADE

Think of how all this points us to Jesus Christ. Nehemiah is merely a shadow that points to the greater reality of what Christ has built for the glory of God the Father. Like Nehemiah, He came from a distant palace to rescue us from our helpless, defenseless state. Our lives were ruined and ravaged by sin and we were living in shame and reproach.
But then Jesus went to work on our behalf!

Though He was opposed by the enemy who tried to keep Him from going to the cross, our Savior was determined.

Even as He hung on the cross suffering for our sins, the taunts came from those who gathered, “Save yourself! Come down from the cross, if You are the Son of God!” Just as Nehemiah didn’t come down from the wall when faced with the enemy’s taunts, neither did Jesus.

“I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?”

Application:

• A difficult task is no excuse for lack of hard work

• Impossibilities with man are possibilities with God

• The glory of God must be our ultimate motivation

When I read the story of how God worked through the prayer and persistence of Nehemiah and the people, I am very encouraged when I consider the task of ministry within our own church. Much like Nehemiah, God has called us to build up the walls of ministry and mission. The work that He has given to us as a church is a challenge, but one in which God has sufficiently equipped and empowered us to do.

We have accomplished quite a bit this last year in the life of our church. For instance:

• we’ve secured the necessary leadership for our children’s ministry as well as our student ministry

• we’ve moved our church offices back on campus; what was estimated to cost $85k cost just over $20k

• we’ve kicked off a debt retirement campaign in which we have secured almost $2 million in commitments over the next three years
We need to stop and celebrate what God has done in our fellowship over this last year!

What’s next?

I’m working with our staff to put forward an aggressive strategy for evangelism, discipleship, and ministry for this upcoming year that will require a lot of hard work and participation of us all.

• growth in the area of children, teens, young families

• increase in baptisms

• training and leadership development

Also, I feel like we are almost where we need to be with our ministry staff. I’ve been working closely with our personnel committee and we are evaluating what our biggest needs are moving forward into 2017.

Someone has well said that in the work of God, it is always too soon to quit. Nehemiah persisted in the power of God until the end, and so also should we.

1 Corinthians 15:58 - “Therefore, my believed brethren, be steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as you know that your labor is not in vain in the Lord.”

We pray! We dare not rely upon our own strength in the work of God.

We give! The work requires that we sacrifice and give generously like never before.

We go! Like Nehemiah, God calls us to leave comforts and self and make the mission of God top priority.

We build! Brick by brick, one person at a time, we want to see the church of Jesus Christ grow and expand.

We share! We dare not keep the gospel of God’s grace to ourselves, but we eagerly share it with others.
We worship! Such is the fuel of all mission endeavors, for we keep the glory of God ever in mind.

We won’t rest until the job is done.