

## **God's Work-Our Hands** **(The La Crosse Area Synod Assembly Theme)**

“Then I (Nehemiah) said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, ‘The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there’ (Neh. 4:19-20)...And the people said, ‘Let us rise up and build. Then they set their hands to this good work’ (2:18)

Since the walls are very extensive, and the workmen consequently much scattered, and widely separated from each other, their enemies might easily attack and paralyze the activities of the building. Therefore Nehemiah ordered them all to work as near to each other as they could.

Nehemiah is the good strategic leader mobilizing the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people for the common goal and vision. He is

- a man of prayer
- a spiritual leader
- a diplomatic leader (he convinced the then political leaders to have their green light for the wall building project).
- a visionary leader
- a man of action

“He set out to build a wall, but left an enduring legacy of leadership” (Student Study Bible). He knows his part to do and make the people know their parts either the new great project.

### **Nehemiah's part is**

- a. to produce specific vision that galvanizes the people.
- b. to commit himself to God through prayer.

His enemies tried their best to collapse the whole activities:

- They mocked him with character assassination approach - but he never bowed to their plots.
- They made an invitation to go to the Valley- his enemies “sent me this message: ‘come let us meet together in one of the villages on the plain of Ono’” (6.2)
- They made an invitation to go to the Temple through his friend's prophets - they sent prophets to let him come to meet them in the house of God to kill him. (6:10-12)

In spite of the obstacles he encounters from his enemies, he encourages the people saying “Do not be afraid of them. Remember the LORD, who is great and awesome and fight” (4:14) as “Safety consists not in the absence of danger but in the presence of God”.

### **People's part**

- a. Self determination to join the team.  
The invitation “Join us there” is ringing to their ear waiting for their quick response. Regardless of divine call, some times people are reluctant to

response. During the time of Haggai, the prophet God, the Almighty seriously is addressing the Israelites saying “Because of my house, which remains a ruin, while each of you is busy with his own house“(Hag 1:9-10).

God was ready but they never drew their attention to Him

- b. The second thing that is expected from the people is to offer their gifts in cash and in kind to speed up the building.

### **God’s part**

- a. God creates a conducive environment to build the wall.
- b. He raises up both spiritual and social reformations.

### **We remember that Jesus includes people in His healing process:**

In Jn. 11 Jesus does two things:

- a. He makes Himself available
- b. He calls out Lazarus, from the dead and in the meantime He asks the people around to do two things:
  - To take away the stone from the grave
  - To take off the grave clothes from Lazarus

These two things are what they can do but the rest two duties are Jesus’ part.

Christians as a healing community we have our part in revealing God’s glory to this dark world. Jesus is always available in all places and also we have to be faithful to be there to take part in His Gospel Proclamation, witnessing God’s kingdom.

God’s work is not reserved only for few people in the church today but rather for all the members - the body of Christ. The church ministry is not like the Red Sea where Moses is running here and there alone or not like crossing the Jordan River where only some priests were involved to reveal God’s miracle over the river but like the victory over Jericho where all Israelites are involved and marching together to conquer the land.

Accordingly, today God calls for every body saying “Come and join us.” And this call may cost, our precious time, our energy our budget. Paul extends his thanks and appreciations to the Philippians saying “... no church shared with me in the matter of giving and receiving except you alone” (4:15).

No one is expected to be spectator in God’s mission field and therefore, whenever you hear the church bell, make yourself available and join there the community - to change or to be changed, to transform or to be transformed, to learn or to teach, to follow or to lead.

Today the voice from leaders calling in similar way saying: you the nobles, the officials the rest of the people (the youth and the adult all) the work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the voice of the leaders, the pastors, and other ministers saying “join us there” as a Christian community please respond saying let us rise up and build and set your hands to this good work.

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