

Return, Repair, Rebuild

Neh 3, Eph 4:11-13

Background: We are coming out of the pandemic and can finally regather as a congregation in the auditorium without capacity limits! Praise God! While we wish everything can return to exactly like it was 16 months ago, we know that aspects of our personal and community life have changed. Some areas of our lives may need attention, some relationships need strengthening or rebuilding.

This week and next week, we'll be embarking on a short 2-sermon series entitled "*Return, Rebuild, Rejoice*" based on lessons from Nehemiah. As the Israelites returned from their isolation in Exile under the leadership of Nehemiah, they banded together to Rebuild and to Rejoice. What can we learn from their story and example? Let's find out together this Sunday.

Sermon Text: Nehemiah 3, Ephesians 4:11-13 (ESV)

Nehemiah 3

¹Then the high priest Eliashib set to work with his fellow priests and rebuilt the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set up its doors; they consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred and as far as the Tower of Hananel. ²And the men of Jericho built next to him. And next to them Zaccur son of Imri built.

³The sons of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate; they laid its beams and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars. ⁴Next to them Meremoth son of Uriah son of Hakkoz made repairs. Next to them Meshullam son of Berechiah son of Meshezabel made repairs. Next to them Zadok son of Baana made repairs. ⁵Next to them the Tekoites made repairs; but their nobles would not put their shoulders to the work of their Lord.

⁶Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah repaired the Old Gate; they laid its beams and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars. ⁷Next to them repairs were made by Melatiah the Gibeonite and Jadon the Meronothite—the men of Gibeon and of Mizpah—who were under the jurisdiction of the governor of the province Beyond the River. ⁸Next to them Uzziel son of Harhaiah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs. Next to him Hananiah, one of the perfumers, made repairs; and they restored Jerusalem as far as the Broad Wall. ⁹Next to them Rephaiah son of Hur, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs. ¹⁰Next to them Jedaiah son of Harumaph made repairs opposite his house; and next to him Hattush son of Hashabneiah made repairs. ¹¹Malchijah son of Harim and Hasshub son of Pahath-moab repaired another section and the Tower of the Ovens. ¹²Next to him Shallum son of Hallohesh, ruler of half the district of Jerusalem, made repairs, he and his daughters.

¹³Hanun and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the Valley Gate; they rebuilt it and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and repaired a thousand cubits of the wall, as far as the Dung Gate.

¹⁴ Malchijah son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth-haccherem, repaired the Dung Gate; he rebuilt it and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

¹⁵ And Shallum son of Col-hozeh, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the Fountain Gate; he rebuilt it and covered it and set up its doors, its bolts, and its bars; and he built the wall of the Pool of Shelah of the king's garden, as far as the stairs that go down from the City of David. ¹⁶ After him Nehemiah son of Azbuk, ruler of half the district of Beth-zur, repaired from a point opposite the graves of David, as far as the artificial pool and the house of the warriors. ¹⁷ After him the Levites made repairs: Rehum son of Bani; next to him Hashabiah, ruler of half the district of Keilah, made repairs for his district. ¹⁸ After him their kin made repairs: Binnui, son of Henadad, ruler of half the district of Keilah; ¹⁹ next to him Ezer son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the Angle. ²⁰ After him Baruch son of Zabbai repaired another section from the Angle to the door of the house of the high priest Eliashib. ²¹ After him Meremoth son of Uriah son of Hakkoz repaired another section from the door of the house of Eliashib to the end of the house of Eliashib. ²² After him the priests, the men of the surrounding area, made repairs. ²³ After them Benjamin and Hasshub made repairs opposite their house. After them Azariah son of Maaseiah son of Ananiah made repairs beside his own house. ²⁴ After him Binnui son of Henadad repaired another section, from the house of Azariah to the Angle and to the corner. ²⁵ Palal son of Uzai repaired opposite the Angle and the tower projecting from the upper house of the king at the court of the guard. After him Pedaiah son of Parosh ²⁶ and the temple servants living on Ophel made repairs up to a point opposite the Water Gate on the east and the projecting tower. ²⁷ After him the Tekoites repaired another section opposite the great projecting tower as far as the wall of Ophel.

²⁸ Above the Horse Gate the priests made repairs, each one opposite his own house. ²⁹ After them Zadok son of Immer made repairs opposite his own house. After him Shemaiah son of Shecaniah, the keeper of the East Gate, made repairs. ³⁰ After him Hananiah son of Shelemiah and Hanun sixth son of Zalaph repaired another section. After him Meshullam son of Berechiah made repairs opposite his living quarters. ³¹ After him Malchijah, one of the goldsmiths, made repairs as far as the house of the temple servants and of the merchants, opposite the Muster Gate and to the upper room of the corner. ³² And between the upper room of the corner and the Sheep Gate the goldsmiths and the merchants made repairs.

Ephesians 4

¹¹ The gifts he gave were that some would be apostles, some prophets, some evangelists, some pastors and teachers, ¹² to equip the saints for the work of ministry, for building up the body of Christ, ¹³ until all of us come to the unity of the faith and of the knowledge of the Son of God, to maturity, to the measure of the full stature of Christ.

Discussion Questions

1. Preparation

- a. As you reflect on the sermon, what stands out to you most?
- b. What is one thing you hoped to talk about today/tonight?
- c. What question(s) did you come away with from the sermon?

2. Sermon questions

- a. Jerry compared our situation of returning from the pandemic to Ezra and Nehemiah's situation when the Israelites returned from exile. For them, each person used their own unique skills and abilities to help build and repair the wall around Jerusalem. How are you using (or plan to use) your gifts, skills and abilities within PBCC to help rebuild and repair the relationships here? Explain.
 - As Jerry said, there are several needs at PBCC right now (tech team, music team, children/youth ministry, etc). Another need is for the community café team which serves the coffee and snacks between services. If you would like to try serving in any of these areas, please let me (Shawn) know.
- b. From Ephesians 4:12, God places leaders in churches to equip the saints for the work of ministry. This seems to describe a healthy church. Is this happening at PBCC? Why or why not? How could we do better?
- c. The Israelites of old had a physical wall to determine success. How do we determine success at PBCC? As Jerry said, it's not numbers, it's love. Love is seeking the best for the other person regardless of personal cost to myself. The good news is love can be learned. It is the supreme lesson in life. Coming out of the pandemic, how are you learning to love? Where can you look like Jesus by being more loving?
- d. On top of the pandemic, Jerry ended with mentioning the transitions happening at PBCC. How does this make you feel? Do you generally look forward to change or fear it? Why?