

Doing the Right Thing the Right Way

2.14.10

9 Then I came to the governors of the province Beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. 10 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel. 11 So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. 12 Then I arose in the night, I and a few men with me. And I told no one what my God had put into my heart to do for Jerusalem. There was no animal with me but the one on which I rode. 13 I went out by night by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and I inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire. 14 Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal that was under me to pass. 15 Then I went up in the night by the valley and inspected the wall, and I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned. 16 And the officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, and I had not yet told the Jews, the priests, the nobles, the officials, and the rest who were to do the work. 17 Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come, let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer suffer derision." 18 And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, "Let us rise up and build." So they strengthened their hands for the good work. 19 But when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant and Geshem the Arab heard of it, they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" 20 Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem." - Nehemiah 2:9-20 ESV

"the king's letters... Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen." These letters, which came with an escort, would have ensured safe passage through what would have otherwise been dangerous territory. They came with a military escort.

These things are obvious evidence of the 'good hand of God' upon him.

"when Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite servant heard this, it displeased them greatly that someone had come to seek the welfare of the people of Israel." The foreboding appearance of the "Joker and Penguin" figures in the book. They were disturbed because Nehemiah's arrival threatened the Samaritan governor. More on them soon.

"So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days. Nehemiah took a break before he began work. This shows a great amount of discipline and that he understood his limits and the nature of the task at hand.

P: Before we lead others well, we have to lead ourselves well.

Do I have appropriate rest in my life or am I running at an unsustainable pace?

Steps Toward Change:

1. Ask "Why am I running so hard?" and apply the Gospel.
2. Consider the alternative.

P: There is a *right* way to cast vision (v.12-16).

Before the Vision is Cast (v.12-16):

Nehemiah "does his homework" secretly, silently and systematically before he ever goes public. This applies to all of us both at home and at work.

When It Comes Time to Cast the Vision (v. 17-18):

1. The timing matters.
 - a. Nehemiah casts the vision at the moment when it has the potential to make the greatest impact.
2. The language matters.
 - a. "*the trouble...*" "*ruins...burned*" "*no longer suffer derision*"
 - i. All strongly emotive words meant to move the people.
 - b. "*let us build...*"
 - i. Nehemiah is a co-laborer not a consultant.
3. The passion matters.
 - a. The need is the seed of vision. The vision is a solution to a problem.
 - b. He spoke passionately about what he was passionate about.
4. The facts matter.
 - a. Nehemiah didn't spin the truth. Integrity and credibility are at stake.
 - i. The King is with me and God is with me.
 - b. When appropriate, we need to point out where God is at obviously at work.

"But when Sanballat... heard...they jeered at us and despised us and said, "What is this thing that you are doing? Are you rebelling against the king?" lit. 'ridicule,' strong language.

P: When we seek to do the right thing the right way, we will always

be met with some kind of opposition (v.19).

Do I know the opposition is coming? Or do I expect that things to be easy?

"And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also of the words that the king had spoken to me. Then I replied to them, "The God of heaven will make us prosper, and we his servants will arise and build, but you have no portion or right or claim in Jerusalem."

Nehemiah speaks with clarity and confidence but not cockiness.

P: Our confidence must be in God and not ourselves (v.20).

Where is my confidence today? Especially when I encounter opposition?

**The Gospel is our hope for doing
the right thing the right way.**

Works Consulted : Expositor's Bible Commentary, MacArthur Study Bible, Message by Mark Driscoll, Other works by Ware, Wiersby, Carson, Stanley, Getz, others. Logos Library: too many to list!