

Just a List of Names?

2.21.10

Facts About the Text and the Wall:

- The list provides a counterclockwise ‘fly through’ around the wall and a list of the names of all the people who would have worked on it.
- 41 parties are named in the reconstruction of 42 sections. The project included rebuilding both the walls and the gates.
- The circuit of the walls would have been between 2-2.5 miles enclosing between 90-220 acres. Each of the 42 sections would have averaged about 250 ft. in length though there was one extraordinarily long section and a couple of sections were very short.
- The wall itself would have been 15-20 ft high and 3-4 ft wide.

Observations About the Text:

1. The fact that Nehemiah included these names is significant.

P: Nehemiah was a good leader who valued his people and the contribution that they made.

Do I value the people in my life or do I take them for granted? Who do I need to “appreciate?”

2. Who led the work and where the work began is significant (v.1).
 - Eliashib the high priest led the way. 1 Pet. 5:3 leader as example.
 - They began at the Sheep Gate which was named for where the sheep came in on their way to the temple to be sacrificed. By starting here there, they were “putting God first.”

P: Any time we undertake a task we should seek to “put God first.”

Can that be said for you when you take on a task—of any size? If not, what needs to change?

3. Some people are capable of doing more work than others (11, 19, 21,24, 27,30)
 - By divine design, we all have different gifting, abilities, limitations, etc.
4. The workers were strategically positioned where they would make the greatest impact (v. 10, 23, 28,30):
 - Most were positioned just outside their homes. People work harder when their hearts are in the work.

P: Each of us have been strategically positioned for the greatest impact as well.

Am I making the most of my strategic placement? If not, what needs to change?

- Think 1 Cor. 12-14. One body, many members.
5. Some jobs are less desirable than others:
 - The Dung gate: It was like the ancient landfill/sewer system where all of the feces and trash were taken out to the dump. The man assigned

there was some kind of ruler and showed great humility.

P: Faithfulness is not about which part you play, it is about how well you play your part.

Am I playing my part well? If not, what is standing in the way?

6. The nature of the work force:

- Highly diverse: Rulers and priests (1, 12-19), men and women (12), professional craftsmen (8, 32) even some outside the city (2,5,7).
- Unusually unqualified for building: From what we can tell, there were
- *no* expert builders here. Priests, priests’ helpers, goldsmiths, perfume makers, women, but no expert builders or carpenters are named.

P: God uses ordinary people to do extraordinary things.

What is God using me to do? Do you see the significance of what you are doing for the Kingdom?

- Some of the workers had a checkered past (v. 4, 11)
 - Meremoth’s grandfather had been excluded from the priesthood. Malkijah had married a foreign wife.

P: God can use anyone, no matter what his or her past.

Am I living in the good of this truth today or am I being shackled by my past?

- Some of the workers worked hard, others didn’t work at all (v. 20, 5)
 - Baruch: only worker said to work ‘zealously.’
 - The nobles: These aristocrats thought they were ‘above’ manual labor. Some of the common people had to do double duty because they didn’t do their part.

P: Our pride can hinder our effectiveness in Kingdom work.

Where is your pride keeping you from being used by God to your full capacity? If someone were to describe your work (with the church and beyond) how would you be described? Like Baruch or the Tekoans?

**The workers and their work point us to the Ultimate Worker
and His Work on the Cross.**

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!