

APPROACHING AUTHORITY WITH NEED

REBUILD & REPAIR: ENGAGING THE WORLD WITH NEHEMIAH · NEHEMIAH 2:1-10 · JUNE 18, 2023 · PASTOR MATT ERICKSON

"I said to the king, 'May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?'" (Nehemiah 2:3)

Living at the Intersection of Prayer and Action (Nehemiah 2:1)

Time delay between the report and Nehemiah's action (1:1-3; 2:1)
Nehemiah's unhurried life of prayer that leads to action (1:4; 2:1)

Faith and Wisdom that Leads to Action (Nehemiah 2:1-3)

Nehemiah responds to God
Nehemiah acts wisely
Nehemiah boldly opens his heart

Action that is Faith-full and Strategic (Nehemiah 2:4-10)

The king's first question (2:4)
Nehemiah prays (2:4)
Nehemiah's request (2:5)
The king's second question (2:6)
Nehemiah's strategy (2:7-8)
The first steps and first opponents (2:9-10)

Making It Real for Us

A vision to rebuild and repair
Living at the intersection of prayer and action
Reaching out to authority with faith-full strategic action

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. When have you been in a situation of approaching someone with more authority than you? How did you handle it? Did it go well or not?
2. This weekend at Eastbrook we continue our sermon series, "Rebuild and Repair: Engaging the World with Nehemiah," by looking at Nehemiah 2:1-10. Take some time to pray, asking God to speak to you through His word. Then, whether you're alone or with others, read that portion of Scripture aloud.
3. Background: Nehemiah serves as a cupbearer (1:11) to King Artaxerxes of Persia. This was

- a position of honor, not only in insuring wine intended for the king was not poisoned, but sometimes indicated an advisory role to monarchs in other ways.
4. Based on the dates given in 1:1-3 and 2:1, approximately 4 months have passed since Nehemiah first heard the report of Jerusalem's ruin and the events of this chapter. What does that tell you about Nehemiah's prayerfulness and wisdom in approaching the king?
 5. Why do you think Nehemiah may not have looked sad in the king's presence before but now allows his emotions to be visible (2:1-2)?
 6. It's important to understand that if Nehemiah requested something of the king that the king refused, he could lose his position and possibly even die. How does Nehemiah respond to the king's question in verse 3?
 7. In verse 4, the king opens the door for Nehemiah by asking him what he wants. What is it that Nehemiah does first and then what does he ask for (2:4-8)?
 8. How does Nehemiah reflect. On God's action within his conversation at the end of verse 8?
 9. Reflecting on Nehemiah's situation, how would you describe the intersection of trust in God's sovereignty and human responsibility?
 10. Verse 9 describes the quick activity of Nehemiah after the king's response. Why would it be important that Nehemiah had army officers and cavalry with him?
 11. In verse 10 we are introduced to characters who will plague Nehemiah throughout his narrative. Who are they and how are they described here?
 12. What is one thing God is revealing to you through this study? If you're on your own, write that down, pray over it, and share it with someone this week. If you are with a small group, share your answers with one another before closing in prayer.

DIG DEEPER:

This week dig deeper in one or more of the following ways:

- Return to Nehemiah's prayer (Nehemiah 1:5-11) and then compare it with the interaction of Nehemiah with King Artaxerxes (2:1-10). Reflect on how you see God guiding the activities of chapter 2 based on the prayer of chapter 1.
- Read through all of Ezra and Nehemiah with a study Bible to help you get a sense of the historical background and overall flow of this portion of biblical history.
- Watch one or both of these videos by The Bible Project:
 - Ezra-Nehemiah: bibleproject.com/explore/video/ezra-nehemiah/
 - The Way of Exile: bibleproject.com/explore/video/the-way-of-the-exile/