

Word notes Sunday 10/7/2011 Tony Hodge
Nehemiah Chap 3: The Building Works 1

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Nehemiah 3:1-13

Having dealt with the initial opposition Nehemiah's work starts, Chapter 3 is a list of all the gates and walls and who repaired them. This may have served as a report for the king as well as Nehemiah's own memoirs and memoriam for his people but what can it say to us today? If Nehemiah is a picture of the work of the Holy Spirit then we can look at these works and seek revelation of its application in the believer's life.

The Sheep Gate is a picture for us of the Cross. It speaks of Jesus' sacrifice made for our sins once and for all and the way in which we can come, through Him, and be restored into God's family. The starting point and endpoint of all in our new restored life. The Holy Spirit firstly shows us our need then points to Jesus as the answer.

The Fish Gate speaks of evangelism, we are to be "fishers of men" – the first thing Jesus wants us to do after accepting his free gift of salvation is to tell others. The Holy Spirit empowers us to do this – look at Peter on the day of Pentecost! From Christ denier to most powerful preacher for centuries!

The Old Gate tells us where to go when troubles strike, difficulties in ourselves or in the world – look back at the amazing things God has done and remember He doesn't change. Walk God's way with Jesus and you'll know these victories in your life too. The Holy Spirit will empower you – remember His Laws are now written on your heart not in tablets of stone. And don't do it alone – share you walk with other Christians in good standing with God – they'll support and help you.

The Valley Gate tells us that there will be difficult times – valleys in the Bible are places of sorrow, of trials, of humbling experiences, the long walls before indicate we'll not be tested until we've walked with the Lord sufficiently to know him well enough to lean on him in these times. The mountaintops are enjoyable vistas, but we'll grow deeper roots and shoots as we walk through the valley.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

Choose one or both of the following ways to share and pray for each other:

1, Testimony Time. Let's encourage and inspire each other by sharing times in our own lives when the Lord has taken us through one of these gates.

Ask each person in turn to share one testimony of the Lord working restoration in their life, choosing just one of these four "gates" or experiences:

- 1, Sheep – Salvation and worship
- 2, Fish – Evangelism, telling others
- 3, Old – God's ways being established in their lives, seeing His faithfulness, support form others.
- 4, Valley – growth through difficult times.

Keep it simple and to the point – you may like to set a time limit so all get a chance to share!

2, Where are you now? Ask the cell to share which gates are active in their life now – either in seeing the fruits of growth or being in the valley, growing:

Is Jesus first and last, is your worship and sacrifice being renewed? Is witnessing and demonstrating the Gospel easy or hard? Are you walking in God's ways with the help of the Holy Spirit and Christian brothers & sisters or is you old self pulling you down? Are you in a valley right now and leaning on the Lord or struggling?

Pray for those who share – maybe split into small groups or pairs to do this.

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Don't forget that Sunday mornings in August are different – we'll meet at 9:30 for breakfast followed by a shorter meeting at 10:30. Who might you be able to invite to such a meeting?