# What Do You Want to Do?

**When God Pushes You To Do Something**

Nehemiah 2:1-9

February 4, 2018 AM

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1. **Introduction (Nehemiah 2:4)**
   1. **There is something amazing about someone who will throw away his chances for a great career, to take on the burden of affliction, labour, sacrifice, and abuse**
   2. **THAT is just what Nehemiah was about to do – risk everything he had carefully built and accomplished**
   3. **All so that he might build some things that were far more important – far more valuable**
   4. **To Nehemiah, the ruins of Jerusalem were much more attractive than the splendours of Shushan’s palace!**
2. **Review** (Hebrews 13:3) “*Remember them that are in bonds, as bound with them; and them which suffer adversity, as being yourselves also in the body*.”
   1. **We are working our way through the books of Nehemiah and Ezra – two “builders”**
      1. Yes, these two men spend their efforts rebuilding ruined things, like the ruined walls of Jerusalem, and the Jewish Temple…
      2. But they show almost 200 principles of how to rebuild and restore ruined lives!
      3. **THINK ABOUT THAT!** These two Books of the Bible could help US fix some broken things in OUR homes, lives, nation!!!
      4. That’s how I know this Book, the Bible is of God – written under the inspiration of the Holy Spirit!
      5. NO ONE ever got much of anything spiritual out of a modern builder’s manual, or planner’s building code and regulation book
      6. But THIS Book? Well, it has page after page of supernatural helps and instructions on building lives and rebuilding ruined ones!
   2. **In Chapter 1 of Nehemiah, we have seen God prepare a man named Nehemiah for an impossibly large task!** To leave everything and head up a team that was going to rebuild the capital city of Jerusalem from amidst the rubble of its destruction 160 years earlier!
   3. **In that same chapter, we watched as Nehemiah was driven to his knees in absolute and total dependency upon God, and surrender to His will. We saw just what Prayer looks like!**
   4. **This morning, Nehemiah is about to be pushed to start acting on his prayers now.**
   5. **And the goal is for you and me to ask OURSELVES, “What are WE going to do?”**
3. **Message (Nehemiah 2:1-9a)**
   1. **A Day at the Office (2:1)**
      1. It’s the month of Nisan
         1. Not the car – that’s Nissan, which is a Jappanese word
         2. But the Jewish month spanning March/April – the beginning of Spring
         3. It’s Passover month
         4. Thoughts of the supernatural deliverance from Egypt almost 1,000 years earlier
         5. Thoughts about how most of the people of Israel were in Persia – still a diaspora
         6. That means it has been four months since Nehemiah started praying and even fasting about what to do in chapter 1
      2. Nehemiah has gotten to work on time as usual
      3. Took his place beside the king of the world at that time – Artaxerxes
      4. Made sure the wine was safe – not poisoned – and then kept the kings cup full of wine all day long.
         1. It couldn’t have been a pleasant job, to taste the wine, literally wondering if your next drink was going to be your last, but it was a very responsible job.
         2. It automatically made him a confidant of the King, and he would share things in the relaxed atmosphere of that relationship.
   2. **Something is Evidently Wrong (2:1,2)**
      1. Nehemiah was visibly sad
      2. It caught the attention of the king
      3. It terrified Nehemiah – why?
         1. Because you don’t focus on yourself when around the king
         2. It could get you fired
         3. The King of kings is always there, and always noticing our hearts!
         4. But HUMAN kings, and employers are not there to console us, or to hear about all our problems – it is wonderful when they do care, and go out of their way to make sure you are happy
      4. But instead of lying, he just went ahead and risked everything and told the king everything that was on his heart!
   3. **“Something Needs to be Done!” (2:3)**
      1. I am sad because…
         1. Not because of anything wrong in my life
         2. But, because the beautiful capital city of my country Jerusalem…
            1. The place of all my heritage – all the graves and sepulchres
            2. The beautiful city of God,
         3. Lies in ruin – is an empty wasteland of rubble for 160 years now!
            1. The walls are gone
            2. The gates are burned
            3. The people are constantly being robbed and abused and molested
         4. And no one is doing anything about it!
      2. So, Why shouldn’t I be sad?
      3. You would be too if YOUR city here was gone!
      4. The pause must have seemed like an eternity after Nehemiah blurted all of that out!
   4. **Then King Asked, “What Do You Want To Do About It?” (2:4)**
      1. Huh? Could this really be happening?
      2. Was the king actually caring about the ruins of Jerusalem? A small far away city that meant nothing to anyone important!
      3. Nehemiah then quickly prayed (2:4) – he believed in PRAYER
         1. This was what he had been praying for, for months
         2. And now the door had swung all the way open
         3. It’s Now or never!
   5. **Out Came the Plan (2:5)**
      1. You see, there has been a time for prayer – and now was a time to ACT!
      2. “Send ME to Judah”
         1. SEND ME
         2. I am not going to just up and quit and go do what “I” think I should do – like most everyone else does
         3. I need YOU to have the same burden that I have for this project, O king!
      3. “I want to go to rebuild the city of Jerusalem” – WOW!
         1. Do you think Nehemiah had everything all figured out?
         2. No – but he did have a plan, and he just knew it needed to be done!
         3. AND, he knew how long it would take
         4. He was ready for Artaxerxes to ask how long it would take and when he would be back at work
         5. Would have been a no go if he had not thought enough ahead
      4. Asked for a leave of absence – a sabbatical – a furlough
         1. He was not quitting
         2. Just needed to take the necessary time to rebuild the walls and gates
   6. **The King Respected Nehemiah (2:6,8)**
      1. TRUSTED Nehemiah
         1. To do things right
         2. To actually accomplish the job
         3. To come back when the job was done
      2. The king greatly RESPECTED Nehemiah – prized him as a counsellor, and as a benefit to his life – Nehemiah was a blessing to be around!
         1. Knew that Nehemiah was not malicious against Persia or the king – not trying to stir up rebellion
         2. Showed that he would miss Nehemiah
         3. Think about it… the king was showing that he would “miss him” – What?
            1. Everyone is dispensable around the king!
            2. He normally has the best pick of peop[le to work for him!
            3. And yet, here was king Artaxerxes wanting Nehemiah back!
         4. The king was going to hold his position as cup bearer for as long as Nehemiah was going to be away!
      3. Wouldn’t you like to have such a boss!
   7. **What Nehemiah Needed Specifically… (2:7)**
      1. Asked for four big things
      2. PERMISSION to leave his job and to go all the way to Jerusalem (1,000 km away)
      3. CONVEYANCE – the ability to get there
         1. Asked for transportation to take he and the many fellow workers to Jerusalem!
         2. Here was Nehemiah asking outright for a huge number of horse and carriages to be freely provided to carry all the people who would end up going to Jerusalem
      4. SUPPLIES – loads of supplies: like food, and tools, and MONEY
      5. And for AUTHORITY to do what he was wanting to do – he needed the authority in the king’s name
         1. Not a lone ranger like most people I know are
            1. Who don’t care about rules, and have no authority over them
            2. Their wives live in fear of what their husbands are going to try and do next
         2. No. Nehemiah knew how important it was to work WITH his authority, not independent of him
      6. Remember, Nehemiah was asking all this of a pagan king, not a follower of the God of Israel
         1. So, next time ladies, when your stubborn husband is not doing what you want, make sure you approach him with what you need, yes, but with proper appeal
         2. Same goes as a teen
         3. Gentlemen, try it on your authorities – YOUR employer, your pastor, your own parents!
   8. **Surprise, Surprise! The King Granted It ALL (2:8)**
      1. Not out of the goodness of the king’s own heart
      2. But because GOD was in control of the king’s heart and mind in this! (Prov 21:1) “*The king's heart is in the hand of the LORD, as the rivers of water: he turneth it whithersoever he will*.”
      3. Since Cyrus was king, the kings of Persia had MIRACULOUSLY granted to the Jewish people:
         1. Their freedom from captivity/slavery 90 years earlier
         2. The restoration of their worship – their Temple was allowed to be rebuilt
         3. The entire set of Jewish sacrifices were allowed again in Jerusalem
         4. Their Priests and Levites were exempt from taxes!
         5. And now, they were not only allowed to rebuild their city walls
         6. AND… king Artaxerxes was going to help pay for it!
      4. The good hand of “my” God, was involved in Nehemiah’s insignificant life
   9. **Last Thought… Nehemiah set out for Jerusalem right away (2:9a)**
      1. So, he was able to get going right away!
      2. Most of us would have so many issues to get in order before we could ever start doing some ministry
         1. Like getting your wife’s permission
         2. Getting out of the debt that is forcing you to work two jobs
         3. Getingt your kids out of every sport-commitment imaginable
         4. And the list goes on and on
      3. How FREE are you Christian? Are you able to do whatever the Lord would burden you to do? Notice all the ways Satan is trying to put God’s people under bondage
4. **Let’s Review The Principles Nehemiah Showed Here**
   1. **Nehemiah’s Good Testimony Paid Off – more than any university’s education, Nehemiah’s own personal character and intergrity paid off the most in preparation to do something more than being a POISON-CHECKER!**
      1. He was faithful as another man’s servant
         1. Everyone wants to work for themselves!
         2. God says learn to be faithful UNDER your parents, and then under an employer, and maybe, one day you can head up a huge construction team like Nehemiah did!
      2. He Worked hard at his job
      3. He was faithful worshipping and obeying God, even though in a strange, foreign land
         1. Nehemiah never “blended” with the world around him
         2. Never learned how to dance the Persian “rug” or the Babylonian bounce
         3. Never took on the worship of the false Persian gods that were everywhere
         4. He honoured the king
         5. He did his job
         6. He was kept the faith of his fathers
         7. Like Daniel, kept himself unspotted by the world
         8. And prayed constantly to the only God who hears!
      4. He was trustworthy – had integrity above everything else
      5. He allowed God to touch his heart for an impossible task
         1. Burdened about BIG things that need to be fixed – not flippant or numb
      6. He was a man of prayer – didn’t just start to pray in chapter 1. He didn’t just expect everything to go his way without much passionate prayer (James 5:16)
      7. He spent his down time wisely
         1. This thought blew me away
         2. Here was a cup bearer! A “poison checker”
         3. And he was ready to take on the management of a huge construction project!
         4. Evidently Nehemiah has more under the hood than what can be seen on the outside!
         5. Evidently this man was a student of construction already
         6. A student of team-work, and management skills
         7. Here was a cup bearer who could plan and prepare for something bigger than just where he was at the moment!
      8. He honoured his employer
      9. He waited for the door to open before charging ahead
      10. He had a plan about doing important things
      11. He Trusted God
      12. He then got busy right away
   2. **All of that will work for everyone of US**
      1. Christian… YOU be faithful as another man’s servant – it is okay to be a servant!
      2. Work hard at whatever YOU do – paid or unpaid
      3. Be faithful worshipping and obeying God, even though in a wicked culture
      4. Be trustworthy – have integrity, honesty above everything else
      5. Allow God to touch YOUR heart for an impossible task
         1. Be burdened about things that need to be fixed – not flippant or numb
            1. Like your own trustworthiness
            2. Like this nation’s morality
            3. Like the marriages of the people in this room
            4. Like the hearts of so many people who have never known real spiritual safety and stability – always fearful, and discouraged, and frustrated!
      6. Be a man/woman of prayer
         1. Make prayer a constant habit! Be a man/woman of prayer – nothing is going to your way without much passionate prayer (James 5:16)
         2. Ask GOD to send YOU somewhere/anywhere, to do something great for Him. Maybe he won’t! But He deserves the right to tell you to go, or to stay!
         3. When you pray – pray for everything! Ask for what you need to get the job done – don’t be shy
      7. Spend your down time wisely
         1. That is so important for every Christian, young and old! Get a job, read books, and take courses, and work on hobbies – don’t just sit in front of the egit box hour after hour after hour, and then complain about your job!
         2. Spend your down time wisely – learning, planning and preparing for something bigger than just where you are at the moment!
      8. Honour Your Employer as if they are Jesus
      9. Have a plan about doing important things
         1. Like finding a wife or a husband and getting married
         2. Like targeting people at work, or at school and going right up to them and preaching the Gospel to them without fear
         3. Like taking the lead of your wife and family – no matter how much “bucking” they may throw at you!
      10. Trust God for the Impossible! That will be most everything!!!
      11. Then get busy right away – too many are just sitting around, even though they have heard God’s tug on their hearts! Too many are “JUST” praying, and NOT going next door, and down the street, and up to their boss, or teacher, or co-worker with the Gospel mandate!
   3. **But there are Three GREATER Lessons to learn…**
      1. Nehemiah is showing us how to go before OUR KING, the Lord Jesus in PRAYER
         1. If Nehemiah could just encourage us to come before the throne of GOD! (Heb 4:16) “*Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need*.”
         2. If we only had a good reason to pray, and ask for help! I think we do!
      2. Get and the Keep a Good Testimony in this world – it will always Pay Off
      3. And… Don’t wait for someone else to do what needs to be done!
         1. Winning lost hell bound souls
         2. Discipling new believers
         3. Reaching the drunkards, and addicts – join up in Twelve Weeks to Freedom
         4. Preparing to teach Sunday School, and preach and start churches!
5. **Questions For Personal Reflection**
   1. **Is there anyone here willing to throw away his/her chances for a great career, to take on the burden of affliction, labour, sacrifice, and abuse in doing God’s will?**
      1. To risk everything you may have carefully built and accomplished?
      2. And decide to build something that will LAST and bring glory to the God who loves you and saved you and can use you?
   2. **Isn’t there anything important – anything valuable that you would like to repair?** Rebuild? Mend? Fix? Overhaul? It’s funny how old cars become so valuable when they are brought in from the weather, and painstakingly RESTORED!
   3. **To Nehemiah, the ruins of Jerusalem were much more attractive than the splendours of Shushan’s palace!**
   4. **What has YOUR heart?**
   5. **Or more importantly, WHO has your heart?**
      1. If you think YOU are in charge of your own heart, take a good long honest look at it and tell me if you have it all under control or not
      2. There is only ONE Person capable of fixing the human heart – the very One who made it! Jesus Christ!
         1. The Lord Jesus Christ, in the very same way as Nehemiah did, chose to LEAVE the SPLENDOURS of heaven, and said: 'Lo, I come: in the volume of the book it is written, to do thy will O God'
         2. and came to earth as a servant, to bleed and die on a cross IN YOUR AND MY PLACE, to be buried and to rise again of course victoriously
         3. All, to save you from your sins
      3. If there is one thing to learn from Nehemiah, it is that GOD is in the REBUILDING business – the restoration business – the saving broken things business!
      4. You can be saved today! If you would only ask Him to save you now!