

Neh 2:1 In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.

Neh 2:2 And the king said to me, “Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid.

Neh 2:3 I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

Neh 2:4 Then the king said to me, “What are you requesting?” So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Neh 2:5 And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it.”

Neh 2:6 And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), “How long will you be gone, and when will you return?” So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.

Neh 2:7 And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah,

Neh 2:8 and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.” And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Neh 2:9 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.

Neh 2:10 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.

Neh 2:11 So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days.

Neh 2:12 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.

Neh 2:13 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.

Neh 2:14 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.

Neh 2:15 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.

Neh 2:16 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.

Neh 2:17 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.”

Neh 2:18 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.

Neh 2:19 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?”

Neh 2:20 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.”

Neh 2:1 In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I **took up the wine and gave it to the king**. Now I had not been sad in his presence.

Neh 2:2 And the king said to me, “**Why is your face sad**, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid.

Neh 2:3 I said to the king, “Let the king live forever! **Why should not my face be sad**, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

2Co 12:15 I will most gladly spend and **be spent** for your souls.

Nehemiah was cupbearer or butler to the king of Persia. Even though he was burdened for the condition of the walls of Jerusalem, he still was diligent to serve the king in his capacity of cupbearer (v.2). However, he was consumed with God's desire and the condition of God's testimony, and the king noticed that his face was sad. This may indicate that Nehemiah put his job second to God's interest, which is the church. The burden that God had put in him was reflected in his living. He was genuine and sincere and did not hide his emotions.

Do we have such a living? Are we willing to not only spend, but also be spent? We may spend our time and even our money for the sake of the church, but what about our souls? Nehemiah could not be happy. Do we mourn for the condition of the church, even as we take care of what God has entrusted us humanly? Are we affected by the revelations that God gives us? Are we willing to sacrifice our job, or even what God has given us, for the sake of God Himself and His heart's desire? Nehemiah knew that he was risking much to let the king know how he felt. How would the king react? But he had prayed in chapter 1 and acted according to God's speaking to him, regardless of the outcome.

Neh 2:4 Then the king said to me, **“What are you requesting?”** So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Neh 2:5 And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that **you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it.**”

Neh 2:6 And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), **“How long will you be gone, and when will you return?”** So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.

Neh 2:7 And I said to the king, “If it pleases the king, **let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah,**

Neh 2:8 and **a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest,** that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy.” And **the king granted me what I asked,** for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Neh 2:9 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.

These verses show us that Nehemiah had much close fellowship with God. He also had a plan according to God's leading. When the king asked him what he was requesting, Nehemiah responded right away. In v.5, he requested that the king send him to Judah to rebuild the city of Jerusalem. In v.6, when the king asked him how long he would be gone, Nehemiah gave him a time. In v.7, he requested that letters be given him to the governors of the province beyond the Euphrates river so that he may be granted a free passage to enter Judah. In v.8, he asked that a letter be written to the forest keeper to give him lumber to repair the gates and the walls of the city. Nehemiah had thorough, specific prayers beforehand, and then, according to God's revelations to him, he had thoughtful planning and foresight to implement or carry out what God had spoken to him. What Nehemiah requested in v.8 is confirmed in v.9 as something that was necessary.

Our prayers need to be specific, not vague. Our prayers need to follow the revelations of God, and then result in thoughtful consideration and planning. When we pray specific prayers, God will answer us specifically, and our faith will increase. However, if our prayers are too vague or general, then God's answers may also be general, and we may not grow that much in our faith.

Neh 2:11 So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days.

Neh 2:12 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.

Neh 2:13 **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.**

Neh 2:14 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.

Neh 2:15 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.

Neh 2:16 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.**

Neh 2:17 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."

Neh 2:18 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.

1. Nehemiah was a prudent and detailed man. He realized that he needed to evaluate the situation of the walls of the city before starting to build. He realized that he needed a detailed plan. Even though he had God's leading, he still needed to know what parts of the wall were damaged so he could effectively repair the damage. Do we know the condition of the saints in a detailed way so we can effectively pray for them and also fellowship with them in a way that brings them to know the Lord?
2. Nehemiah had a small service team. These brothers were his companions. This shows that he was not independent. He had individual and corporate prayers and fellowship, and assessed the situation of the "church" individually and corporately.
3. Nehemiah inspected the damage with his service team by night, and did not tell anyone else. He did not even tell the officials, nor the priests or nobles, and all who were going to do the work of rebuilding. This may indicate that he did not advertise what he was going to do before he had thoroughly prayed and fellowshiped with his service team. He was not rash in making a decision. When we have a burden, do we right away advertise our burden, or do we pray to the Lord and fellowship with our companions and our service team first, and then, according to the Lord's leading, fellowship with the church? This is for our protection and for the protection of the whole church.

Neh 2:10 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.

Neh 2:19 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?”

Neh 2:20 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.**”

Sanballat was a Persian satrap. Tobiah was an Ammonite, a descendant of Lot, born of incest. Geshem was of Arabic origin. They were, in a sense, companions, but not in a positive sense. They mocked Nehemiah and his service team and even accused them of rebelling against the king. Nehemiah was firm to exclude them from the portion of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. This may indicate that Nehemiah did not let anything come in to hinder the burden and operation that God had given him and his service team.

In the church life, do we practice desperate corporate prayers? Do we exclude or drive out the world from the church life? If any sins enter, do we confess them and repent to the Lord? Do we separate ourselves from anything foreign, that is, anything that competes with or replaces God (represented by Sanballat and those with him)?

This also means that when God leads us, Satan will invariably rise up to oppose. There will always be opposition. This is a test to us. How real to us is the revelation that God has given us? Do we know the Lord in the church life so we can stand, not alone, but with brothers and sisters, to pray desperately and fight for our growth and the growth of the saints, and fight to prevent any aspect of the world from coming in?

Neh 2:1 In the month of **Nisan**, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. **Now I had not been sad in his presence.**

Neh 2:2 And the king said to me, "**Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick?**" This is nothing but sadness of the heart." **Then I was very much afraid.**

**Nisan** is approximately between the third and fourth months of the current Gregorian calendar in 445 BC. This month was the first month set by God at the time of the Exodus, and **was named "Abib" (Exo 13:4), which means "early barley". After exile, it was changed to Babylonian name "Nisan"**

**During the presence of the king Artaxerxes Nehemiah had not been sad. Why? He was a person who was one with God, cared for God's interests, and served the King with the presence of God. This is the exercise (a kind of denying self) which we need to practice in front of our family members, saints and friends.**

**Although Nehemiah had a heavy burden within him, he was patiently waiting for God to arrange an environment such as this time to speak to the king.** The vision given by God was not diluted by time. The negative news from Jerusalem troubled him so much, he couldn't help his "sad face." At this time, it is God's leading. Through Nehemiah's "sadness in his heart" concerning God's testimony, God opened a way out for the reconstruction of the wall and the gate of Jerusalem.

**Why in Neh 2:2 Nehemiah was very much afraid? I believe that he feared that**

- 1. At this time it is not God's will rather his personal will;**
- 2. Even it is God's time, was he ready to serve God's current interests?**

Neh 2:1 In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence.

Neh 2:2 And the king said to me, “**Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick?** This is nothing but sadness of the heart.” Then I was very much afraid.

Neh 2:3 **I said to the king**, “Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?”

**Nehemiah seized this opportunity boldly and humbly to speak to the king and explained why he was in sad face and had a sad heart. Although he was a cupbearer and a servant of the king, he was willing to serve God, and had the burden to build the wall and gates of Jerusalem.**

**Nehemiah was a person who had intimate fellowship with God. He loved God and subjectively knew God's heart's desire on earth, including the holy land (representing Christ), the temple (representing the church,) and the holy city (representing the kingdom of God). All such healthy relation with God might come from his parents and family members. Nehemiah believed in God and was one with God. As a result, he became the representative of God. Nehemiah did not seek anything for himself, and was willing to sacrifice his all for God's people and God's testimony.**

Neh 2:4 Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Neh 2:5 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it."

Neh 2:6 And the king said to me **(the queen sitting beside him; king must be in joyful mood)**, "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time.

Neh 2:7 And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah,

Neh 2:8 and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy."

And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

Neh 2:9 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 (Lord's overflowed blessings).**

**When the king asked "what are you requesting?" Although Nehemiah had years of intimate fellowship with God, still he asked God's presence indicated by "so I prayed to the God of heaven". This is also a crucial exercise for us in the church life.**

**The king asked "what are your requesting? Nehemiah's speaking to the king were**

- 1. you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it; and the king asked "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?"**
- 2. Nehemiah's response: So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time. and he said also**
- 3. "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah,**
- 4. and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy."**

**This is very blessed example how a person of God had an intimate fellowship with God and knew God's heart desires for the advancement of the testimony for the church and churches. I believe that Nehemiah had written it down each time after his fellowship with God. The book of Nehemiah is a proof. Please refer Bible home work "规划对生命成长的帮助".**

Neh 2:9 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.

**Neh 2:5-8** tells us that Nehemiah had a long period of careful fellowship with God. He was fully prepared for God's will, building the city wall and setting up the city gate, as far as possible (I believe that it was also God's guidance), that is, he had a detailed and specific plan in God. When the king asked him what he needed, he could answer immediately (as marked 1, 2, 3, and 4 in the previous slide).

**Neh 2:9** proved that the 3 in **Neh 2:7** he requested from the king was necessary. Therefore, our prayers in the Lord need to be carefully planned according to what God has revealed and have intentions for God, and should not be disorderly, so that the guidance of God's response will be clear. In this way, our faith in the Lord will grow.

Again, please have intimated fellowship with the Lord and the saints and then have a growing detailed written plan for our own growth in life and the advancement of the testimony for the church and churches.

Neh 2:10 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.

Neh 2:19 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?**”

Neh 2:10 and Neh 2:19 show that Satan never quits and always tries to stop the advance of the testimony of God. They ( **the Horonite, the Ammonite and the Arab** ) represent flesh, world, self, and nature inside of us. It is a spiritual warfare, and **we need to be very much aware of and exercise to deny ourselves lose soul life and carry our own cross to follow the Lord.**

Neh 2:11 So I went to Jerusalem and was there three days.

Neh 2:12 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.

Neh 2:13 **I went out by night** by the Valley Gate to the Dragon Spring and to the Dung Gate, and inspected the walls of Jerusalem that were broken down and its gates that had been destroyed by fire.

Neh 2:14 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.

Neh 2:15 **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.

**Neh 2:12-15** show that **even God was present with Nehemiah and gave him a plan to rebuild the wall and the gate,** but **Nehemiah must be diligently, thoroughly and labor hard to carry out the Lord's works with a detailed work plan and a one-accord service team (Neh 2:12 a few men with me“”). To work alone without companions and teams is not what God desires.**

Neh 2:16 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.

Neh 2:17 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.”

Neh 2:18 **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.

Neh 2:19 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?”

Neh 2:20 **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.”**

**“I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good”** is to make a testimony for the Lord in front of the saints, and **“also of the words that the king had spoken to me”** is to be lawful and reasonable in humanity.

To the enemies of God ( **the Horonite, the Ammonite and the Arab** ) Nehemiah was bold in the faith of God and said 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.”** .