

Nehemiah (God is Faithful)

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Nehemiah 3:1-32

1 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests, and they built the Sheep Gate. They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated it as far as the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Tower of Hananel. 2 And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zaccur the son of Imri built.

- **Gate** – The 9 gates mentioned in this chapter were the critical entry and exit points to the city, and the places most likely to see an enemy attack.
Wall Dimensions: 15-20 feet high, 3-4 feet wide, 2.5 miles in circumference.
- **Consecrate** – the separation of oneself from things that are unclean, especially anything that would contaminate one's relationship with a perfect God. Cf. **Joshua 3:5; 2 Samuel 12:20; Colossians 3:5-14**

Israel's Faithfulness:

1. Some people will refuse to work (3:5)
2. Some people will do more work than others (3:11, 19-21, 24, 27, 30)
3. Some work less desirable jobs than others (dung gate; 3:14)
4. A diverse team (priests, skilled craftsmen [3:8, 31-32], city officials, women, bachelors [3:12], security guards [3:29], business leaders [3:32])

God's Faithfulness:

John 10:7-15

7 So Jesus again said to them, "Truly, truly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. 8 All who came before me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not listen to them. 9 I am the door. If anyone enters by me, he will be saved and will go in and out and find pasture. 10 The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly. 11 I am the good shepherd. The good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep. 12 He who is a hired hand and not a shepherd, who does not own the sheep, sees the wolf coming and leaves the sheep and flees, and the wolf snatches them and scatters them. 13 He flees because he is a hired hand and cares nothing for the sheep. 14 I am the good shepherd. I know my own and my own know me, 15 just as the Father knows me and I know the Father; and I lay down my life for the sheep.

- Jesus is the Door/Gate.
There is no other way to salvation except through faith in Jesus' death, burial, and resurrection; and making Him your Lord. Cf. **Acts 4:12**

16 And I have other sheep that are not of this fold. I must bring them also, and they will listen to my voice. So there will be one flock, one shepherd. 17 For this reason the Father loves me, because I lay down my life that I may take it up again. 18 No one takes it from me, but I lay it down of my own accord. I have authority to lay it down, and I have authority to take it up again. This charge I have received from my Father."

- This is referring to us—Gentiles. Cf. **Galatians 3:28; Ephesians 4:1-7**

19 There was again a division among the Jews because of these words. 20 Many of them said, "He has a demon, and is insane; why listen to him?" 21 Others said, "These are not the words of one who is oppressed by a demon. Can a demon open the eyes of the blind?"

2 Timothy 2:13 *if we are faithless, he remains faithful—for he cannot deny himself.*

Discipleship Homework:

Joshua 3:5 *"Consecrate yourselves, for tomorrow the Lord will do wonders among you."*

Here the people of God were commanded to wash themselves, change their clothes, and were to devote themselves wholly to the Lord. The significance of this command was that water was considered a luxury and wasn't used often for personal hygiene. The bathing and changing clothes symbolized making a new beginning with the Lord. The spiritual picture is that sin defiles and we have to be cleansed before truly following God.

Is this something you have ever done? Not in literally taking a bath, but the spiritual act of consecration? Spend some time this week wrestling with the instruction of consecrating yourself to the God. Below are some practical steps to help:

1. Make a conscious, willing decision to surrender your soul, mind, heart, and body to God. This is decision is because you have a longing to live holy and want to be more like Jesus.
2. Reflect on the true motive of your heart. Is this truly a desire from within, or is it possible that you are giving in to peer pressure? Do it because you want to show God how much you love Him. God knows your motives.
3. Once you have reflected on your motives, pray the Holy Spirit reveals to you what those motives are. This may be a time a to give thanks for the pure motives, repent of sinful motives, and enjoy the grace that's found in Jesus.
4. Separate yourself from worldly evil. 1 John 2:16 warns against the lust of flesh, lust of the eyes, and pride of life. What things or patterns in your life feed those sins? What things in your life can you remove to not be led to temptation?
5. Draw close to God through prayer, fasting, and studying scripture.

Consecration is not a single, once-off decision. It becomes a way of living. We will certainly stumble as we walk the path, even fall. Proverbs 24:16 has an encouraging promise: For a righteous man may fall seven times and rise again, but the wicked shall fall by calamity.

