



Mustard Seed Children's Summary for May 11, 2008

Released on Wednesday, May 7, 2008

"Nehemiah Saw a Need"

MEMORY VERSE:

"...They said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work"
(Nehemiah 2:18)

SCRIPTURE LESSON TEXT: (Nehemiah 2:1-8, 11, 17-18)

1 And it came to pass in the month Nisan, in the twentieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that wine was before him: and I took up the wine, and gave it unto the king. Now I had not been beforetime sad in his presence.

2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.

5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

7 Moreover I said unto the king, If it please the king, let letters be given me to the governors beyond the river, that they may convey me over till I come into Judah;

8 And a letter unto Asaph the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the palace which appertained to the house, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall enter into. And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.

11 So I came to Jerusalem, and was there three days.

17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

OBJECT IN VIEW:

Explain that we should see needs and try to meet them.

TRUTHS TO STRESS:

1. One person can make a difference.
2. Nehemiah's faith was strong enough to pray and wait.
3. Nehemiah's faith was strong enough to ask others for help.

PLANNING LESSON AIDS:

For Helping to Remember, you will need card making supplies. You will also need a copy of the word search for each student.

LESSON BACKGROUND:

Time: 445 B.C.

Place: Shushan; Jerusalem

Nehemiah lived in the period of time after the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem under Zerubbabel (Ezra 1-6) and the spiritual renewal led by Ezra (Ezra 7-10). Nehemiah lived in Shushan (shoo' shān), which was one of the cities in the Persian Empire, and served the king. Nehemiah received word that the walls of Jerusalem were broken down and destroyed by fire (Nehemiah 1:3), and the people were in great distress. Nehemiah's concern led him to fast, pray and intercede for the needs of God's people.

In this week's lesson, it is about four months after Nehemiah began fasting and praying for God's people (Nehemiah 1:4; 2:1). We learn the result of Nehemiah's prayer and how God opened a door by giving Nehemiah favor with the king.

TEACHER'S NOTES / TELLING THE LESSON:

Consider the following as you prepare your lesson for your students:

What was Nehemiah's relationship to the king?

Nehemiah was one of the officials serving under King Artaxerxes. His job was cupbearer to the king. In this position, Nehemiah was responsible for testing all the king's beverages to make sure they were not poisoned. Nehemiah put his life at risk to protect the king.

Nehemiah, therefore, was a trusted adviser and spent much time in the presence of the king. The king owed his life to Nehemiah and, no doubt, trusted him completely and would have confided in him.

What did Nehemiah request of the king?

After four months of fasting and praying, Nehemiah's concern for Jerusalem must have weighed heavily upon him and began to show outwardly because the king noticed his sad countenance and wanted to know what was wrong. Nehemiah conveyed the reason for his sadness to the king. King Artaxerxes then asked what Nehemiah wanted.

Nehemiah spoke directly to the heart of the need. He wanted to return to Judah and the city of his fathers' tombs (Jerusalem) for the purpose of rebuilding it (Nehemiah 2:5). He also asked for letters of protection from the king addressed to the local rulers and the provision of timber from local resources for the building projects (2:7-8).

How did the king respond to the request?

The king asked for a time frame or how long he would be gone and when he would return. He then agreed that Nehemiah could go. Nehemiah 13:6 states that he returned in the king's 32nd year, which would mean that he was gone for a total of twelve years. There may have been intervening periods when he returned to the king and then back to Jerusalem, but for the most-part, Nehemiah dedicated more than twelve years in Jerusalem.

God touched the heart of the king and he gave Nehemiah all that he requested. In addition to the letters of protection and the timber, some of the army and cavalry of the king accompanied Nehemiah (2:9). Nehemiah, therefore, received all that he asked for plus a military escort.

What was Nehemiah's assessment of the damage to Jerusalem, and what was his plan?

Nehemiah would have arrived in Jerusalem after about a two-month travel period (a long and dangerous trip of about one thousand miles). After his arrival, he spent three days closely examining the need and determining the course of action. His survey was thorough (2:13-15) and included various gates and portions of wall.

Nehemiah's overall assessment was that the city was in trouble. He felt that they were a disgrace – the city was in ruins and the gates were burned (2:17). Nehemiah challenged the people to begin working and rebuild the wall.

How did the people respond to Nehemiah's plan?

The people listened to Nehemiah's plan and heard his personal testimony of how God had been with him and directed him. The people recognized the hand of God at work and

accepted the challenge to rebuild the wall. Their response was a readiness to get on with the task. They began working to rebuild the wall.

TELLING HOW TO LIVE:

Ask God to help you see needs and meet them. Some people are selfish. They see only their own needs. Do you notice when your friends are sad or a teacher or parent seems tired or discouraged? Be like Nehemiah. Perhaps, like him, you will be able to encourage others to help meet needs. Be like Nehemiah and have enough faith to pray and wait on God and, if necessary, ask others for help.

Discuss the fact that Nehemiah's ministry began with a concern for the people that led him to fast and pray for an answer. When told of the situation in Jerusalem, the first thing that Nehemiah did was to fast and pray. It was after his commitment and dedication to prayer that God gave him favor with the king and opened the door for him to help Jerusalem.

HELPING TO REMEMBER:

Help the children to find the names of people that are sick and need encouragement (in your congregation, community or neighborhoods). Use the card making supplies to make get-well cards to distribute and encourage those that are sick.

A word search with key words from the lesson is also included at the end of this lesson summary.

EXPLAINING THE MEMORY VERSE:

"...They said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work" (Nehemiah 2:18)

Nehemiah saw a need. He prayed. He asked for the king's help. He encouraged others to help meet the need. Many others enthusiastically helped, and the need was met. God can use one person's faith. God can use you to meet needs.

ANTICIPATING NEXT WEEK'S LESSON:

Next week's lesson is "The People Ended the Work" and focuses on the completion of Jerusalem's walls, despite opposition from enemies. Read Nehemiah 4:1-15 and 6:15.

Lesson Summarized by:

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Have a blessed Mother's Day!

WORD SEARCH

Nehemiah Saw a Need (Nehemiah 2:1-8, 11, 17-18)

Find each of the following words.

CITY

NEED

SORROW

REQUEST

TIMBER

JERUSALEM

WORK

GOOD

RISE

NEHEMIAH

STRENGTHEN

WALL

CUPBEARER

HANDS

REBUILD

PRAYED

B L D I O E W L E S Y R D O O G R U R R E B U
O D S E E Y Q R N E R E R A E B P U C E T M D
H R T D I E O U R D D E R Q I R E Q U E S T S
E B R R K W W O R R O S R R D E E A D E U N E
C T E R N E O W T T W W B H M E E U E R C I B
U E N P O B A R L P R E E D A D C E E B W H R
H R G R H L Y A K A R L W N E I S R N E E I N
S N T J L T E S R C I T Y T S T M D I E E N E
Y Q H H E E D R O D I T D I A R U E S E J O Y
I B E T E I T H E W B L N R Y R S R H W R E H
A B N E L N A Y S I I T I M B E R O M E S S O
R R D P H N A H R U W D G Y I H S O I U N I S
A N Q C D R N A B E H A S A L S A H A N S R A
R N N S P E C E N E E A D E R A E D S E R L H
R E S S E R R A O J E R U S A L E M R T M T I
R U T D R Q L E L E R O B N J R A E D T Q R A

Solution to Word Search

Nehemiah Saw a Need (Nehemiah 2:1-8, 11, 17-18)

					D	O	O	G														
S							R	E	R	A	E	B	P	U	C							
T													R	E	Q	U	E	S	T			
R		W	W	O	R	R	O	S											D			
E			O	W						H									E			
N			A	R						A									E			
G		L				K							I						N			
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