



## August Message Series: Rebuilding the Wall

### Message #1 Life Happens: Care Enough to Be Broken

**Pre-Sermon Video: [All Things New](#)**

#### Getting the Nod

**The new normal is forming as we gather.** Masks are now normal. A daily report from our Governor about the virus is normal. Names like Fauci and CDC are everyday words we use. Daily updates on protests and violence and fallen statues riddle our conversations and current restrictions both guide us and anger us. Hospital rooms are now off limits to all the loved ones. Unemployment rates and stock market trends and stimulus checks all keep us on the end of our seats. AND THE CHURCH, is being nominalized in courtrooms and certain states.

DIVISION IS THE NEW NORMAL. Any place the enemy of our souls can set up shop always ends with division. Dividing homes and neighbors; dividing government; and dividing authorities with illogical thoughts about those who protect us.

**Someone needs to rebuild the walls!!!! The walls of our nation! The walls of our strength and our constitution that claims our heritage “We the People”. The walls of the Church as a source of hope in a hopeless world. A REBUILDING IS COMING!!!**

**Illustration God the Rebuilder:** Three men are hiking and they come upon a large raging river. They need to get to the other side, but they don't know how.

The first man says, "God, give me the strength to cross this river. "Poof! God gives him big arms and strong legs, and he swims across the raging river. It takes him two hours, but he makes it.

Seeing this, the second man prays, "God, give me the strength . . . and the TOOLS . . . to cross this river." Poof! God gives him a rowboat, and he rows across the raging river. It takes him 90 minutes, but he makes it.

Seeing this, the third man says, "God, give me the strength and the tools and the INTELLIGENCE . . . to cross this river." And poof! God hands him a map, looks upstream 50 yards, and then walks across the bridge that God provided!

**Application:** My friends, we believe in a God who gives us the strength and the tools and the wisdom to overcome obstacles. We believe in a God who does awesome things through ordinary people! In fact, we believe in a God who wants to help! (SOURCE: from a sermon by Marc Axelrod, SermonCentral.com, "God the Rebuilder" 6/30/08)

**Transition:** God wants His people to be involved in the rebuilding process when this new normal settles upon us. There's a story found in the Old Testament that shows how one man was used by God to rebuild walls. His name is Nehemiah. Let's look at his story in the first 4 verses of his book.

#### God's Take on Nehemiah's Story

NLT | Nehemiah 1:1-4 **These are the memoirs of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah. In late autumn, in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was at the fortress of Susa. 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, "Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire." 4 When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.**

### Background on This Story:

- **Nehemiah was a high official in the Persian court of King Artaxerxes I at the capital city of Susa**, which lay 150 miles east of the Tigris River in what is now modern Iran.
- Nehemiah served as **the king's cupbearer** (Nehemiah 1:11), which evidently put him in a position to speak to the king and request favors from him.
- **After hearing about the sad state of affairs in Judah, Nehemiah acquired the king's permission** to return to Jerusalem and rebuild the city and its fortifications.
- **He was even given letters from the king** to ensure safe passage and to obtain timber from the king's forest for the gates and walls of Jerusalem.
- **The hurried work of repairing and rebuilding Jerusalem's walls and gates was completed in just 52 days** (Nehemiah 6:15).

### Why was the Broken Wall So Important to Nehemiah?

1. **It revealed a defeated and disgraced people.** His people needed a way to be victorious again.
2. **It suggested that the God of Israel was weak.** His God was mocked.
3. **A rebuilt wall would show God's blessing again.** The wall would jumpstart the city of God.
4. **A rebuilt wall would show our enemies that they have no claim on this city.**

**Nehemiah wanted to see his city... and his people restored to what they were meant to be... A POWERFUL EXAMPLE OF GOD!!! I WANT TO SEE MY COUNTRY AND MY NATION RESTORED TO A POWERFUL EXAMPLE OF GOD. BUT WE HAVE TO DEAL WITH OUR OWN FLAWS FIRST!**

**Craig Groeschel's Encounter with Virgil:** Early in Craig's ministry he was asked to preach and fill in for his friend while he was on vacation. So, he got dressed up in his best suit and tie and arrived early for the service so he could make a good first impression. Lora, the church secretary, met him at the door and excitedly told him that she had just talked to a lady who was upset and had tried everything to fix her life. She was now going to try church. Craig went to the church office and with Lora they prayed for the soon coming visitor. He went back to the front door to wait for her... with Virgil... a long-term congregational member. Craig could tell Virgil loved his church... but had a problem with the younger generation. Using terms like rebellious; disrespectful; and lazy... Virgil was on a monologue of shaming. In the middle of his speech, Craig saw the visitor pull up in a beat up old car with bald tires low tire pressure. There were dents all around the car and she got out with a cigarette in her hand. She clearly stood out from the normal Sunday School crowd. She took a deep breath and headed toward the church. As she reached the front door, Virgil turned his attention toward the scantily dressed woman and said, **"We wear our best clothes for God at this church! Is that the best outfit you own? Or do you just not care what God thinks?"**

Craig saw the humiliation on her face and tried to say something that would counteract the dagger thrown by Virgil... but it was too late and she left in her clunker... away from Virgil, but more than that... from God. Virgil mumbled the word, "Rebellious." **Craig later wrote in one of his books that at moment something happened in his heart. He vowed in his heart that day that he would never let that happen again... despite the Virgil's of this world.** (Weird by Craig Groeschel)

**Application:** He realized that day that blessings come in different shapes, colors, and sizes.

Blessings are always viewed as something received like a new raise at work; a good report from your doctor; or an excellent deal on you house.

**But God's blessings aren't always bigger or better or beautiful. In fact, you might call it weird, but sometimes our blessing is wrapped in a burden that we have toward doing the right things.**



**Illustration of Popeye the Sailor:** Do any of you remember Popeye the Sailor Man? Whenever his archenemy, Brutus, would attack and kidnap Popeye's girlfriend, Olive Oyl... something that bothers us so deeply, this hero would finally reach his limit and shout, "That's all I can stand; and I can't stand no more!" So, he'd swallow a can of spinach and crush his brutal enemy.

**Application:** We all need a Popeye moment! It's something that one famous pastor called "Holy Discontent". It's a moment when God blesses you with a divine burden that bothers you so deeply that you're moved from apathy to action. In other words, God wants to bless His people with something that unsettles us... disturbs us... and upsets us. **Because we all need divine discontent...**

### **We All Need Divine Discontent:**

If you're like most people, you're probably wondering, "Why in the world would I want a burden?" Aren't we supposed to avoid them? Isn't life hard enough? **But, God didn't put us here on earth just to feel good and enjoy ourselves. He doesn't give us our lives so we can master the techniques to avoid pain. He puts us here to make an eternal difference. We are His hands and feet. What is divine discontent?**

#### **1. Resisting the temptation to shame the unchurched and other believers.**

- **It's called legalism.** NLT | Col 2:8 **Don't let anyone capture you with empty philosophies and high-sounding nonsense that come from human thinking and from the spiritual powers of this world, rather than from Christ.**
- Manmade rules about external things do nothing for the Gospel and everything to discourage people from finding Christ.
- **"Shaming" has become a powerful tool in Satan's hands. Church attendance; tattoos and jewelry; college selections; political opinions etc.**
- **Legalism is looking to something besides Jesus Christ in order to be acceptable and clean before God. (Tim Keller)**

#### **2. Never to turn anyone away from church because of how they look.**

- **Our goal is to see God change the inside first!!!** NLT | 1 Pe 3:3-4 **Don't be concerned about the outward beauty of fancy hairstyles, expensive jewelry, or beautiful clothes. You should clothe yourselves instead with the beauty that comes from within, the unfading beauty of a gentle and quiet spirit, which is so precious to God.**
- **God looks inside first!!** NLT | 1 Sa 16:7 **But the LORD said to Samuel, "Don't judge by his appearance or height, for I have rejected him. The LORD doesn't see things the way you see them. People judge by outward appearance, but the LORD looks at the heart."**
- **Illustration of the Dutch Christians:** Charles Price (pastor of The Peoples Church in Toronto) tells the story of a friend of his who went to the Netherlands to share the gospel with Dutch people and became friends with many Dutch Christians. He was amazed to find out how distressed Dutch Christians were with the state of American Christians. You see, they were struggling with the style of dress and the application of makeup that women in America had taken up and was now a part of the Christian culture. They felt that this was a worldly sin that had crept into the church. They would never let the world impact them and apply makeup as the Americans did.
- His friend was amazed to see how upsetting it made these Dutch Christians. So upsetting that he saw women and men cry enormous tears of sadness. He watched as those tears ran down their faces and dripped off the edge of their noses... and dripped

into their beer and overtop of their cigarettes as they lamented at the worldliness of American Christians.

- **God is most glorified in us when we are most satisfied in Him... not dressed to please others.**

### 3. Vowing to never be the excuse of why someone rejects God.

- **How we treat others is directly connected to the excuses people make against the church.** NKJV | Ro 14:13 *Therefore let us not judge one another anymore, but rather resolve this, not to put a stumbling block or a cause to fall in our brother's way.*
- **The Greek word for "witness" is the equivalent to "martyr". Which means we would rather die than blow our witness.**

### 4. Desiring to let God make our hearts ache for those trapped in sin.

- **An example of the Weeping Prophet.** NLT | Je 13:17 *And if you still refuse to listen, I will weep alone because of your pride. My eyes will overflow with tears, because the LORD's flock will be led away into exile.*

**Application:** The walls are collapsing all around us and we need to care enough to be broken. To have a burden for the Church and the Nation. The hopeless and the hurting. **The Great Commission must become the Great Conviction!!!**

## Our Response

### Three Things Every Christian Needs to Pray Today:

1. **God, give me a burden to rebuild walls.** Lead us into the rubble to lift others up.
2. **God, provide me righteous anger.** Acceptable anger that compels us to use our armor.
3. **Please God, don't just stir me, use me.** Do more than inspire us... change us.

**Transition:** Let's close with this...

## Closing

**Illustration of the Unchanged Tribe:** Scientists studied a native tribe in South America whose people have been dying prematurely for generations. After thorough investigation, the cause of premature death was determined. The disease was transmitted by an insect that lived in the walls of their adobe homes. This new information presented several options. They could move to another area where such insects don't exist, tear down their homes and rebuild them, use insecticide to rid their homes of the bugs, or, continue as they have and die early. Surprisingly, these people have opted to remain as they are and do nothing about their problem. Many people behave similarly. To save themselves, they know what they must do; instead, they opt to remain unchanged.

**We must be His Hands:** There was a statue of Jesus, arms extended, at the cross-roads in the French countryside [Knight's Treasury of 2000 Illustrations, p 440]. A fierce battle occurred there during WWI. The hands of the statue were blown away in the fighting. Afterwards, someone placed a plaque on the pedestal: "Christ has no hands but your hands." How true. If we are to rebuild, it must be God working through our hands.

(Partially adapted from Craig Groeschel's book "Weird")