

SERMON

DATE: Saturday/Sunday, February 2-3, 2019

SERIES TITLE: STEADFAST: *Joining God in the Work of Building His Kingdom*

SERMON TITLE: Leading in Hard Times

SCRIPTURE: Nehemiah 2:9-20

[9] So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.

[10] When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.

[11] I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days

[12] I set out during the night with a few others. I had not told anyone what my God had put in my heart to do for Jerusalem. There were no mounts with me except the one I was riding on.

By night I went out through the Valley Gate toward the Jackal Well and the Dung Gate, examining the walls of Jerusalem, which had been broken down, and its gates, which had been destroyed by fire.

[14] Then I moved on toward the Fountain Gate and the King's Pool, but there was not enough room for my mount to get through;

[15] so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and reentered through the Valley Gate.

[16] The officials did not know where I had gone or what I was doing, because as yet I had said nothing to the Jews or the priests or nobles or officials or any others who would be doing the work.

[17] Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace."

[18] I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

[19] But when Sanballat the Horonite, Tobiah the Ammonite official and Geshem the Arab heard about it, they mocked and ridiculed us. "What is this you are doing?" they asked. "Are you rebelling against the king?"

[20] I answered them by saying, "The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it."

February 2-3, 2019

Title: Leading in Hard Times

1. Expect Opposition.

- Enemies – and the ENEMY – will seek to destroy the work of God
- Kinds of opposition:
 - Some legitimate
 - Some fearful
 - Some selfish
 - Some will be in the form of ridicule

2. Seek wise counsel and gather good information.

- *Proverbs 15:22 Plans fail for lack of counsel, but with many advisers they succeed.*

3. Establish the problem and propose God's solution.

- Pray
- Show the benefits
- Show God's affirmation

4. Put God at the forefront.

Lagniappe

Have you noticed what is happening in our Connect Groups (aka Sunday School, Small Group Bible Study, Bible Fellowship Groups)?

It may be hard for you to know since we no longer give a week by week report about Connect Groups, Worship Attendance, and financial giving.

So, here's what is happening. January has been a record month for Connect Group attendance.

This is the attendance for the four weekends of January: 1578, 1600, 1536, 1684. The average attendance for this month is 1599.5. January is historically not a great month for Connect Group attendance and we've never had a month that even approached this kind of attendance (and this has been a cold, rainy January).

Why is this important? Well, of course, it shows the growth and outreach of the church, but it does more. When people are in a Connect Group, they have moved a GIANT step closer to being involved in the ministry of the church.

In Connect Groups:

- **People receive encouragement from other people.** Encouragement about their families and marriages as well as how to live for God on a daily basis.
- **We "make the church small"** when we join together by meeting and getting to know other people.
- **We have the opportunity to experience community and ministry.** We have a group who helps us in our troubles, and we get to minister to them in similar ways.

Connect Groups allow us to live in close community with other believers.

On top of all this, we get to study the Bible, pray, and know God.

I am grateful to see God doing such great things.