

“The Vision of an Uncommon Leader”

UNCOMMON LEADER Sermon Series | Week Two | Newbreak Church

June 13th, 2021

This week is about the vision of an uncommon leader. This message answers the question: How do I lead with vision?

Start Here

- What is the most beautiful place you have ever seen in person?
- Who do you think exemplifies visionary leadership? Explain why you chose that person.

Going Deeper Into the Message

Read: Nehemiah 1

Point 1 – Identify the needs around me and allow them to break my heart.

³ They said to [Nehemiah], “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” ⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 1:3-4, NIV)

Nehemiah received a report from Israel that broke his heart. The walls of Jerusalem, the center of Yahweh worship, were broken down and the city was defenseless against her enemies. The remnant of Israel was in danger and Nehemiah was burdened for the people and the land.

Leadership often begins with a burden. Some refer to this as a “holy discontent.” When God shows us the suffering of others, we can’t get it out of our minds. This burden becomes like a rock in our shoe. No matter how hard we try to ignore it, we can’t get past the pain. Feeling compassion for another is a painful experience. God wants to take that newfound awareness of the suffering or burdens of another and use you to make a difference. What has God burdened you with?

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Why do you think Nehemiah was so concerned about rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem? Trying to put yourself in his shoes, what do you think caused him such heartache?
- Nowadays, our concern is not to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. What do you think would be a contemporary example of Nehemiah's burden for today's world?

Read: Nehemiah 1:4, 11

Point 2 – Listen to God's guidance.

⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ¹¹ Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king. (Nehemiah 1:4, 11)

Nehemiah's broken heart led him to the Lord. Much like Hannah poured out her heart before the Lord because of her barrenness, Nehemiah wept, fasted, and prayed before the Lord for the current state of Jerusalem. Calling out to God and praying, letting Him know what we want and need, is important. However, it is equally important that we listen for His reply. We need to put ourselves in positions of openness and come to Him with humble spirits, so we can hear His response to us. "After the earthquake came a fire, but the Lord was not in the fire. And after the fire came a gentle whisper" (1 Kings 19:12, NIV). Sometimes we can't hear Him because we are not listening carefully.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- Have you ever received instruction from God in what He wanted you to do? What did He tell you? How did you respond?

- How do you listen for God's word? What steps do you take to confirm what you're hearing is the voice of God?

—ACTIVITY—

Identify the burden: Take a moment and either write down or share with your group a burden that you currently have for a certain situation or people group. If you are doing this with a group, select one burden for this activity. Spend a few moments writing or discussing why this burdens you and what you have done in the past to alleviate this.

Find Scriptural Insights: Find Scripture that shines a light on this topic. Are there any passages that explain what God thinks about this problem?

Pray for the burden: Move into a time of prayer for this topic. What are some specific things that you can pray about regarding this topic? How can you help intervene?

Take Action Steps: After praying and asking God for direction, what are some practical things that you as an individual or your group can do to help the situation?

Read: Nehemiah 2

Point 3 – Raise up a team around a common purpose.

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. (Nehemiah 2:17-18)

Talk with your friends, family, coworkers about what God has put on your heart. There is a good chance they might have some ideas to move you forward, or they may want to join you in making a difference. God gives us each other so that we can support one another in the work He has given us to do. Let's be smart and utilize those resources.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- What are some ways to inspire people toward purpose? What works? What doesn't work?

- Who do you think God wants to join you in making a difference? Is there anyone specifically that comes to mind? How could your Life Group help?

Read: Nehemiah 4-6

Point 4 – Stick to God’s plan in spite of adversity.

They [those opposing Nehemiah both internally and externally] were all trying to frighten us, thinking, “Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed.” But I prayed, “Now strengthen my hands.” (Nehemiah 6:9)

The enemy does not want success for God’s people. He wants us to fail and he will attack in every way possible to make that happen. Our job is to know the will of God and stick to the goals He gives us. When the enemy puts up barriers and roadblocks, our response should be to ask God to show us a way through, around, over, or across them. We need to ask for the strength to persevere.

Questions for Group Discussion or Personal Reflection

- When was a time you knew you were doing the right thing but were facing opposition? Did you give up? Or persevere? What did you learn from that experience?
- Read the Additional Insight (below) what sticks out to you from it? What is your main takeaway? Why?

—ADDITIONAL INSIGHT—

The Secret Ingredient of Endurance

The dictionary definition of endurance is *“the fact or power of enduring an unpleasant or difficult process or situation without giving way.”* We all have had to ride out times of “unpleasant or difficult” situations. Have you ever sat down to ask yourself what gave you the strength? Hopefully as we grow in our faith, we learn to rely on God for the strength to endure trials. And there’s a key ingredient that God often uses to give us endurance, that’s easy to overlook.

Think about Nehemiah's story for example. Give it a read if you never have before (you'll find it mid-way through the Old Testament). A cursory understanding of Nehemiah's story shows that he was fixated on one thing—walls—rebuilding Jerusalem's walls, specifically. But why the obsession? For a people who had just come back from exile, you would think they might have other priorities.

⁴ *The king said to [Nehemiah], "What is it you want? Then I prayed to the God of heaven, ⁵ and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my ancestors are buried so that I can rebuild it." (Nehemiah 2:4-5, NIV)*

Nehemiah recognized that it was never merely about rebuilding the walls, it resembled a far deeper work—the rebuilding of the people's identity. Purpose acts as the fuel for endurance.

Coming out of exile and captivity, ancient Israel was discombobulated. They needed to remember who they were and what Yahweh, the God of Israel, had brought them back *for*. There is a keyword: "for." Nehemiah reminded the people what they were here for. He reminded them of their *purpose*—their *why*. When he led people in and around this common goal he found great success; not because everything came easy but because they were not easily broken. The ability to endure is the capacity to keep at the goal even when opposing forces are working against you. Nehemiah [4](#) & [6](#)

They were all trying to frighten us, thinking, "Their hands will get too weak for the work, and it will not be completed." But I prayed, "Now strengthen my hands." (Nehemiah 6:9)

Nothing came easy for Nehemiah in his task of rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. But adversity has a way of either stopping us or emboldening us. Again, *purpose acts as the fuel for endurance*. Like gasoline to a flame, fiery opposition only reanimates a leader's passion for their cause. We need to know our "why" if we want to succeed in accomplishing God's vision for our lives.

Every great task will be met by adversity. If God isn't in it, then Demons won't feel the need to oppose it.

So the question is: *Am I living with a purpose that makes enemies with the Devil? Or are the demons content with my life's ambitions being where they are?* And let's not get this twisted. The importance of our God-given task does always not amount to the number of people you influence. The task of raising your kids to be passionate Jesus-followers is a holy labor! Leading a Life Group has a ripple effect on the lives of those you lead and those they influence around them. The conversations you have in the halls of your work might be the seeds that become the starter kit of someone's faith journey. Don't underestimate your influence. And don't give up.

So, when you feel like quitting...

- 1) **Remember** why you started. Purpose is the fuel that feeds and energizes you!
- 2) **Reflect** on how far you have come. Because everything looks like failure in the middle.
- 3) **Rediscover** the dream of what can become if we persevere. Because what God leads you to commit to has the potential to make a mark that echoes into eternity.

After all, God does not give purpose that He will not cause to prevail through means of faithful endurance ([Isaiah 46:10](#)). He carried out His purposes for Nehemiah (the walls got rebuilt!) in the face of adversity, and He promises to do the same for you!

—SUMMARY—

How do I lead with vision?

- 1) Identify the needs around me and allow them to break my heart.
- 2) Listen to God's guidance.
- 3) Raise up a team around a common purpose.
- 4) Stick to God's plan in spite of adversity.

—FINAL CHALLENGE QUESTIONS—

1. How are you going to think differently in light of what you have read, heard, and discussed this week?
2. What is one thing you are going to change in your life in light of the sermon?
3. BONUS: For those of you with kids or around kids: What is one truth from this message that you can share with your kids?