

## Washington church of Christ

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# The Washington Messenger

Volume 2 – Number 27

**August 11, 2013**

## Order of Services Sunday, August 11, 2013

Song Leader	Cameron Wydro
Prayer	Ralph Ruggiero
Preaching	Bob James
Lord's Supper	
Prayer for the Bread	Dan Wydro
Prayer for the Cup	Bob Celentano
Prayer for the Collection	Stan Thompson
Assisting at the Table	Bob DeGrado
Scripture Reading	Scott Thomas
Morning Closing Prayer	Tom Dolan
Evening Opening Prayer	Derald Sanchez
Announcements	Matt Grimaldi

## Schedule of Weekly Services

Sunday Morning Bible Classes	9:30 am
Sunday Morning Worship	10:30 am
Sunday Evening Worship	6:00 pm
Wednesday Evening Bible Classes	7:30 pm
Thursday Morning Bible Study	11:00 am

### ***Finding Our Piece of the Wall...***

At times a passage in my daily Bible reading will stick with me in a special way, typically because it resonates with a present situation. Such was the case this week in reading a passage from the book of Nehemiah.

As I read about the work of Nehemiah and the people in rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem, I considered the work to be done here at Washington.

*So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. (Nehemiah 4:6)*

Although our situation is very different than that of Nehemiah's day, in that we are not faced with the daunting job of physically rebuilding walls around our city, we are however in a position to build our congregation spiritually by our working together to do the Will of the Lord. Spiritual growth often leads to physical growth.

#### **Cooperation and Joint Participation**

At the close of Nehemiah chapter 2, he had successfully persuaded the people of Judah to join him in rebuilding the wall. They intended to begin work, in spite of ridicule from their neighboring opponents. Here at Washington we enjoy the blessing of not being faced with the open obstacles faced by Nehemiah and those working with him. But, to paraphrase a famous quote, "our biggest obstacle will be us." Much like Nehemiah motivated the people, we must motivate ourselves to engage and accomplish the work before us.

One of the first things noticed in Nehemiah chapter 3 is the fantastic level of cooperation among God's people for the task. While the list of families participating in the rebuilding of the walls might not be exhaustive, it does offer an overall picture of the work in progress in that it is strikingly inclusive. The builders came from diverse regions of Judah (for example, the Tekoites in Nehemiah 3:5, and the inhabitants of Zanoah in Nehemiah 3:13), and from diverse professions (the goldsmiths and the perfumers, Nehemiah 3:8). Both sexes worked on the wall (Shallum and his daughters in Nehemiah 3:12), and even leaders from Judah got their hands dirty ... including the high priest and his brethren the priests (Nehemiah 3:1), the Levites (Nehemiah 3:17), and many district leaders (Nehemiah 3:9, Nehemiah 3:12, etc.).

In fact Malchijah, the "leader of the district of Beth Haccerem, repaired the Refuse Gate" (Nehemiah 3:14). This was probably not prime territory to work in ... downwind from the city dump ... but someone of authority, who might have used his influence to gain a better assignment, was willing to complete this necessary but less than desirable task.

#### **Realizing That God Works Through Us**

The story is told about a preacher from southern California who was intrigued by the lush forests of New England. He marveled that throughout the densely-overgrown region, one

can see many small farms hewn out of the woods. While out on vacation one day he came upon a farmer laboring in the fields. Eager to compliment his work the preacher stated, "Say, you and God have certainly done a wonderful job out here." With typical New England wit, the farmer responded, "Yeah, but you should have seen what God did by Himself." The wise farmer knew whose hands had done the work!

Likewise, rebuilding the wall in Jerusalem was God's work. God stirred up Nehemiah in chapter 1 and enabled him to be sent to Jerusalem in chapter 2. To his opponents, Nehemiah stated boldly, "*The God of heaven Himself will prosper us; therefore we His servants will arise and build ...*" (Nehemiah 2:20). Later when the wall was completed, Nehemiah commented that "*this work was done by our God*" (Nehemiah 6:16).

But God worked through people ... through Nehemiah and the hard working men and women of Judah. Nehemiah 3 should serve as a reminder to us that the work of God happens when the people of God labor. Of course God can do whatever He wishes, but usually He chooses to work through those who belong to Him, those who respond to His direction. This was true in the days of Nehemiah ... and it was true in the New Testament. It is still true today. Knowing that God works through us should encourage us ... and it should also motivate us to get busy with God's business.

I've stated that Nehemiah 3 is a reminder that the work of God happens when the people of God labor ... it is also a reminder that the work of God happens most effectively when everyone participates. Many may be willing, but they simply don't know where to start ... they can't find their piece of the wall.

I encourage each member of our congregation to consider the following...

**Pray for God's guidance** - We have many examples in the Bible of men and women who asked God for guidance in what to do for Him. Here we read of Moses' request of God...

*Now therefore, I pray, if I have found grace in Your sight, show me now Your way, that I may know You and that I may find grace in Your sight.*" (Exodus 33:13 NKJV)

**Look around Us** - There may be opportunities for us to serve God right in front of us that we may miss because we are looking for our section of the wall elsewhere...

*"Then the righteous will answer him, 'Lord, when did we see you hungry and feed you, or thirsty and give you something to drink? When did we see you a stranger and invite you in, or needing clothes and clothe you? When did we see you sick or in prison and go to visit you?' 'The King will reply, 'I tell you the truth, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers of mine, you did for me.'*" (Matthew 25:37-40 NIV)

**Be Determined** – Much like Nehemiah and those working with him, we will face obstacles, and at times set-backs, when we dedicate ourselves to the work. The Apostle Paul offers these words of encouragement...

*Therefore, my dear brothers, stand firm. Let nothing move you. Always give yourselves fully to the work of the Lord, because you know that your labor in the Lord is not in vain.* (1 Corinthians 15:58 NIV)

God intends to work in this world through us. And surely the church of Christ needs the participation of each member. When each member participates we all, individually and collectively, can experience the joy and fulfillment of contributing to God's work ... the growth of our fellow Christians ... and the growth of our local congregation!

... **Bob James**

## ***Our Prayer List...***

***For Spiritual Responsiveness*** – Georgia DeLorenzo ... Sondra DeLorenzo

***For Physical Healing*** –Mary Broadwell ... Larry Smith (Sharon Ferencze's brother)

***For Wisdom and Good Judgment*** – The Leaders of our nation ... the leaders of our congregation

***For God's Care and Good Providence*** – Our young people here at Washington ... our members who are traveling ... the men and women in military service ... our congregation.

*"This is the confidence we have in approaching God: that if we ask anything according to his will, he hears us. And if we know that he hears us—whatever we ask—we know that we have what we asked of him."* (1 John 5:14-15 NIV)

## ***EVENTS AND NOTES***

UPCOMING EVENTS THAT WE ARE AWARE OF ARE ...

- ✦ OUR "PICNIC IN THE PARK" IS SCHEDULED FOR TODAY AFTER MORNING SERVICES ... ALL ARE WELCOMED!
- ✦ THE NEXT THURSDAY MORNING BIBLE STUDY WILL BE AUGUST 15<sup>TH</sup>, AT 11:00AM.
- ✦ THE WASHINGTON LADIES' RETREAT – SEPTEMBER 6<sup>TH</sup> & 7<sup>TH</sup>.
- ✦ OUR FALL GOSPEL MEETING WITH JOE WORKS OF THE FAIR LAWN CONGREGATION ON OCTOBER 11<sup>TH</sup> – 13<sup>TH</sup>.
- ✦ BOB IS SCHEDULED TO PREACH THE FALL UPPER WEST MANHATTAN GOSPEL MEETING PLANNED FOR SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup> – 22<sup>ND</sup>.
- ✦ SONG SERVICE AT THE EAST ORANGE CONGREGATION ON SEPTEMBER 21<sup>ST</sup> AT 5PM.

