
A Time to Build: *a blueprint for visionary leadership*

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Sermon Study Guide - Part 2 of 7 - "Leaders Take Risks" - 9/22/19

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Welcome to The Story!

A Time to Build is a 7-week series about vision and leadership. Leadership is the ability to *influence* people, and the big idea behind this series is that **every follower of Jesus is called to be a leader**. As we follow him, **Jesus expects us to influence others to follow him as well** (Matthew 28:19).

So if you're following Jesus, surprise - you're a leader!

Who are you leading, and how are you influencing them?

Who was Nehemiah?

Write everything you learn about Nehemiah's context and background here:

Nehemiah 2:11

"I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days..."

What did Nehemiah do when he finally arrived in Jerusalem, and how might many of us have treated this situation differently if we were in his shoes?

What does this tell you about Nehemiah's *character*?

Nehemiah 2:12-16

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. 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; so I went up the valley by night, examining the wall. Finally, I turned back and re-entered through the Valley Gate. 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.

What were Nehemiah's reasons for going out at night to look at a bunch of ruins?

Why was it important for Nehemiah not to tell anyone about the vision God had given him?

See 1 Timothy 1:7, Proverbs 29:20

The Cost of Obedience

Nehemiah was counting the cost to rebuild the city walls. **Obedying God almost always comes at a cost.** Sometimes the cost is financial, but faithfulness can also mean putting your time, reputation, relationships, or social life on the line. What were the costs facing Nehemiah?

Jesus had some weighty things to say about the cost of being his disciple:

"If anyone comes to me and does not hate father and mother, wife and children, brothers and sisters—yes, even their own life—such a person cannot be my disciple. And whoever does not carry their cross and follow me cannot be my disciple. "Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish...In the same way, those of you who do not give up everything you have cannot be my disciples.'" - **Luke 14:26-30, 33**

What is Jesus saying here about the cost of Christian discipleship?

Has following Jesus cost you anything yet? If yes, what? If not, what does that tell you?

Grace Is Free, But It Ain't Cheap

Nehemiah's story reminds us to step back, take stock, and count the cost before we run our mouths about God's plans for us and other people. That's because, while God's grace is a free gift, it's never cheap, and if we're unwilling to sacrifice for Christ's sake, we won't last long as disciples.

"Costly grace was turned into cheap grace without discipleship." - D. Bonhoeffer

What are the key distinctions between true grace and cheap grace?

How do you think it looks for you to follow Jesus like his grace is costly instead of cheap?

Your Notes: