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

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Sermon Study Guide - Part 6 of 7 - "Leaders Prepare Their People for Victory" - 10/20/19
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Welcome to The Story!

A Time to Build is a 7-week series about vision and leadership. Leadership is *influence with 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 leads us to influence others to follow him as well** (Matthew 28:19). *So if you're following Jesus, surprise - you're a leader!*

Losers Get Rattled; Leaders Get Ready

What is our aim? I can answer in one word - Victory - victory at all costs, victory in spite of all terror, victory, however long and hard the road may be; for without victory, there is no survival.

- Winston Churchill

What were the greatest challenges Winston Churchill faced when he became the British Prime Minister in the 1940s? How did he lead through them?

Nehemiah 4:6-10

So we rebuilt the wall till all of it reached half its height, for the people worked with all their heart. But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the people of Ashdod heard that the repairs to Jerusalem's walls had gone ahead and that the gaps were being closed, they were very angry. They all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and stir up trouble against it. But we prayed to our God and posted a guard day and night to meet this threat. Meanwhile, the people in Judah said, "The strength of the laborers is giving out, and there is so much rubble that we cannot rebuild the wall."

Why were the people starting to give up?

Leaders Adapt to Changing Circumstances

Nehemiah 4:11-15

Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work." Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us." Therefore I stationed some of the people behind the lowest points of the wall at the exposed places, posting them by families, with their swords, spears and bows. After I looked things over, I stood up and said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "Don't be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your families, your sons and your daughters, your wives and your homes." When our enemies heard that we were aware of their plot and that God had frustrated it, we all returned to the wall, each to our own work.

What did Nehemiah do to motivate the builders to get back on mission?

Nehemiah 4:16-23

From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped with spears, shields, bows, and armor. The officers posted themselves behind all the people of Judah who were building the wall. Those who carried materials did their work with one hand and held a weapon in the other, and each of the builders wore his sword at his side as he worked. But the man who sounded the trumpet stayed with me.

Then I said to the nobles, the officials and the rest of the people, "The work is extensive and spread out, and we are widely separated from each other along the wall. Wherever you hear the sound of the trumpet, join us there. Our God will fight for us!" So we continued the work with half the men holding spears, from the first light of dawn till the stars came out. At that time I also said to the people, "Have every man and his helper stay inside Jerusalem at night, so they can serve us as guards by night and as workers by day." Neither I nor my brothers nor my men nor the guards with me took off our clothes; each had his weapon, even when he went for water.

How did this strategy differ from Nehemiah's initial response to the threat (prayer and one guard on duty)?

Why was it important for Nehemiah to outfit his workers with tools for building *and* weapons for combat?

Jesus' Victorious Vision

Matthew 10:16-23

"I am sending you out like sheep among wolves. Therefore be as shrewd as snakes and as innocent as doves. Be on your guard; you will be handed over to the local councils and be flogged in the synagogues. On my account you will be brought before governors and kings as witnesses to them and to the Gentiles. But when they arrest you, do not worry about what to say or how to say it. At that time you will be given what to say, for it will not be you speaking, but the Spirit of your Father speaking through you.

"Brother will betray brother to death, and a father his child; children will rebel against their parents and have them put to death. You will be hated by everyone because of me, but the one who stands firm to the end will be saved. When you are persecuted in one place, flee to another. Truly I tell you, you will not finish going through the towns of Israel before the Son of Man comes.

How did Jesus prepare his disciples to face the inevitable conflict that awaited them?

How about you and the people you're leading? How are you using your influence to prepare yourself and those you're leading to build your defenses while also readying your "sword"?