



Sermon Preached August 18th 2019
“The Heart that Built a City”

SERMON OUTLINE

Main Idea: A heart that breaks is a heart that builds.

- I. The theme for the year ahead is Building Up One Another. 1 Thessalonians 5:11
- II. The heart of a builder cares enough to ask. Nehemiah 1:1-3
- III. The heart of a builder feels sorrow over ruined lives. Nehemiah 1:4
- IV. The heart of a builder prays. Nehemiah 1:4; Romans 12:11

GETTING STARTED

1. What major point from the sermon stood out to you as particularly helpful? Why?

DIRECTOR'S CUT

“Room For Anguish”

A young man, who is newer to our church, approached me after the sermon on Sunday and said he often feels moved to tears during the church service. He acknowledged that he didn't know whether it was appropriate to cry in church so he usually stifles his tears. I think most people at our church feel comfortable in expressing their tears but this young man somehow caught the idea that church is not a place for tears. I asked him, “why do you feel reluctant?” He told me that he didn't want people to think there was something wrong with him. I love that he replied in this way because tears are the marker that something is deeply wrong. Tears are the sign that there is something wrong with the world. Tears are also the marker that everything is right because tears are the appropriate response to sin and ruin. When we see a child of God crying we can say, “there is something wrong and everything is right.” There is something wrong with Nehemiah. He is stirred to anguish because of the ruined condition of Jerusalem. There is also everything right with Nehemiah because tears are the appropriate response to ruin.

Nehemiah's sorrow could be seen by others. The king of Persia could tell that something was wrong with Nehemiah. He wasn't his “normal” self. (c.f. Nehemiah 2:2) Nehemiah's anguish initiated a conversation that would change the fate of Jerusalem. That is power. Anguish can be an unpleasant experience at times but it has incredible power when it is anguish from the Holy Spirit. When a child of God cries it shows that there is something wrong. It also shows that something is right because children of God are called to mourn.

DIGGING DEEPER

1. Do we have room for anguish in our churches? What does “room for anguish” actually mean?
2. What are the obstacles in church or in culture that keep Christians from experience anguish? What influence does media and entertainment have in numbing Christians to anguish?
3. Do you think Nehemiah's weeping was a surprise to himself? Do you think it was “out of the blue” or do you think Nehemiah had already cultivated a heart that was soft for God and His people? How do you imagine Nehemiah cultivated his heart?