

May Series: Foundations 2008

Building to last

How to develop your level of Influence

Key lessons from the life of Nehemiah and the building of the walls of Jerusalem

May 4	<i>Become a person of vision</i>	<i>Ian Miller</i>
May 11	<i>Pick up the sword and the trowel</i>	<i>Ian Miller</i>
May 18	<i>Have a mind to do something</i>	<i>Ian Miller</i>
May 25	<i>I am doing a great work</i>	<i>Ian Miller</i>

Today marks the beginning of the highlight
(Foundations mast) month of our calendar here at CCH.

The focus for us is:

Building to Last

How to develop your level of Influence

I'm going to draw a lot of insights from looking at the life and example of a famous OT leader, Nehemiah.

Let me give you the background... *(map)*

~ 600BC, Israel into captivity

By 536BC – Persian Empire

The story of Nehemiah starts in 446BC in one of the Persian capitals, Susa. Nehemiah is a Jew, but he's in prominent government position. He's the cupbearer to the king!

And he hears what is happening in Jerusalem...

Nehemiah 1:2-3

Hanani, one of my brothers, came to visit me with some other men who had just arrived from Judah. I asked them about the

Jews who had returned there from captivity and about how things were going in Jerusalem. They said to me, “Things are not going well for those who returned to the province of Judah. They are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem has been torn down, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

What’s been going on? Has no one seen it? This is ages into the return to Jerusalem.

The city walls are a pile of rubble. The state of their city reflects what their own hearts look like – broken down, disorganised, aimless, just existing but not living.

When Nehemiah heard what was going on, he was gripped by a vision that changed his people forever!

Nehemiah 1:4

When I heard this, I sat down and wept. In fact, for days I mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven.

Vision captures our heart! *(heading to verse)*

Nehemiah 1:5-6

Then I said: "O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel.

Vision inspires prayer! *(heading to verse)*

But we don't just pray!

Vision inspires action!

Nehemiah 2:1-3

Early the following spring, during the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes' reign, I was serving the king his wine. I had never before appeared sad in his presence. So the king asked me, "Why are you looking so sad? You don't look sick to me. You must be deeply troubled." Then I was terrified, but I replied, "Long live the king! How can I not be sad? For the city where my ancestors

are buried is in ruins, and the gates have been destroyed by fire.”

The king sends him on his way, gives him building materials & letters of authority for the regional Governors...

Nehemiah 2:11-12

I went to Jerusalem, and after staying there three days I set out during the night with a few men. 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.

Let the vision settle in your heart. *(heading to verse)*

It can overwhelm you. Don't run away from it!

Nehemiah 2:17-18

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." I also told them about the gracious hand of my God upon

me and what the king had said to me. They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work.

Let the vision encourage faith, not despair...

CCH, we can learn SO much from this!

The walls of OUR CITY are broken down!

Jonah 4:11

But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, and many cattle are also there. Don't you think I should be concerned about that great city?

Vision captures our heart!

Our city needs to see what a passionate group of Jesus' followers really looks like. People whose lives make a difference!

Who bring a positive influence!

Our community needs to see what Jesus' church is really like – with people who love life, build positive relationships, who have dignity, who believe in themselves – the best relationships, the best business practices, the best work ethics, the greatest integrity.

So we pray! (Vision inspires prayer!) We can't achieve our destiny without Jesus! It's why we have the 31 Day Prayer Team.

Vision inspires action!

We plan and strategise! We're deliberate! It's why we bought the Bridge/refurbished! It's why we give so freely!

Let the vision settle in your heart!

Every May, we focus on our Vision. We're not ashamed of that, because our City needs us to focus on our Vision!

Foundations *(with Impacting Communities for Christ slogan)*

Each May we give people the opportunity to join in with the Foundations adventure. If you haven't partnered with the rest of us, at the end of the month, I'll give you the opportunity to join in for the last year.

If we don't rise up and champion the cause of Jesus' vision for us, no one else will!

So we plan. We pray. We anticipate!

Sunday 25th May Celebration Sunday!

We're continuing our series

Building to Last

How to develop your level of Influence

We're looking at the life of Nehemiah in the Old Testament.

It's an ancient book, from a time ~2500 years ago, but there are so many principles that help us become people of influence

If you missed last week's message, go to our website! Welcome to those listening online!

Nehemiah had rallied the people together to do a great work. Their city was in chaos, but God had a plan for them. They had a vision! So they started rebuilding the wall of Jerusalem.

You'd think that if you'd heard from God, that if you were doing what he wanted you to do, that everything would go smoothly!

That's hardly ever true in any great venture!
There were enemies! And that meant plenty
of discouragement!

1st Obstacle: the Nay-sayers!

Nehemiah 4:1-3

When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?" Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!"

“You can’t build a great church in
Hornsby!”

You see, we have a vision too...

Jonah 4:11

But Nineveh has more than 120,000 people living in spiritual darkness, and many cattle are also there. Don't you think I should be concerned about that great city?

And there's always those who say it can't be done!

Give it to God and get on with the job!

2nd Obstacle: not sharing the load

Nehemiah 5 – tell the story. Hard time economically, had to work the fields, tax was high, some were selling their land and families! And some were profiteering! Not everyone pulling their weight!

Let your own integrity be seen

He called them to put an end to cheating on their brothers, and used his own example as the motivator.

Nehemiah 5:14-18

For the entire twelve years that I was governor of Judah neither I nor my officials drew on our official food allowance. The former governors, in contrast, had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine, besides forty pieces of silver... But because I feared God, I did not act that way. I also devoted myself to working on the wall and refused to acquire any land...

3rd Obstacle: Slander

Nehemiah 6:5-7

Sanballat's servant came with an open letter in his hand, and this is what it said: "There is a rumour among the surrounding nations, and Geshem tells me it's true, that you and the Jews are planning to rebel and that's why you're building the wall. According to his reports, you plan to be their king. He also reports that you have appointed prophets in Jerusalem to proclaim about you, 'Look! There is a king in Judah!' You can be very

sure that this report will get back to the king...”

How many times have I seen THAT one with churches that are moving ahead!

Don't expect everyone to speak well of you!

Just don't let it stop you!

He came with an open letter in his hand!

File it in the bin!!!

We're all about...

Impacting Communities for Christ

...being a people of influence

Matthew 16:18

On this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it.

Build the Church

The gates of Hades won't overcome it!

Hades! We have our own Sanballat!

Ephesians 6:12

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms.

If you want to be a person of Influence, or be a part of a church of Influence, there'll be a fight.

It will look remarkably like what Nehemiah faced!

Nehemiah 4:7-9

But when Sanballat, Tobiah, the Arabs, the Ammonites and the men 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.

Nehemiah 4:16-18

From that day on, half of my men did the work, while the other half were equipped

with spears, shields, bows and armour. 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.

And there's the key!

Pick up your trowel! Pick up your sword!

One hand on the work, the other on the sword!

1 Corinthians 15:58

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 labour in the Lord is not in vain.

2 Timothy 2:3

Endure hardship with us like a good soldier of Christ Jesus.

Foundations...

1 Year Commitment

May 25 splash Offering

We're continuing our series

Building to Last

How to develop your level of Influence

This is a highlight month for us here at CCH. We focus in on who we are, and why we're here!

Church isn't a club!

It's all about Jesus! He died for us! He rose again! Have you ever thought why he ascended back to heaven? Why didn't he finally restore all things?

And here's another question. If he knew he was going away, and would be leaving us (but not really, because he gave us his Spirit to be with us)... But if he knew he'd be leaving, obviously he'd want to organise us some way. And he DID! "I will build my church". But why CHURCH? Of all the ways he could have got us together to do something powerful and significant in our

world. Of all the ways to organise us, why
CHURCH?

Could have...

Schools

Hospitals

Aid agencies

Political group

Peace corp