

THE WILL TO PREPARE

Nehemiah 2:1020

January 11, 2009 Sunday am

INTRODUCTION

- A. One definition of success says “**Success is when opportunity meets preparation**”.
 - 1. Roger Staubach, former Dallas Cowboy quarterback once said, “**Spectacular achievements come from unspectacular preparation**”.
 - 2. Bear Bryant was the football coach at Alabama for 25 years. He once said, “**Its not the will to win that matters, everyone has that. It’s the will to prepare that matters**”.
- B. If you want to be a leader you must spend some time in preparation.
 - 1. Nehemiah did just that as we see in chapter 2 of his book.
 - 2. Last week we learned three marks of a leader in chapter 1....
 - a. Willing to become more than they are.
 - b. Passion for something.
 - c. Willing to take the lead.
 - 3. Today we see that Nehemiah prepared to become a leader in five ways. What must a leader do to be ready to lead?

I. FIRST, LEADERS MUST GET READY TO WAIT.

- A. It was November when Nehemiah heard about the walls being down according to 1:1. However it was May before he had an opportunity to do anything about it according to 2:1. In other words, six months went by before Nehemiah could act on his passion.
- B. This reminds us that if you want to be a leader you probably will need to be ready to wait.
 - 1. Over the years I’ve had many people come to me and excitedly say they felt called to go into the ministry. Most of them stayed excited for about a week and then it was back to business as usual.
 - 2. The point is that often the first thing we must be willing to do before we can become a leader is wait.

II. SECOND, LEADERS MUST GET READY FOR AN OPEN DOOR.

- A. What did Nehemiah do during that 6 month waiting period?
 - 1. He decided what he would need when the opportunity presented itself.
 - 2. It came in 2:4 and he shared his preplanning in 2:4-5.
- B. If God gives you a dream, don’t be discouraged by the wait. Instead start planning what you need to do when the chance comes.
 - 1. Its not luck that brings success (“being in the right place at the right time”).
 - 2. Its being prepared when the opportunity arises.

III. THIRD, LEADERS MUST GET READY TO PRAY.

- A. Nehemiah prayed what can be called “bullet prayers”—2:4-5.
 - 1. This wasn’t his only kind of praying.
 - 2. Throughout the 13 chapters of his book, 9 of his prayers recorded.
- B. If God has given you a dream start praying about it.

IV. FOURTH, LEADERS MUST GET READY FOR SOME LONELY NIGHTS.

- A. Nehemiah spent some lonely nights getting ready before he started to rebuild the city walls.
 - 1. First, he had to travel 800 miles from Babylon to Jerusalem.
 - 2. Next, he examined the project before he told anyone else about it—2:11-12, 16.
- B. There comes a time when leaders must spend some lonely nights in preparation just as Roger Staubach and Bear Bryant said.
 - 1. Perhaps no one else will ever know about your late nights and days.
 - 2. But it’s a price leaders must be willing to pay.

V. FINALLY, LEADERS MUST GET READY FOR OPPOSITION.

- A. Nehemiah had his critics—2:10, 19.
 - 1. They probably said something like “who does he think he is”.
 - 2. Or, “he’s just a slave, why should we listen to him?”
- B. Most leaders have their critics.
 - 1. They are usually people who are not leaders themselves.
 - 2. No leader is immune to criticism.
- C. How should we respond to critics?
 - 1. If you can keep from it, don’t respond at all.
 - 2. If you must respond, keep it short like Nehemiah did—2:20.
 - 3. By all means, keep going and don’t let them stop you.

CONCLUSION

- A. Success doesn’t just happen. It’s the result of preparation meeting opportunity.
- B. Has God given you a dream? Then....
 - 1. Get ready to wait.
 - 2. Get ready for an open door.
 - 3. Get ready to pray about it.
 - 4. Get ready for some lonely nights.
 - 5. Get ready for opposition.