

MOVING OUTSIDE THE WALLS

Nehemiah 12:27

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. At this point in Nehemiah... the people of Israel who had returned to Jerusalem from captivity.
- b. Had rebuilt the walls of the city...they were rebuilding the homes inside Jerusalem... and the Temple.
- c. But it was never God's intention for the influence of Israel to be confined just to one particular place... behind the walls of a city.
- d. It was God's intention for Israel to be His witnessing nation to the world...to draw the people of the world to faith and trust in the one true God.
- e. The call of God for Israel to be His witnessing nation to the world has never been revoked... that is still God's purpose and intention for the nation.
- f. But to this present day... Israel has failed to fulfill God's purpose.
- g. When Israel rejected Jesus their promised Messiah... and caused Him to be crucified by the Romans... God temporarily put Israel to the side ... and He called a new nation to be His witnessing nation to the world ... and that new nation is the Church of Jesus Christ.
- h. It is now the church's calling to share the good news of Jesus Christ to the world... and draw people from around the world to faith in Christ.
- i. But God has not put aside Israel forever... the Bible says that during the time of the Tribulation... Israel will turn to Christ... and be God's witnessing nation to the world.

- j. But until that happens it is the calling of the church... to witness to the world of the truth about Jesus... and His saving grace for all who will repent and believe.
- k. As it was not God's intention for Israel to stay behind the walls of Jerusalem ... it is not God's intention for the church to stay behind the walls of it's buildings... it is God's intention for the church to go into the world and tell the good news of Jesus Christ.

II. GOD'S CALLING TO GO-

- a. God's marching orders to the church are found in *Matthew 28:18-20 (NKJV)* "And Jesus came and spoke to them, saying, "All authority has been given to Me in heaven and on earth. Go therefore and make disciples of all the nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, teaching them to observe all things that I have commanded you; and lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age. Amen."
- b. Just before Jesus ascended into Heaven... forty days after His resurrection... He told His disciples to remain in Jerusalem until the Holy Spirit of God came upon them in power.
- c. Jesus said in Acts 1:8... "*But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be witnesses to Me in Jerusalem, and in all Judea and Samaria, and to the end of the earth.*"
- d. 10 days later on the Day of Pentecost...the Holy Spirit came upon the disciples as Jesus promised.
- e. And since that time the church's calling has been to carry the gospel to the lost world... starting at our front doorsteps.

III. SALT AND LIGHT-

- a. God does not intend for the influence of the church to be confined to the walls of its building... God intends for the church to go and tell.
- b. In Matthew 5:13-14... Jesus said that those who follow Him are the salt and light of the world.
- c. Salt and light are agents of influence... for salt to carry out its function of preserving and influencing taste... it cannot be confined to a container or shaker.
- d. For salt to do its work... it has to be applied to what it is supposed to influence.
- e. Salt is not meant to stay in a box... no matter how beautiful that box may be... salt is meant to be applied.
- f. For Christians and the church of Jesus Christ to be salt of the earth... we cannot stay confined to the walls of our church building... no matter how beautiful that building may be.
- g. For Christians and the church of Jesus Christ to be salt of the earth... we must go outside the walls of the church... and be an influence for Christ in the world.
- h. For Christians and the church to be the light of the world ... we cannot hide our light under a basket... no matter how beautiful that basket may be.
- i. For Christians and the church to be the light of the world... we cannot confine our light for Christ and let it shine only in the church building.
- j. For Christians to be the light of the world we must let our witness for Christ shine in the world ... by living holy and godly lives... by doing good works in His name ... and by sharing the gospel of Jesus Christ with the lost world around us.

- k. When a church building becomes nothing more than a glorified saltshaker holding the salt of a church... and a beautiful basket covering up the light of a church.
- l. When a church is failing to reach outside the walls of its building and failing to influence its community and the world for Christ as God has called us to do ... then that church needs revival.
- m. If a church is not having visitors attend its services on a regular basis ...then that probably is a sign that that church is not reaching out to its community as it should.
- n. And the truth is... our church is not having the visitors we should have ... and that is a sign that we are not reaching out to our community as we should be doing.
- o. Today... I want us to begin to do something about reaching out to our community in a better way than we are doing.
- p. Today...I have no intention of putting us all on a guilt trip with this message... guilt is a motivator... but it is not the best motivator.
- q. Today I think we can all stipulate that our church needs to do a better job in reaching out to our community... so how do we do that?

IV. THE PURPOSE OF OUTREACH-

- a. Over the past three or four years... this church has lost a whole generation of strong, stalwart, foundational church members... and our church is missing them.
- b. Many of the strongest givers and tithers and workers who once were a part of this church family have graduated to Heaven... its hallelujah and praise the Lord for them... but it is a challenge for us who have been left behind... we have some gaps to fill.

- c. Like a lot of churches... over the past few years we have gained some wonderful families ... and we thank God for them... and we have lost some families too.
- d. And before any of you guys get any ideas... this church is not ordaining anyone else to the ministry... we have sent enough people off to Pastor other churches... I am just kidding of course!
- e. With all that being true...the purpose of reaching out to our community ... *is not*... so that we can get more church members.
- f. The purpose of reaching out to our community is to bring people to Christ ... we are to reach out so that people might be saved... being a church member means absolutely nothing ... if a person is not saved.
- g. The worst thing in the world we could do... is to try to bring people into the church as members... without first making sure that they are saved.
- h. It is dangerous to be an unsaved church member...unsaved church members...are among the hardest people in the world to reach for Christ.
- i. Jesus did not send us into the world to make church members ... He sent us into the world to bring people to Christ and to make disciples ... church membership follows that.

V. THE PLAN OF OUTREACH-

- a. Today I want to share with you a plan... that will involve every member of our church... in reaching out to our community.
- b. This plan begins where every plan, program and ministry in the church should begin... with prayer.
- c. The truth is every Christian can and should be a witness ... if you can talk about the weather or sports... or hunting... or sewing ... you can talk with someone else about what Jesus has done for you.

- d. But the thought of witnessing to someone else and telling someone else about Christ is terrifying to many Christians...they wish they could do...they want to do it...but they just don't feel like they can.
- e. That is okay... I know how you feel... before he was saved...I witnessed to my own brother... and I was terrified when I did it... but I loved him and I wanted him to be saved ...so I witnessed to him... and he was not saved then... but he was saved later.
- f. Maybe you are not at the point where you feel like you can witness to someone about being saved ... keeping praying about ...and pray that God will help you to get to that point.
- g. But until you get there... there are things you can do to help our church reach out to our community... #1, you can pray for our church.
- h. You can pray that we might begin to see people saved... and come into our church.
- i. Nothing will revive a church quicker... that seeing people saved and born again.
- j. If you are willing to pray... that people might begin to be saved in our church... I want to ask you to raise your hand.
- k. #2, You can pray for the lost...I want you to make a list of five people ... in this community... that you believe or that you know... are lost ... and then I want you to begin to pray every day that those people might be saved.
- l. I mean it... don't let this be one of those things that you say you are going to do... but you don't get around to doing it... we do that kind of thing in church more than we should.
- m. If you are willing to make that list of lost people... and make a commitment to pray for them to be saved ... please raise your hand.

- n. You may not feel like you can witness to someone yet... but you can pray... you can pray for your church... and you can pray for the lost.
- o. I want you to pray for those people individually... and I want you to pray for them with belief and passion.
- p. In Romans 10:1... Paul shared how he was praying for the lost people of Israel... *“Brethren, my heart's desire and prayer to God for Israel is that they may be saved.”*
- q. The phrase “heart’s desire”... expresses Paul’s deep longing for his fellow countrymen to be saved.
- r. The word translated “prayer” in that verse... conveys the idea of pleading and making a persistent petition to God that Israel might be saved.
- s. When Paul prayed for Israel to be saved... he was not making a hopeless plea that he did not expect God to answer.
- t. Paul believed that all of Israel could be saved..if they trusted in Christ.
- u. #3, The third thing every member of this church can do to help us reach out to our community... is invite people to come to the services of our church.
- v. Here is what I want to ask you to do... I want you to make a list of five people that know who are not going to church... and next week I want you to invite them to our church.
- w. They can be the same five you are praying for to be saved... or they can be different people.
- x. You don’t have to go visit them... you can call them... you can text them ... you can email them... you can private message them on Facebook...but I want you to specifically invite them to church.

- y. Tell them that when they come to our church they won't be asked to say anything... they don't have to dress up... you can tell them that the preacher may have a suit and tie on but that is his job... they don't have to give any money... you just want them to come and sit with you in church.
- z. If you are willing to do that... will you raise your hand?
- aa. I want you to one other thing... I want you to write down the name of those you are praying for... and the names and contact information of the ones you invited to come to church and bring them with you next Sunday... because the Pastor and Deacons and others are going to be praying for these folks as well.

VI. CONCLUSION-

- a. We are planning organized outreach events and activities... but let's don't wait for those... let's start reaching out now.
- b. Do you want to know how to be saved from a lost and empty life... and a lost eternity?
- c. *Isaiah 55:6-7 (CSBBible) "Seek the LORD while he may be found; call to him while he is near. Let the wicked one abandon his way and the sinful one his thoughts; let him return to the LORD, so he may have compassion on him, and to our God, for he will freely forgive."*