

Building Together

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- [0 : 0 0] And turn to the book of Nehemiah. And we're going to be picking up where we left off in this book before Easter, in Nehemiah chapter 3.
- Where the remnant of the people of Judah, those whom the Lord brought back from exile, are setting about rebuilding the wall around Jerusalem.
- And you'll see on your seats, when you came in earlier, you've been given a map. And this map clearly shows a picture of that wall that they're rebuilding. And it shows you the names of the different people I mentioned in this passage and where they were building.
- Don't look at it just now. Alright, put it under your seat just now please. And let's focus on God's word. You can look at that later. It's a very helpful document to have. You maybe want to keep it tucked in your Bible for future reference.
- But let's read this passage. Hear the word of the Lord. Nehemiah chapter 3, beginning at verse 1. Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brothers the priests.
- [1 : 0 8] And they built the sheep gate. They consecrated it and set its doors. They consecrated it as far as the tower of the hundred. As far as the tower of Hananel.
- And next to him the men of Jericho built. And next to them Zachur the son of Imri built. The sons of Hasenah built the fish gate.
- They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts and its bars. And next to them Merimoth the son of Uriah. Son of Hachos repaired. And next to them Meshulam the son of Berechiah. Son of Mesh-Isabel repaired. And next to them Zadok the son of Banna repaired. And next to them the Techoites repaired.
- But their neighbors would not stoop to serve their Lord. Joiada the son of Paseah. And Meshulam the son of Besodiah.
- [2 : 1 8] Repaired the gate of Yeshannah. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts and its bars. And next to them repaired Melatiah the Gibeonite.
- And Jadon the Merinothonite. The men of Gibeon and of Mizpah. The seat of the governor of the province beyond the river. Next to them Uziel the son of Harhiah.
- Goldsmiths repaired. Next to him Hananiah one of the perfumers repaired. And they restored Jerusalem as far as the broad wall. Next to them Repha-iah the son of Hur.
- Ruler of half the district of Jerusalem repaired. Next to them Jediah the son of Haram-Aph. Repaired opposite his house.
- And next to him Hattush the son of Hashab-Ne-Aiah repaired. Malkijah the son of Harim.
- [3 : 2 6] And Hashab the son of Pahath-Moab. Repaired another section. And the tower of the ovens. Next to him Shalom the son of Halohesh.
- Ruler of half the district of Jerusalem. Repaired. He and his daughters. Hanan and the inhabitants of Zanoah repaired the valley gate.
- They rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts and its bars. And repaired a thousand cubits of the wall. As far as the dung gate. Malkijah the son of Rechab.

Ruler of the district of Beth-Hakarim. Repaired the dung gate. He repaired it and set its doors, its boats and its bars. And Shalom the son of Col-Hose.

Ruler of the district of Mizpah. Repaired. The fountain gate. He rebuilt it and covered it. And set its doors, its boats and its bars.

[4 : 31] And he built the wall of the pool of Shelah. Of the king's garden. As far as the stairs that go down from the city of David. After him Nehemiah.

The son of Asbuk. Ruler of half the district of Beth-Zur. Repaired to a point opposite the tombs of David. As far as the artificial pool.

And as far as the house of the mighty men. After him the Levites repaired. Raham the son of Bani. Next to him.

Ashabiah. The ruler of half the district of Keilah. Repaired for his district. After him their brothers repaired. Bava-i. The son of Henadad.

Ruler of half the district of Keilah. Next to him. Ezra. The son of Jeshua. Ruler of Mizpah. Repaired another section.

[5 : 30] Opposite the ascent to the armory. At the buttress. After him Baruch. The son of Zeba-i. Repaired another section. From the buttress to the door of the house of Eliashib.

The high priest. After him. Merimoth. The son of Uriah. Son of Hachoz. Repaired another section. From the door of the house of Eliashib.

To the end of the house of Eliashib. After him. The priests. The men of the surrounding area. Repaired. After them.

Benjamin. And Hashub. Repaired opposite their house. After them. Azariah. The son of Mahaziah. Son of Ananiah.

Repaired beside his own house. After him. Ben-u-i. The son of Henadad. Repaired another section. From the house of Azariah.

[6 : 27] To the buttress. And to the corner. Palal. The son of Uzzi. Repaired opposite the buttress. And the tower. Projecting from the upper house of the king.

At the court of the guard. After him. Ped-i. The son of Parosh. And the temple servants. Living on Ophel.

Repaired a point. Opposite the water gate. On the east. And the projecting tower. After him. The Techoites. Repaired another section.

Opposite the great projecting tower. As far as the wall of Ophel. Above the horse gate. The priests repaired. Each one.

Opposite his own house. After them. Zadok. The son of Immer. Repaired opposite his own house. After him. Shema-iah. The son of Shekeniah.

[7 : 22] The keeper of the east gate. Repaired. After him. Han-iah. The son of Shelemiah. And Hanon. The sixth son of Zalaph.

Repaired another section. After him. Meshulam. The son of Berechiah. Repaired opposite his chamber. And after him.

Melchizedek. One of the goldsmiths. Repaired as far as the house of the temple servants. And of the merchants. Opposite the muster gate. And to the upper chamber.

Of the corner. And between the upper chamber of the corner. And the sheep gate. The goldsmiths. And the merchants. Repaired. Amen.

And may God bless to us. This. His word. Amen. Well. It would be a great help. If you could have. An AMI chapter three.

- [8 : 22] Open. There in front of you. And. Thank you to Phil. For reading that. I know you've been dreading that. Since you. But thank you.
- So please have that open. Now. I wonder. If. As the reading was announced. As Phil began to read. That. I wonder.
- If your heart sank. As Phil's did. When we saw this long list. We can have that. Response. When we come to lists.
- In the Bible sometimes. But let me give you another list. And see. If it sparks your interest. A little more. Then. I've not told her this. She's unaware.
- Then. Agnes Brough. Arose. With her junior church team. And they sought to build up. The children. And youth in the church. Beside her. Was Ed de Bleek.
- [9 : 19] Working in the central location. Beside him. Was Connor Blair. Catherine Coombs. Aaron Hunt. Johnny Lynn. Catherine Morrison. Sarah Nichol. Also. There was Dan Greaves. Miriam Lowry. Zara McClure.
- Gemma Rennie. James Todd. Saskia Whitford. May Wong. And Ify Yan. At the. Calvin Grove location. Rose up. Torkel. Sandra. Torkel Campbell.
- And Sandra Campbell. Who built. The cleaning teams. To ensure. That our building. Was ready. For worship. On a Sunday. Alongside them. Were Lynn Kerr.
- Elizabeth McNaughton. Callum McElraith. Andy Ballengall. Kieran Cranston. Richard Dunsmore. Catherine Lobb. Rizwan Sakrib. And so on. I could keep going. But a list like that.
- Grabs your attention. Doesn't it? Perhaps your name was on it. And you probably know. A good number of those. Included. Our eyes. And ears. Suddenly lit up. We wanted to hear more.
- [10 : 17] Now. Lists of names. Lists. That describe. The living church. That you belong to. They do interest you. Don't they? There is of interest.
- Because you know. The people on it. But the lists here. In Nehemiah 3. Perhaps. Don't grab you. So easily. But the more time I've spent.
- In this chapter. This past week. The more interested I've become. The more it grips me. In the same way. That those other lists. I just read. Did. There is more.
- For us here. Than we might imagine. Initially. This chapter. Is a simple record. Of the various peoples. And groups. Who engaged. In the rebuilding. Of the walls. Of Jerusalem.
- It's a very straightforward list. It names. Who was there. And which bit of the wall. They repaired. Simple it may be. But the truth.
- [11 : 15] It communicates. Is profound. Chapter 3. Of Nehemiah. Describes. Real people. Doing real. Gospel. Building work.
- Sacrificially. Serving. Side by side. For the sake. Of God's kingdom. And these people. Are. Our spiritual. Ancestors. And there is great.
- Instruction. For us. Here. As we spend time. This evening. On this chapter. It is just what. The apostle Paul. Speaks of. In Ephesians chapter 4. Where he writes this.
- Christ. Gave the apostles. The prophets. The evangelists. The shepherds. And teachers. To equip the saints. For the work of ministry. For building up. The body of Christ. Speaking.
- The truth in love. We are to grow up. In every way. Into him. Who is the head. Into Christ. Christ. From whom. The whole body. Joined. And held together. By every joint. With which is equipped. When each part.

[12 : 09] Is working properly. Makes the body grow. So that it builds. Itself up. In love. Nehemiah 3. Is a very vivid.

Illustration. Of what the apostle Paul. Is talking about there. In Ephesians 4. Here is what real. Gospel service. Looks like. Here is what.

Real gospel servants. Look like. So we're going to note. A few details. About this chapter. And draw out. Some key implications.

For us today. So here's the first one. There's four. Number one. This is an account. Which demonstrates. Order. In the building. Of God's kingdom. It demonstrates.

Order. In the building. Of God's kingdom. This. Is a very carefully. Put together list. Now. As. If you paid attention. To the maps.

[13 : 04] That were on your seats. The reading. Begins. With the liarship. And that's in the very north. Point. Of your map. The very top. At twelve o'clock. You see the sheep gate.

And the liarship. The priest. We're told. Rebuilt that section. Of the wall. And the list. Works. Anti-clockwise. So it goes around.

Bit by bit. In a very orderly. Fashion. And it tells you. Who built. And what area. Of the wall. They rebuilt. It's a very. Ordered.

Account. It works. Systematically. Around the wall. Anti-clockwise. Next. Is the tower. Of the hundred. Next to sheep gate. Verse one.

And so on. It goes around. The wall. Several things. To note. About this observation. One. It speaks of order.

[13 : 59] In God's kingdom building efforts. Nehemiah was clearly. A very well organized leader. There was nothing. Haphazard about this. Remember that Nehemiah. Had conducted his own survey.

Of the crumbling walls. Back in chapter two. He had seen for himself. What work was required. He has not only. Inspired.

And motivated. The remnant. To get up. And start building. We saw that in chapter two. He motivated God's people. To get up. To rebuild. But he's also then. Organized them.

And deployed them. Across the whole extent. Of the wall. So it wasn't a free for all. Nehemiah carefully designated. No, no. You are to build this section.

You are to build next to them here. It's a very well organized. Endeavor. And gospel service.

[14 : 58] Effective building. For the gospel. Is not. Anti-order. That's the point. Quite the opposite. Organization. Is required. In gospel service.

That's the first thing to note. In regards to this. Orderly account. Number two. Is. To make the point. That.

There are leaders. Who are taking the lead. This list. As we will see. Includes a whole range. Of different people. A whole range of folk.

With different roles. Different responsibilities. Different skill sets. Different jobs. But the list begins. Doesn't it. With the leadership. Verse one. A liarship. The high priest.

He rose up. Now we. Read that. And we think. Of course. That is how. It should be. Of course.

[15 : 55] The high priest. The leadership. Should be. Leading the way. Of course. And you're right. To think that. But so often. In the church. That is not the case. Often.

As you look back. Through church history. The church leadership. Has shirked. Responsibility. They've not. Shouldered the load. And we'll see. An example. Of that.

In a minute. But let's note. The positive. Example. Right from the top. Here. The leadership. They didn't. Wave their ministerial. Exemption cards. They didn't say. No no. I'm above all that. I'm not going to get. My hands dirty. Building with rocks. And putting stuff. In place. On the wall. They didn't think. That their priesthood. Rendered them immune.

To the work. Not at all. They got at it. They got to work. And one imagines. That would have. Quite the impression. On everybody else. Working on the wall. Seeing the high priests. Getting dusty.

[16 : 49] And dirty. Helping in the wall. In the church. Leadership. Is. A place. Of sacrifice.

Of service. The heaviest. Loads. Ought to be borne. By the leadership. That is right. And good. And that does seem. To be the case.

At least. With these guys. Notice. That the verbs. Shift. Through the chapter. It begins. With.

Rebuilding. And building. Do you note that? So verse one. What is it that Eliashib. And his brothers. And priests. Are described as doing. They built.

The sheep gate. And next to him. In verse two. The men of Jericho. Built. And next to them. Zachar. The son of Imri. Built. But then.

[17 : 46] It changes. So look at verse. End of verse three. Sorry. End of verse four. We see about. Merrimoth. The son of Uriah. Son of.

Hakos. Repaired. So there's a change. From rebuilding. And building. To repair. So that would suggest. That the. Part of the wall.

That the. High priest. So engaged with. Required total. Rebuilding. Not just repair. There was a lot of work. Required at that point. So. The northern part of the wall.

Where the priest. So at work. Was the most. Damaged. It seems. Requiring. Rebuilding. Rather than just. Merely repairing. And where the work.

Was most. Needed. Where the damage. In the city wall. Was greatest. Where the threat. Of attack. From enemy. Was most severe. Nehemiah. Puts his leadership. The high priest.

[18 : 41] That's where they rebuild. At the place. Where the greatest. Work is needed. Nehemiah. Prioritizes. The workload. He prioritizes.

Where he wants. His leadership. To be. It wasn't just. Left a chance. Wasn't random. No no. You. Are going here. The leadership. Are going to. Repair.

Where the wall. Is in most. Need. Of rebuilding. And that's worth. Us reflecting on. Where. Are we. As we think about.

Building. God's kingdom. Today. Where are we. To prioritize. Our efforts. Where do we. Want our leadership. To be most. Engaged. Where do we. Want them.

Deployed. What is it. That the leadership. Should be attending. To. And surely. It's this. It must always be. Mustn't it. The ministry. Of the word.

[19 : 36] That must be. The priority. For the leadership. It is the preaching. And proclamation. Of the word. That builds. The church. Today. It is the preaching.

And proclamation. Of the word. That equips. The saints. For the work. Of ministry. It is the preaching. And proclamation. Of the word. That builds up. The saints. To maturity.

In the faith. It is the preaching. And proclamation. Of the word. That brings life. Bringing faith. To repentance. And faith. On the Lord Jesus. Preaching.

Proclaiming. The word. That must be. The focus. For a church. As leadership. That must be. What they attend to. Above everything else. Now there are. A great many.

Good things. That can be done. In the life. Of church. There are many. Many. Good things. We can do. But. We must always. Prioritize.

[20 : 31] First things. Must. Come first. And that bears out. In the real world. In terms of. How leadership. Allocate their time. What is it.

They must do. Well. They must. Attend. To the preaching. Of the words. And that will mean. That many. Good things. Will be left. Undone.

There's nothing wrong. With them. In themselves. But. They can't. Get to that. Because. First things. Must come first. The leadership. Must discern. What needs.

To be left. Undone. So that. The church. Together. Can pursue. What must be done. And a question. Priorities. Is always hard. Because it means.

Saying no. To things. So what is the one. Non-negotiable. Where. Must. The leadership. Give its best efforts. And time. And energy. Well.

[21 : 26] It's the preaching. And the proclamation. Of the words. Well. That's the first observation. From. This chapter. It's an orderly. Chapter. Nehemiah. Was organized.

He prioritized. So the wall. Could be. Rebuilt. Here's the second thing. It's an account. Which demonstrates. That every individual. Matters.

In. The building. Of God's kingdom. Now. It's abundantly clear. As you read. As Phil. Would have known. That he tried. To learn those names. It's abundantly clear.

That individuals. Matter. To the Lord. This chapter. Could have been. Much briefer. Phil. Would have been. Very glad of that. It could simply. Have said something like this.

The people. In Jerusalem. Rebuilt. And repaired. Each section. Of the wall. From the sheep gate. All the way around. To the muster gate. You could have just said that.

[22 : 21] But this chapter. Doesn't do that. Individuals. Families. Are mentioned. The details. Of the work. They undertook. Are mentioned.

Look for example. At verse three. The sons. Of Hassanah. Built the fish gate. They laid. They laid its beams. And set its doors. Its bolts.

And its bars. That's quite a lot of detail. Isn't it? But isn't it greatly encouraging. To know. That God cares enough.

For these people. That they're named. In our Bibles. We get to read about them. Two and a half thousand years later. Seventy five individuals.

Are named. Fifteen groups. Are mentioned. Groups like the Levites. And the Goldsmiths. But not only are they named. As I've said.

[23 : 13] But the details of their work. Are mentioned. You see. God cares. About individuals. As well as about. Churches.

And nations. He sees. Our work. He sees. All that we do. For the glory of God. God. And that brings us. To the third thing. In relation.

To the second one. Yes. God. Sees individuals. Every individual matters. But here's the third thing. This account demonstrates. That all our work. Is seen. In the building.

Of God's kingdom. You see. Our work. Matters. To the Lord. This list. Shows us. How much. God values. The work. That his people do.

Yes. The work. These people did. Way back then. Rebuilding the walls. But also. The work. That you and I. Do now. Remember. The letters.

[24 : 09] In Revelation. Jesus. Writing to those. Seven churches. Well. Listen to the. These words. From one of those letters. This. Was the letter. To the church. In Ephesus. And in that letter.

Jesus says this. He says. I know. Your works. Your toil. And your patient. Endurance. Jesus knows.

Jesus sees. It may be. That no one else. Sees. Your good deeds. No one else. May see. The hand of friendship.

You extend. To another member. Of the congregation. As they walk. Through dark valleys. Nobody may know that. No one else. May see that. But the Lord does. No one else.

May see. The offer of help. You extend. To a young family. As they endure. Sleepless nights. And sick children. Plenty of that. Going around. At the minute.

[25 : 05] I suspect. But no one else. May see that work. You do. But Jesus does. No one else. May see you. Meeting up. With that young student. As you disciple them.

And help them. Navigate the choppy waters. Of early adult life. No one else. May know that. But Jesus does. No one else. May hear you. As you practice. For hours. Your instruments. Ready to play.

On a Sunday evening. To help. Accompany the congregation. In singing. Nobody may see. The hours you put in. But the Lord does. Jesus knows. It may be.

That no one else. Sees your good deeds. Done. For the glory. Of his kingdom. To help build up. The saints. Nobody may see that. But Jesus knows.

And God honors. God honored. The work. Of these builders. Here in Nehemiah 3. He included their names. In the Bible. And in one sense.

[26 : 02] All they were doing. Were picking up. Rubble. Placing it. On a wall. They weren't expert builders. They were doing what they could.

But the Lord saw. The Lord honored them. Just note. Some of the names. Included here. Both. Positive and negative. Positively. Just note.

Verse 14. We have this chap. Called. Malkidja. The son. Of Rechab. Now. Why mention him? Well.

He's a fairly prominent man. Look. He's the ruler. Of the district. Of Beth. Hackerim. And. He's prepared. To do. A pretty dirty job.

He's got. An unglamorous job. He's repairing. The dung gate. Now. Look at your maps. The dung gate. Is right at the southern tip. It's as far away.

[26 : 57] From the temple. That you can get. It's right down. To the bottom. Nobody else would see you. Right down. The bottom. Of a bit of a hill. And the dung gate. Is as bad. As it sounds. It was the place.

Where the city's rubbish. Refuse. And other things. Were brought. To be dealt with. It was smelly. Dirty. Unpleasant work.

But. Malkidja. Was prepared. To repair. The dung gate. Could hardly be called. Frontline work. This wasn't up near the temple. This wasn't. This wasn't.

With Eliashib. And the other high priests. This wasn't. Taking the glory. No. This is down. The dung gate. Here was a man. Clear.

On the vision. He understood. What Nehemiah. Was about. He was prepared. To do the job. That maybe nobody else. Wanted to do. He was a ruler.

[27 : 52] A prominent man. But. He was humble enough. To do the job. That not many others. I suspect. Would be prepared to do. Quite the contrast.

To another set of rulers. In this chapter. Did you notice. The leaders of Tekoa. Verse 5. So the Lord. Does see our works. That's greatly encouraging.

But he also notes. The lack. Of our work. The absence. Of our work. Look at what it says. Verse 5. And next to them. The Tekoa.

It's repaired. But. Their nobles. Would not stoop. To serve their laws. Of all the people. Listed in chapter 3.

These are the only ones. Mentioned. For their unwillingness. To get involved. They would not stoop. The work. It seems. Was beneath them.

[28 : 48] They were nobles. Of Tekoa. I'm not getting my hands dirty. With everybody else. Remarkable unity.

And dedication. That these men. Have managed. To achieve. The distinction. Of being recorded. In the Bible. As being unwilling. James Philip.

I'm going to quote. At length. It's just so good. How he puts this. But he puts it. This way. To have this. Recorded. Of them. In a time. When the spirit.

Of God. Was manifesting. So much. At work. When the work. Of such magnitude. And significance. Was being accomplished. What a reproach. This was. Their names.

As listed. As being unwilling. Perhaps. These leaders. Of Tekoa. Had. Their doubts. About Nehemiah. Strategy. They didn't quite. Agree. On a few points. Perhaps.

[29 : 44] They knew better. Perhaps. They thought. They understood. The situation. Better than. God's appointed man. I'm going to keep.

Reading. James Philip's. Notes. He said. People. Like to be. On the side. Of the angels. But alas. They sometimes. Make grave mistakes. In the estimation.

Of where the angels. Are. Would it not be better. To be dead. Than to have it said. Of us. That we had no part. In the building. Of God's kingdom. In our day. Sobering.

Isn't it? To have your name. Listed. To someone. Unwilling. Wouldn't stoop. To serve. Now credit. To the men.

Of Tekoa. Not the nobles. But the regular men. Credit to them. Despite the standoff approach. From their leaders. They worked. A double shift.

[30 : 43] Despite the discouragement. With the absence. Of their leaders. They worked. Diligently. For the Lord. Not only here. In verse 5. But across. In verse 27. Flick over to that. They recorded again.

So verse 27. After him. The Tekoa. Repaired. Another section. Opposite the great. Projecting tower. As far as the wall.

Of Ophel. So. These men do double duty. Credit to them. They get two mentions. In the chapter. So bad leadership.

Doesn't always have the effect. Some can rise above. Bad leadership. Can't they? The Lord sees. All our work. The Lord sees.

All our service. And in the end. Our work for the Lord. Will be seen. By all. For what it really is. The Apostle Paul.

[31 : 41] Says this in 1 Corinthians 3. Says. According to the grace. Of God. Given to me. Like a skilled. Master builder. I laid a foundation. And someone else. Is building upon it.

Let each one. Take care. How he builds upon it. Each one's work. Will become manifest. For the day. Will disclose it. Because it will.

Be revealed by fire. And the fire. Will test. What sort of work. Each one has done. Our service. Today. For the Lord.

Is seen. By him. And one day. It will be seen. For what it really is. That great day. Will disclose. All that we've done.

And that reality. Brings. Great dignity. Doesn't it? To our work now. Great dignity. And significance. For the. The work that we do.

[32 : 39] In the service of God. Today. One day. Be shown. In all its glory. It may seem like a small thing. To you. At the moment. Cleaning the toilets.

Rehearsing your peace. To help. In the worship. On a Sunday night. But there's great significance. Because the Lord knows. The Lord sees. And every little thing we are doing.

Is building. His eternal kingdom. Keep at it. Keep working. Whether it's the prominence. Of the sheep gate. Or.

The hidden nature. Of the dung gates. The Lord sees. The Lord knows. And here's the fourth. And final thing. To note. From this chapter. It's an account.

Which demonstrates. The real. Real diversity. That is always evident. In the building. Of God's kingdom. As you read. And reread this list. It becomes very apparent.

[33 : 38] That there's real diversity. Here in God's. Building kingdom. This list contains. All sorts of people. People of different ranks. And nationalities. Different skill sets.

And experiences. It is a wonderful. Illustration. Of the reality. That Paul speaks of. In the New Testament. About the body of Christ. Being built together. All of us.

Get the privilege. Together. To do ministry. We together. As a body. Do the work of the church. Doesn't mean that. We do identical roles. We're not clones. But the apostle Paul.

As I read from Ephesians 4. Used the language. Of a body. Being built up. The body is made up. Of countless parts. Each with its own. Specific.

Unique role. All of them are crucial. All needed. If my lungs. Decide to take a 10 minute break. I'm in trouble. Aren't I? If parts of the church body.

[34 : 33] Decide to opt out. We're in trouble. Every one of us. Has a role to play. Each of us. Has been uniquely equipped. To help build up.

The body. Just think about. All the elements. That went to the service. This evening. The heat. The light. Someone had to organize that. The cleaning.

The welcome team. The sound team. The welcome. As the musician. Someone to lead the service. Someone to preach. All these things. Need to be in place. As we gather. Each week. And all of us.

Are contributing. In one way or the other. To that great task. Of reaching the lost. And building up the saints. To maturity. There was real. Diversity.

Isn't there? As you look around the room. Real diversity. In the life. Of the church. And that's what you have. In this. Chapter. We've seen leaders.

[35 : 29] And high priests. Already. But there's also. The goldsmiths. Verse 8. And perfumers. Again in verse 8. The daughters of Shalom. Verse 12. Merchants. In verse 32.

All sorts of people. People. All sorts of backgrounds. Experiences. They are working. Side by side. For the same gospel goal. So whether you are. A lawyer.

Or a bin man. A surgeon. Or a janitor. An accountant. Or a teacher. A chef. Or a programmer. A mum. Or a judge. All of us.

Are together. Working for the same goal. The hierarchies. Of the outside world. Exclude no one. From the task. Of making.

And growing. Disciples of Jesus. None of us are excluded. All of us. Have a role to play. Now that's not to say. That it's a free for all. And that anyone.

[36 : 25] Can do anything. They fancy. We've been uniquely gifted. We have unique. Contributions to make. In the life of the church. It would be. An absolute.

Unmitigated disaster. If I said to Muao. I'm going to play the piano tonight. That would be horrendous. I can't just go and do that. No, no. She's been uniquely gifted.

To do that. But there's something quite beautiful. Isn't there? About seeing all sorts of folk. Playing their role. In the life of the church.

Rolling up their sleeves. Doing what needs to be done. I remember quite clearly. The church I grew up in. I saw this. A very good example. The junior church.

Was in need of male teachers. And we had. One of the senior guys. In the church. He was a very senior partner. In a huge investment company.

[37 : 21] In London. He did very well for himself. But he wasn't above. Getting down on his hands and knees. And looking at four year old kids. In the eyes. And teaching them about Jesus. I can imagine.

His colleagues at work. Would have. Been astonished. To hear that he was doing that. But it wasn't beneath him. In fact. He saw the great privilege. Of teaching. The next generation.

The truth about the Lord Jesus. Jesus. But it's not just about. All sorts of different folk. With different giftings. There's also evidence.

In this chapter. Of the abundant grace. Of the Lord Jesus. People who were once. Outside. The people of God. Have been wonderfully included. Given a role.

In building. For God's kingdom. People who had once. Disgraced themselves. Are now included. In playing their part. There's one individual.

[38 : 17] To note in particular. His name is. Melchidji. So look at verse 11. Now there's two. Melchidji's in this chapter. Don't get confused. This is the one in verse 11.

The son of Harim. And he's there. Repairing the wall. Next to. Hashab. The son of. Path of Moab.

Now. Why mention. Melchidji. Well he appears. In this book. We've seen him before. If you flick back. To Ezra chapter 10.

Remember this is one book. In reality. Ezra Nehemiah. Ezra 10. And look at verse 31. So you might remember. From our studies in Ezra. A couple of months ago. That there was a major issue.

Amongst God's people. There in Jerusalem. The issue. Was of intermarriage. With unbelievers. It was a major problem. And Ezra had to deal with it. And the last chapter.

[39 : 14] Of Ezra. Details. Those who were found guilty. Of intermarrying. With others. At the time. And look at verse 31. Of chapter 10. Of the sons of Harim.

Sounds familiar. And here are the sons of Harim. Eliezer. Ishijar. Melchidjah. So there he is.

In Ezra. Chapter 10. His name is listed. In dishonor. But by Nehemiah 3.

His name is listed. In honor. There. It seems that. Melchidjah. Has repented. He has once again.

Taken his place. Amongst God's people. And he is there. Fruitfully serving. Rebuilding the wall. And that is a wonderful testament.

[40 : 14] To God's grace. Isn't it? Once his name. In dishonor. And disgrace. And now included. Playing his part. Fruitfully serving away. But it is not just him. There are other nodes.

To God's grace here. Which we don't have time. To get into. One such example. Would be the Gibeonites. Mentioned in verse 7. You can maybe dig into the Old Testament. And see what. Is at the root of that. But it speaks.

Over and over. Of God's abundant grace. Not just all sorts of people. Different backgrounds. But people who are once. Outside. And disgraced. And now included. And how true is that.

Of every single one of us. Here tonight. But for Christ. But for his mercy. We are dead aren't we? In our sin. Lost. Without hope.

But he has shown us amazing grace. Every one of us. He has invited us. Into his eternal family. And not only that. He has given us a role to play. We get to serve.

[41 : 15] We get work to do. We get to work. We get to work. Next to one another. We get to build. Beyond our own lives. We get to build.

For the next generation. And Christ's church. Is the only institution. That will never end. It will endure. Into eternity. And that is what we're part of building.

What a privilege. Church. We get the opportunity. To craft. Living stones. To build. Into that eternal institution.

And all of us have a role to play. Every one of us. Has something to contribute. Every one of us. Can serve Christ's church. Every one of us. Can offer up our lives. As a living sacrifice. To serve God's purposes.

In God's world. Through God's church. Church. And we do it for his glory. It is through. A serving people.

[42 : 11] People like you and I. Going about our normal service. In the life of the church. That is how. God. Builds his church. So will we serve?

Will you serve? That's the question. Nehemiah 3 poses to us tonight. Well let's pray in response. Shall we? Before we. Conclude our service. By singing together. Let's pray. Amen.

Our Father God. We are amazed. At your. Astonishing grace. Which you have. Shown to us. Again and again.

How glad we are. Not only to be. Included in your family. But given the privilege. Of being able to serve you. And so we ask. That in light.

Of these words. That we would. See the great privilege again. Of. Being able to serve. Side by side. For the sake.

[43 : 13] Of your great gospel purposes. So make us. So make us. A willing people. Make us. A people. Willing. To do the unseen. Make us.

A people. Willing. To serve. Eternal. Ends. We ask. In Jesus name. Amen. Amen. Amen.