

# Reforming the (Living) Wall

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[ 0 : 00 ] Amen. Please be seated. Please turn, then, in your copy of God's Word to Nehemiah chapter 3. We're continuing on. Our passage this morning is from chapter 2, 9, right through to the end of chapter 3.

Nehemiah chapter 3. That can be found on page 399 of the Blue Church Bible. Amen. Nehemiah chapter 3. It is our practice here at Bon Accord to be working through books of the Bible, really chapter by chapter. As Donald said this evening, we return to Genesis, and we've just begun a morning series in Nehemiah. And commonly at this point, as we turn open God's Word, whoever's preaching, Joe, Donald, myself, we'll read it, and we'll pray, and we'll begin the sermon.

This morning, I just want to do this slightly out of order because of what we're going to read. Our reading, if you just cast your eyes down to it there, if you have a Bible open, it is a list of names of people rebuilding a wall. And so what I want us to do this morning is actually just begin with a little bit of context. Where are we up to now? What is going on in this chapter in order to help us as we come and read God's Word? So I'm going to pray now. Please keep your Bibles open. I'm going to pray. We're going to start the sermon, and a few moments into the sermon, we'll come to our reading. So don't worry. I've not forgotten about it. We are going to get there, but hopefully this will just help us find a way into it. So let's pray. Speak, O Lord, as we come to your living Word now, that we would hear, see, and behold our great Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ. Amen.

Amen. So what is the book of Nehemiah all about? Well, for a full answer to that, please do listen to Donald's sermons from the last two Sunday mornings, where he gives much more detail than I'm about to now. But if we were to kind of simmer down or boil down the theme of Nehemiah, of this whole book, to one word, it would be something like renewal or repairing or rebuilding or reformation.

Physical renewal and reforming of the walls of Jerusalem. And it's that work we're going to begin seeing being undertaken today. You'll see as we read in a moment the word repairing, repairing, repairing, repairing, coming up again and again and again. Remember, Jerusalem's walls have been destroyed and lie in ruin since Babylon defeated Judah about 130 or so years before, where our reading is today. But it's more than just kind of Old Testament DIY SOS. I'm not sure if that program is still on, but they have, don't they, all these kind of repairing TV programs where they get some old house or castle or whatever, and everyone just comes in and restores it, repair it.

[ 3 : 29 ] It's more than just a kind of Old Testament DIY SOS. Much more significantly, it's about the need for renewal, repairing, reformation of the hearts of God's people. Spiritual reformation, we could say.

And of course, the two are linked. It was this sin in the life and hearts of God's people that that turned them away from God and allowed them to be driven from the land and sent into exile. And so now it is, as we come to Nehemiah, a renewed sense of who God is, his promises to them, their own sin, and the need to come under the authority of God's word that leads the people to rebuild and reform the walls. Now, we are not God's people then.

We don't live when they did. We haven't just had an exile like they have. So what is this book for us? Well, I think in part, it tells us that the work of spiritual reformation, of coming under a renewed sense of who God is, and the need for the authority of his word in our lives, turning away from sin and to Jesus, we could call it sanctification, is to be ongoing in our lives.

Now, there are periods in history where we can look back and see that renewal coming across the board, if you like, to God's church. We see it here in Nehemiah, God's Old Testament church, if we can put it that way.

[ 5 : 07 ] But we could look back 500 years ago and see the Reformation all across Europe taking place, where men like Luther and Calvin reforming what was lost, bringing Christ back into view.

But one of the main things that came from that time 500 years ago and what we call the Reformation is that the church is reformed, but always reforming, always reforming. We are to be continually reformed by God's word, shaped by it, changed by it, that we would come more like the Lord Jesus, that we would become more like him. So, although we are not then, then, not the people of this day, nor the people of 500 years ago at the time of the Reformation, this is a book very much for us today, as we ask that God would once again work in our lives to convict us of our sin and bring us closer to him. So, where are we up to in chapter 3? Well, so far, Nehemiah has come under the conviction of his need for a reformation and the renewal of the walls of Jerusalem himself.

And we just picked up at the start of our reading today, chapter 2, verse 9, 10, and 11, he has now made it to Jerusalem. And what was read earlier tells us that he's come to Jerusalem.

And what has he done? He's come and inspected the walls. There it is, verse 13. He inspected the walls of Jerusalem. They're broken down. They've been destroyed by fire. So, what he finds during that inspection is not good. Things are not in a good state. I wonder if anyone here has had to buy or sell a home recently. You get one of those home reports now. You have to get one of those. I think you can get ones, twos, and threes. Green for one, the house is looking good. It's kind of amber for two, maybe need some repair. The three, the red three is urgent need of repair. It's the kind of thing, you see the red three, and you think, do we really want to buy this house? Well, if the walls of Jerusalem had that kind of home report, it would all be threes. They'd all be red. It is in disrepair, utter disrepair. And Nehemiah has done his inspection and sees that the work of reformation, of rebuilding the walls needs done. And the question that starts to get answered here through towards the end of chapter 2 and in chapter 3 is, who is going to undertake this work? Who is going to undertake this work? And the answer is everyone. Everyone. It is for all God's people. In chapter 2, verse 17 and 18, we see what was once kind of laid on one man's heart, becoming the vision for all

God's people. Let's just read that again. Chapter 2, verse 17. Then I, that is Nehemiah, said to them, that is the people of God, you see the trouble we are in, how Jerusalem lies in ruins with its gates burned. Come now, let us build the wall of Jerusalem that we may no longer suffer derision. [8:16] And I told them of the hand of my God that had been upon me for good, and also the words that the king had spoken to me. And they said, let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for the good work. This is a community project. It is partnership, gospel partnership, as all the people are to come together for reformation and renewal. It can't just be Nehemiah. It is to be all of them standing shoulder to shoulder together. I have only once ever seen Ireland play a rugby match. It was a long time ago, I don't know, 15 years ago at Murrayfield, Scotland versus Ireland. But I can still picture and remember what it was like being there in Murrayfield, hearing the away support singing, Ireland, Ireland, together standing tall. What's next? Shoulder to shoulder. And on it goes. What are we coming to in our reading in chapter 3? God's people shoulder to shoulder together about the work of reformation and renewal in their lives and of God's city. The task of spiritual reformation, of coming to God with a renewed conviction of who he is, coming to him in worship and love, that we might bear witness to the world, is for us all. So as we read chapter 3, as we're about to do, what I want you to note is note the differences, but the commonalities. The differences, all these people coming together from different towns, different places, different families, different jobs, ages, social standing, but they all set to work repairing, repairing, repairing. It is a list of ordinary people standing together to show God's glory to the nations. Perhaps the best way to think of Nehemiah 3 as we read it today is if I was to stand here with a list of all of the members and church family here at

Bon Accord and read it out as everyone sets to work serving God and serving this church family. Oh, here's the Little Lambs team from West Hill, Socken, Bridge of Dawn, wherever else it is. Oh, here's the list of those helping in Sunday school today, those who work in oil and gas, teachers, stay-at-home mums, doctors, nurses, healthcare professionals. Oh, here's the team on Welcome to Dead, administrators, university students, those who are retired from Scotland, England, Africa, Europe, Asia. But it's not just even the outward task of serving, it is inward spiritual renewal. So I'd also include a list of life groups. Here it is, all these people meeting together under God's word that they might come to know God more. And so with that then, let's read Nehemiah chapter 3.

Nehemiah chapter 3 verse 1. Then Eliashib, the high priest, rose up with his brothers, the priests, 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. Next to him, the men of Jericho built, and next to them, Zachar, the son of Imri, built. The sons of Hassanah built the fish gate. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And next to them, Merrimoth, the son of Uriah, son of Hakoz, repaired. And next to them, Meshulam, the son of Berechiah, son of Mezahabel, repaired. Next to them, Zadok, the son of Banna, repaired. And next to them, the Tekoites repaired. But their nobles would not stoop to serve the Lord. Joyadah, the son of Paseah, and Meshulam, the son of Besadiah, repaired the gate of Yeshanah. They laid its beams and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars.

And next to them repaired Metaliah, the Gibeonite, and Jadin, the Moronathite, the men of Gibeon and Mizpah, the seat of the governor of the province beyond the river. Next to them, Uziel, the son of Haraniah, goldsmiths, repaired. Next to him, Hananiah, one of the perfumers, repaired, and they restored Jerusalem as far as the broad wall. Next to them, Rephiah, the son of Hur, ruler of the district of Jerusalem, repaired. Next to them, Jediah, the son of Harampha, repaired opposite his house. Next to him, Hattush, the son of Hashaniah, repaired. Melchidjah, the son of Haram, and Hashib, the son of Pathomohab, repaired another section of the tower of ovens. Next to him, Shalem, the son of Haloheh, ruler of the district of Jerusalem, repaired. He and his daughters.

Hanan and the inhabitants of

Zenoah repaired the valley gate. They rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars, and repaired. And he built the walls and repaired. And he repaired a thousand cubits of wall as far as the dungate. Melchidjah, the son of Rechab, ruler of the district of Beth, Harakim, repaired the dungate. He rebuilt it and set its doors, its bolts, and its bars. And Shalem, the son of Kolhose, ruler of the district of Mizpah, repaired the fountain gate. He rebuilt it and covered it and set its doors, its bolts, its bolts, and its bars. And he built the wall of the pool of Shalem, 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 the half district of Beth-sur, 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. Rahim, the son of Bani. Next to him, Hashabiah, ruler of the half district of Keilah, repaired for his district. After him, their brothers repaired. Bavi, the son of Henadad, ruler of the half district of

[14 : 47] Keilah. Next to him, Ezer, the son of Jeshua, ruler of Mizpah, repaired another section opposite the ascent to the armory at the buttress. After him, Baruch, the son of Zabai, 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 Hachos, repaired another section from the door of the house to Eliashib, to the end of the house of Eliashib. After him, the priests, the men of the surrounding area, repaired. After them, Benjamin and Hashab repaired opposite their house. After them, Azariah, the son of Maaseah, son of Ananiah, repaired beside his own house. After him, Benuai, the son of Henadad, repaired another section from the house of Azariah to the buttress and to the corner.

Pelal, the son of Uziah, repaired opposite the buttress and the tower projecting from the upper house of the king at the courtyard. After him, Pediah, the son of Parosh, and the temple servants living in Ophel repaired to a point opposite the water gate on the east and the projecting tower. After him, the Tekoites 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, Shemiah, the son of Shekaniah, the keeper of the east gate, repaired. After him, Hananiah, the son of Shelemiah, and Hanun, the sixth son of Zaleph, repaired another section. After him, Mishillam, the son of Berechiah, repaired opposite his chamber. After him, Malkijah, one of the goldsmiths, repaired as far as the house of the temple servants 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. This is the word of the Lord. It's cool. Could you hear it then? Could you see it as we went through all the different names of people, their families, their places, their jobs, all of them coming together to serve the Lord as they rebuild the wall of Jerusalem? And so, as we partner together in this task of serving God, serving his kingdom, and being built by Christ into his people, this work of spiritual reformation, what can we learn from this passage about how we go about this task? Well, there's five things for us to learn, five things to learn as this work of reformation takes place among God's people. First, we must expect opposition, not universal approval. First, we expect opposition, not universal approval. In chapter 2, verses 9 and 10,

Nehemiah is drawing near to Jerusalem, [17:59] Jerusalem. And even before he gets there, people are unhappy about it. Zamballat and Tobiah are what? They're greatly displeased that someone has sought the welfare of the people of Israel. Now, those are striking words, are they not? Before he's even arrived and word goes out and people gets going, there are those who would oppose it. They do not want to seek the welfare of the church, of the people of God. And we see that ramp up again there in verse 19. Nehemiah comes and calls the people together and they say, yes, let us build. And in verse 19, immediately we get opposition.

Zamballat and Tobiah, they jeer and despise. Now, more will be said of this next week and in the weeks ahead as opposition keeps raising its head. But the lesson for us here, even briefly this morning, is that it must never surprise us when we meet opposition for the work of the gospel. For not only were Nehemiah and the people despised and jeered, but there was one who was even more despised and jeered, one who sought the welfare of Jerusalem and of the people of God, even more than Nehemiah did. And of course, that was the Lord Jesus himself. No one loved Jerusalem more than the Lord Jesus. No one was better placed to save its people. And not only them, the entire world, Jew and Gentile, if they came to him. But when Jesus came, he was rejected, despised, a man of sorrows, acquainted with grief, killed on a cross by those who hated him. And friends, we know, don't we, that the Lord Jesus has told us no servant is greater than his master. At any work undertaken, personal or corporate, where we look to draw near to God, to come under the authority of his word and to seek renewal in our lives, we must expect opposition. There are those out there even today who do not want the welfare of God's people. And so as we undertake this work, we expect opposition.

Secondly, and we're going to move fairly quickly through these five points, a long reading. You saw five points, you thought, well, Ben, how's this going to go? Five points, we're going to keep moving. Second, then, this work of spiritual reformation and renewal requires humility, not pride. Humility, not pride. The theme of humility runs almost through this whole section. We see it in a number of places where people humble themselves to go about this work. First, though, we kind of see with the leaders of God's people. We see an example among the leaders. We get a number of mention of rulers, verses 9, verses 12, verses 18, mayors, governors, people with significant power and authority who rule over Jerusalem or other places. And what do they do? They pick up their shovels and build. They head down to the construction site and put on hard hats, if they had hard hats back then. I'm not sure. But they put on hard hats and they set to work. The work was not beneath them, not in any way.

And perhaps spiritually, in Nehemiah's day, there is no more an important or significant person spiritually than the high priest. But we see there, chapter 3, verse 1, he gets to work. He and his brothers get about the work of building the Sheep Gate. Now, I know some of us out there this morning, we love maps, and we're just sitting there itching inside. We just want to know, how does this play out geographically? Well, here we go. Here's your moment here to have it somewhat explained. You can pull up a map later if you really want to get the details. The Sheep Gate, north. And they start there, and the movement all the way through the passage then goes anti-clockwise. It's an anti-clockwise movement.

[22:17] But they start at the Sheep Gate. You'll notice that in verse 1. They work anti-clockwise around the whole city. And you'll see in there, at verse 32, they end at the Sheep Gate. They finish there too. So that is the movement around the city. But the Sheep Gate is important because it's where sheep would have been brought into the city, that they would head to the temple for sacrifice, for sacrifice. But it's also facing the edge that might most likely would have come under attack.

And so they get to work and start there first. And here we see the high priest, the high priest, saying, this of course isn't beneath me. Picks up his shovel, and he builds, and they consecrate the area. Now, who is the fulfillment of this? The fulfillment today of the high priestly role in the Old Testament is the Lord Jesus. He is our high priest today. It is only through Jesus that we can come to God, only through him. And what do we meet of the Lord Jesus? What do we know of him? He is humble.

He is lowly and gentle of heart. One who would come and take up the lowliest place, taking on human flesh. God taking on human flesh, taking the form of a servant. We see the night before his crucifixion, he comes and he washes the disciples' feet, and then goes even lower as he goes to the cross to die, to die. He who is greatest in all of heaven and earth, the eternal Son of God, come

to die. The work of the kingdom is humble work, lowly work. The way of the kingdom is the way down.

And the Lord Jesus is our prime example then. His way is our way too. So what does humility look like for us as we stand shoulder to shoulder in this work of spiritual renewal and reformation? Well, it may look like acts of service, humbly serving those around us in all sorts of different ways. We see wonderful examples of that amongst us all the time, not least yesterday. People serving to cook and clean and plan and organize a wonderful day together. But the humility here, primarily, I think the application does come to the humility of our hearts, of our hearts to be renewed and reformed under the authority of God's Word. Remember, it was their sin that had them driven out of the land.

[ 24 : 45 ] And in coming back, they've come under conviction of their need for God and renewal after their hearts. And so it is the humility to say, I'm not too proud to be spiritually humbled and renewed.

We are prone, I think, often the longer that we've done something or known something or we're in something, that if someone comes to us and say, we might need to address it or redress something, we don't take it so well. I'm in sick here. I'm top of the school. I think I've got the measure of the place. Are you really going to point something out to me, you, oh teacher? I've climbed pretty high up in my job. I've done really well for it. I'm running a small team. I'm the CEO. You really want to point something out to me about the company? I've been married for 20, 30 years, and someone wants to come and say, maybe we need to fix this. Maybe it's just me, but perhaps we don't always take it well. Well, maybe you've been a Christian for decades. Maybe you've been a Christian for a very long time. Is your heart still soft and humble to the correcting power of God's Word? Or has your heart grown hard to God's Word and the conviction of sin by the Spirit? Is there humility enough as we gather Lord's Day by Lord's Day and in our life group around the Word to say, there is something for me to know here, to grow in and to learn? Is there a work of reformation and renewal, needing done in me? Humility, that is the way of the kingdom. Low, lowly under God's Word, lowly as we serve God's people. And it is the way of humility and not pride. For humility, and this is such an encouraging chapter, just imagine being down at Jerusalem and hearing and seeing all this. It would have been something else. Some of you here have worked or do work on construction sites. Just imagine everyone or almost everyone in harmony about this. It's a wonderfully encouraging chapter. They see the need and they get after it. But there is just a little bit of pride in there from one group of people. Did you see it? There in verse 5. Everybody sets to work except, verse 5, for the nobles of Tekoa.

They would not stoop to serve their Lord. They are too proud. The nobles, most likely because of their rank and their social standing, say it's beneath me. And it puts them in a distance to this work. And notice in this kind of passage of shoulder to shoulder, it's going to affect everyone, right? It's going to slow the work. It's less hands to the plough, to the shovel. It's going to leave the walls exposed for longer. Pride is not the way of the kingdom. Here is one commentator on the nobles of Tekoa. One commentator says this, their legacy is this note recorded in Scripture. It is a thought for somber reflection that this should be said of them. In a time when God was so evidently at work and something of such magnitude was being accomplished, would it not be better to be dead than to have it said of us we had no part in the spiritual renewal of the church and of nations?

Strong words, strong words. But their pride kept them from God, kept them from his people, kept them from his work. Pride will keep you from Jesus. So humble yourself this day under Christ.

[ 28 : 16 ] And ask the Lord to keep us humbly under his word. Third, unity, not division. Unity, not division. Now, we need to be careful and not just read into the text and make arguments from silence. But I do want you to note how everybody sets about the work before them without, if you like, overstepping it or redrawing the plans to suit themselves and throw the whole thing into chaos. Clearly, Nehemiah, after his inspection, must draw up plans and set everyone to work over this huge construction site around Jerusalem. But what word or refrain, apart from this word repaired, repaired, repaired, do we get through this whole section? Did you spot the words next to him or next to them or after him or after them? If you just took a highlighter pen, you see all over verse 2, verse 4, verse 5, verse 7. I'm not going to read all the verses. It's there all the way through it. It is that work of unity, shoulder to shoulder. They take their shovels and they build. It is a collective responsibility. And it's a beautiful thing, a beautiful description of the whole body and how it should be functioning together, each making their own humble, sacrificial contribution to the good of the

whole. It's such a beautiful thing, and it's what we just sung of in Psalm 133, God's people dwelling in unity together as they go about

Christ's work in this world. And do we think that their work of building there was always easy? Do you think they always got on with and saw eye to eye with those they were building with?

Do you think anyone there might have had their own ideas? Yes, I think so. But they came under the authority of God's leader and of God's word to go about the work in unity, to do what God has given them, that the work would be done to the glory of God.

Students, it is wonderful to see you back around. And I know over the next few weeks, there will be freshers weeks going on. And the work of the Christian unions will begin again for a new term.

See you going out, students going out with the gospel onto campus, welcoming freshers and standing there shoulder to shoulder in the work you undertake. Will there be different thoughts of opinions?

[ 30 : 43 ] Surely there will be. But with Christ at the centre and God's word at the heart of all you do, may I encourage you to humbly go out and partner together with others that Lord Jesus would be made known on the campuses of our city. And just as a side note for any freshers here, when we said right at the start this passage is about all of us, it is about all of us.

And if you're new or a returning student, pray and ask the Lord that this would be a season of your life that you would always look back on and see that he was at work significantly in you.

The devil, those who would oppose Christ, will be doing all they can to tear you away from Christ's body and his family and from the Lord Jesus in these days as a student. So come humbly and ask that these would be significant days where the Lord works in your life and you draw close to him.

And so what's my point really in this third point? Seeking spiritual renewal and reformation needs us to stand together under God's word. Together we listen to Christ. He is the head of the church. It's his word.

And we live out his way, loving each other, bearing with one another in this great work of the gospel. So dear friends, prize unity. Fight for unity, true unity in Christ. Not uniformity, but unity in Christ around his word as we show the world the glory of the gospel that we are all one in Christ Jesus.

[ 32 : 12 ] And whenever times or seasons or things happen where there are those who would be divisive and would seek out to turn those who are shoulder to shoulder sort of facing in against each other, then run from such a thing and have nothing to do with it. Opposition, not universal approval.

Humility, not pride. Unity, not division. Fourth, character, not competence. What stands out from this list really is people's character, i.e. they just get on and build as they seek God's glory. And they do it even if they're not trained to do it. Do you notice this wasn't left to the stonemasons, the carpenters, the sparkies of the day. No, it's the goldsmiths, it's the perfumers, it's the priests, the rulers. Verse 12, it's families with their young daughters, all building.

And there is an application to us for our works of service as we seek to serve the Lord Jesus and be fruitful in our lives. Sometimes in church life there'll be work to be done that we're thinking we perhaps are not the most suited for. But the need is there, and so we get on and do it. Cleaning teams need to run, meetings, need someone to take the minutes, whatever it is. We may not think this is our number one area of gifting, but we get on if the need is there. Now, just a point of clarity. For this point, I have said character, not competence. Maybe a slightly better way to do it would be saying character over competence, okay? The walls of Jerusalem did need to stand after this, okay? It would have been no use if the perfumers had built their section, hung their gates, and the whole thing just fell down. That wouldn't have been any use. But, but, it is character over competence. Their heart was there, the need was there, and so they set to work. I remember hearing someone say in another church in a faraway place that they had someone in an admin-type role in their church, a part-time admin-type role. The person had some, but not lots of IT skills, but not necessarily all the skills that they needed for the role. But the person said they would not have swapped this person out of the role for the world. They would not have swapped them for the world. Why? Their heart. Their heart. They loved the Lord Jesus. They loved the gospel. They loved his people. And so, dear friends, let this be an encouragement to you this morning, not to be held back in gospel partnership because you don't think you have the right skills. Training can be given. Skills can be taught. We can learn things. Love the Lord. Love his people. And may we get about serving the Lord Jesus. But I also think there is a spiritual aspect of application here, of

sanctification, of edification of the body. It's an Ephesians 4 kind of thing that we saw earlier on this year. All the saints to be about the work of ministry. And I think part of the point is this.

[ 35 : 26 ] You don't need to have it all together or to have all the answers to all the questions or to have all the right words to come and pray at the prayer meeting. Your prayers will help the saints.

You don't have to have all the answers in perfectly formed sentences to share an answer at life group. What you say will build up and encourage those around you. You don't have to have it all completely sorted in your own life before getting alongside a friend who's struggling in sin and saying, let me help you. Let me walk with you through this. We had our wonderful baptism this morning.

William and Caitlin and all parents that are here. We don't have to have all the answers, have it all together before we start teaching our children the glorious good news of the gospel.

We start it. We get alongside each other and we get after the work because we love Jesus. Fifth and finally then, we do it all because we seek God's glory, not our own.

We seek God's glory, not our own. What motivates them to build? What motivates them? Now, we're going to learn that they do the repairs in a remarkably quick time. That is to come in the weeks ahead. They work hard and they work fast, but what keeps them going? It is God's glory. They want to see God's kingdom and God's glory. Chapter 2, 17 and 18 are key. They see Jerusalem is in ruins and there's derision for the people.

[ 36 : 57 ] And Nehemiah tells them that God has put it in his heart to renew and repair the walls and they build. They are motivated by God's glory. A restoration of Jerusalem, of the walls, of the temple of worship.

In Old Testament terms, it's a way of showing the world who God is. And having repaired the walls, the nations are meant to come to Jerusalem and say, look how great your God is. Tell us all about him. We are motivated to come to God because we want his glory. We all have motivations. We need motivations, don't we? What does it take to get out of bed in the morning, to get to school, to do my homework, to go to the gym? We need a reason. As I ran the park run at the beach yesterday, I needed a motivation to get to the finish line and not to be completely outdone by one of my sons who was running, who was completely lost in the distance in front of me. And my motivation to finish was so I wasn't utterly humiliated, even more, as he tore past me and was away. I'll never catch him again.

The motivation for spiritual renewal is the glory of God, the glory of God. When God is not great in our lives, our own desire for him is not great. And our love for his word and him and for prayer will diminish. But when God is great, it will grow. And so, dear friends, ask God to keep his glory before your eyes every day, every day. But for all of us, as we stand shoulder to shoulder in all aspects of church life, from creche and children's work, to open doors on a Wednesday, to Christianity Explored courses when they come round, humbly helping each other to grow more like Jesus, may the glory of God ever be before our eyes. We would seek him in worship and that others would come to know how great he is. Well, perhaps you're here today and this is one of your first or few times in church you don't know God, not sure you believe in God, you don't know the Lord Jesus. Well, if that's you, it's great you're here. You're very welcome amongst us. And maybe all this talk of God's glory sounds rather strange. But what I want to do then perhaps is just lay one question, one very small challenge to you today. And it's that as if you came here with someone. Ask them about the Lord Jesus after the service. Why do you follow the Lord Jesus? Why do you seek his glory? Maybe you've asked them before, but ask them again. And if someone didn't bring you along, come and ask me, come and ask Donald.

Come and be introduced to someone who is like no other. Yes, there is none like him. Jesus is building his church. His kingdom has come. And having called us to himself, we are to seek his glory.

So dear friends, as we close, we saw last time in chapter 2, verse 8, that the hand of the Lord was upon them. And we've seen that today. The land of the Lord is upon them as they build. And unless the Lord builds a house, we do labor in vain. And so our confidence today, as we live as God's people, as a church family, is that Jesus is building his church. And one day he'll finish it and make all things new when he returns. But until that day, let us seek his glory, seek his kingdom, serving together as one body, one people, knowing we are his forever. Let's pray.

[ 40 : 39 ] Lord Jesus, thank you that you have called us to yourself. We cannot be too young. We cannot be too old. There is no nation that we can be from where you do not want us to come to you.

No, Lord, you have called the youngest one in this room to you. Through to the very oldest, you say, come and live.

And so we gladly come as a church family, a people of God, and we sing our praises to you today. We worship you, Lord Jesus, that you have saved us. You have brought us to yourself. And in knowing you now, may we delight to stand together, to love you and worship, and to make the Lord Jesus known, knowing that we are his body. We are your dwelling place, both now and in glory for all eternity. Amen.