

October 21, 2007

Series: Transforming Our World for God

Message: #3 "Vision and Courage: Inseparable"

Scripture: Nehemiah 2:1-8

¹ In the month of Nisan in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was brought for him, I took the wine and gave it to the king. I had not been sad in his presence before; ² so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart."

I was very much afraid, ³ but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

⁴ The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, ⁵ and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."

⁶ Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

⁷ I also said to him, "If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? ⁸ And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?" And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.

Introduction

- Fear is something we live with every day.
- God addresses our fears through His Word.
- What's required to be a visionary? Nehemiah teaches:
 1. We must have a Holy Discontent (1:1-4)
 2. We must have a Holy Prayer (1:5-11)
 3. We must have a Holy Nerve (2:1-8)
- Here's another ingredient in pursuing God's vision for our lives and church family.

I. We need nerve to step out when all you might have is a passion.

- Nehemiah was not a prophet or priest.
- God had given him a vision to complete.
- He acted upon this holy discontent and so should we.

II. We need nerve to step out when all you see are obstacles, terrifying unknowns.

- Nehemiah faced his own
 1. The unknown of how a King would respond
 2. The unknown of how to resource the vision
- God does not say, “I’ll go for you,” but rather, “I’ll go with you.”
- God transforms our weaknesses and calls us to live with holy nerve - “courage.”
- Prayer is the key! (2:4b)
- “Courage isn’t the absence of fear, but the absence of self.”
- **We must get out of the way and let God do His work!**
- Nehemiah gave credit to God (V.8b)

Conclusion

- So what is God teaching us?
 1. Visions go nowhere apart from Holy Nerve - “courage”
 2. Holy nerve comes from Holy Prayer.
- So where are we?
 1. Are we figuring out God’s vision for ourselves and this church?
 2. Facing obstacles that create their own panic?
 3. God is waiting to see what we are going to do. (We can’t wait much longer.)