

CALLED EQUIPPED SENT



OPEN DOOR
Baptist Church

Nehemiah

A Character Study

1. Calling – A weeping heart

Nehemiah's calling came from some pretty terrible circumstances. His people had been dragged out of Israel into Babylon, and the nation of Persia overthrew the Babylonians—this was a double captivity, and it all stemmed from Israel's disobedience to God.

Notice that Nehemiah's ministry didn't start with an action plan but with repentance. He asked forgiveness for his sins and for Israel's sins. He knew that if God were to work, it wouldn't be through people too self-righteous to need His power.

And don't think that he shifted the blame on his captors, the Persians. He knew that Israel had gotten herself into this mess, and his own people had failed to rebuild the Holy City. This failure meant that Jerusalem was not safe, and that meant that no one was worshipping the Holy God. Repentance was necessary.

Now that he was pure from God's forgiveness, it was time to take action. He had a burden far too great for himself. His tears gave way to alignment with God, and this alignment gave way to his calling:

Build the walls.

2. Equipping – Building without fear

Nehemiah 2 shows the first test. After months of prayer, the king notices Nehemiah's sadness. "This is strange," the king thought. "He's always joyful." He questioned Nehemiah.

When asked, Nehemiah gives an honest answer—but a tactful, tactical one. He explained the situation plainly, then prayed *again* before speaking further.

Nehemiah did not ask vaguely. He asked for time, letters of authority, and materials. The king granted all of it because, as the text states, "*the hand of my God ... was good upon me.*"

Once Nehemiah arrives in Jerusalem, he did not announce his plan. He inspected the walls at night when he would not be discovered. He gathered data. Only then did he speak to the leaders, grounding the vision in God's hand already at work. The people responded by building.

Opposition began immediately. Sanballat and Tobiah mocked first. When mockery failed, threats followed. When threats failed, deception and intimidation escalated.

Each time, Nehemiah responded the same way: prayer, practical defense, and continued work. Nehemiah posted guards, ignored the enemies, and carried a sword while he worked. The work did not stop.

Had Nehemiah only been equipped with building tools, the people would not have followed. But he was armed with the power and blessings of God. Nehemiah's equipment had far less to do with his human giftings (a cupbearer isn't a mason!), and far more to do with his God's direction.

3. Sending – Celebration and renewal

Fifty-two days. That's how long the wall's reconstruction took. The burden God gave Nehemiah and the power He gave the builders resulted in an unprecedented (and unmatched) result. I wish they'd copy Nehemiah's strategy on Juban road.

But Nehemiah's story still had a ways to go. God used him to lead the rebuilding project, but He also used Nehemiah to lead the people.

His focus shifted from walls to worship. As they celebrated their construction accomplishments, Chapter 8 tells of how the people found themselves right where Nehemiah was in his Calling stage: weeping. As Nehemiah's friend

Ezra read the words of Scripture, the people saw how far they'd fallen from God and repented.

Nehemiah's calling became theirs, too.

Nehemiah's sending reaches its full expression here. He was not sent merely to fix infrastructure. He was sent to help restore the fear of the Lord among God's people. The new wall protected a renewed people who finally understood who they were and Whose they were.

Summary

Nehemiah's life displays God's sovereignty:

- **Called through repentance, prayer, and confession**
- **Equipped through courage, planning, and resistance**
- **Sent to worship, lead, and renew**

Nehemiah shows us that God rebuilds ruins through men who fear Him more than opposition—and who refuse to separate obedience from worship.