

Sermon Series: “Hand Me Another Brick”—Lord of Life Lutheran, Westfield, IN—4/17/2005

Title: “Everyone does his part”

Text: Nehemiah 3

Intro.: *Ills.: Indisputable value of Teamwork*

Theme: In the Body of Christ, God never intended for the work of implementing his kingdom to fall to a few. That is why he has redeemed our hearts, gifted and resources our lives, place us in a congregation to accomplish it, together.

Organized around God’s project

- Seeing life in God’s kingdom as a string of “**good work**” opportunities
 1. *They replied, "Let us start rebuilding." So they began this good work. Neh. 2: 18*
 2. *For we are God's workmanship, created in Christ Jesus to do good works, which God prepared in advance for us to do. Eph. 2:10*
 3. Defining **good works** by what God places in front of us to do
 - a. To the Glory of God
 - b. For the good of my neighbor
 - c. Carries out God’s will and does not violate his commands
 - d. Done in faith and by faith in Jesus
- God’s organizational plan
 1. **Spiritual leaders should lead (Print vs. 1)** — if God put you in a position at this time, then lead and we will follow
 2. **Ministry is about community, not individualism (Print vs. 2)**
 - a. A whole community came together and what one couldn’t do the other could — a picture of the church
 - b. Families and individuals where building and working side-by-side, as the people of God, blessed & empowered
 - c. *Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken. Eccles. 4:12*
 3. **Motivated by the praise of God not the opinion/participation of others (Print vs. 5, 27)**
 - a. It was not all a glorious picture—some in sinful pride/selfishness refused to work
 - b. Sometimes ministry/progress halts because we get put out at others rather than focused on what God can do
 - c. Not only didn’t Tekoa men let others slacking determine their part, they did more than expected
 - d. *And they did not do as we expected, but they gave themselves first to the Lord and then to us in keeping with God's will. 2 Cor. 8: 5*
 4. **Letting God S.H.A.P.E. our service**
 - a. Spiritual gifts
 - i. **Illus. Ancient Spiritual Gift Inventory**
 - b. Heart/passion
 - i. *Everyone who was willing and whose heart moved him came and brought an offering to the LORD for the work on the Tent of Meeting. Exodus 35:21*
 - c. Ability
 - i. **Print vs. 8, 31** – God even used “*perfumer-makers and goldsmiths*” in his grand project
 - ii. **Ills.: What money can’t buy**
 - d. Personality

But by the grace of God I am what I am, and his grace to me was not without effect. No, I worked harder than all of them--yet not I, but the grace of God that was with me. 1 Cor. 15: 10

a. Experience

b. *All this is from God, who reconciled us to himself through Christ and gave us the ministry of reconciliation 2 Cor. 5:18*

Ministering side-by-side (with family, neighbors, and coworkers) (**Print vss. 3, 12, 23, 28, 29**)

Ills.: Pictures from the tree planting

Involving your children in this project which will reach people for Christ for generations to come

So the next generation would know them, even the children yet to be born, and they in turn would tell their children. Then they would put their trust in God and would not forget his deeds but would keep his commands. Ps 78: 6, 7

Indisputable value of Teamwork

During World War II, when Britain was experiencing its darkest days, the country had a difficult time keeping men in the coal mines. Many wanted to give up their dirty, thankless jobs in the dangerous mines to join the military service, which garnered much public praise and support. Yet their work in the mines was critical to the war. Without coal, the military and the people at home would be in trouble. So prime minister [Winston Churchill] faced thousands of coal miners one day and told them of their importance to the war effort, how their role could make or break the goal of maintaining England's freedom. Churchill painted a picture of what it would be like when the war ended, the grand parade that would honor the people who fought the war. First would come the sailors of the navy, the people who continued the tradition of Trafalgar and the defeat of the Spanish Armada. Next would come the best and brightest of Britain, the pilots of the Royal Air Force, who fended off the German Luftwaffe. Following them would be the soldiers who fought at Dunkirk. Last of all would come the coal-dust-covered men in miners' caps. Churchill indicated that someone from the crowd might say, "Where were they during the critical days of the struggle?" And the voices of thousands of men would respond, "We were in the earth with our faces to the coal." It's said that tears appeared in the eyes of the hardened men. And they returned to their inglorious work with steely resolve, having been reminded of the role they were playing in their country's noble goal of pursuing freedom for the Western World. *Citation: John Maxwell, The 17 Indisputable Laws of Teamwork* (Thomas Nelson, 2001); submitted by Kirk MacLeod, Keswick, Onta

What Money can't buy you