

Building Memorials

Nehemiah 7:5-6 HCSB Then my God put it into my mind to assemble the nobles, the officials, and the people to be registered by genealogy. I found the genealogical record of those who came back first, and I found *the following* written in it: (6) These are the people of the province who went up from among the captive exiles deported by King Nebuchadnezzar of Babylon. Each of them returned to his own town in Jerusalem and Judah.

What an opportunity this project presented to the people of Israel. Like the fabrication of the Tabernacle,¹ this afforded the people a chance to invest in something truly worthwhile; something that would leave a mark on the passing ages of history.

Building memorials reflects a long view.



²Imagine waking up someday and having a sparse breakfast with your family. You are poor and a couple of your children have already been lost to slavery. You're not sure where your next meal is coming from. There's a knock on the door and you're asked to come to a community meeting. There, a guy from another country tries to urge you to help build a wall. "Take time off work and come help me build" he says. How would you react?

³Imagine waking up someday and having a delicious breakfast. Your servants are already busy cleaning up the house and setting the day's business in order for your perusal. As you sip on your coffee, your house



manager begins listing all the important meetings you're going to have to attend today if you're business is to stay competitive. Suddenly, your butler brings a message to you. It reads "Set aside all your business. Let it slide. Let others take those lucrative contracts. Instead, come help me lay bricks...out of your own pocket. And oh, by the way, we'll have to be on guard because the locals will try to kill us while we work."

Does this make sense to you? That poor man could easily think that his survival and the feeding of his family should take precedence. Little would he know that by taking on this phenomenal job he is providing for the economic future of his children. The safety and security of Jerusalem created by those walls would allow business to flourish and jobs to become abundant. Little did he realize that Nehemiah would step into those who had enslaved his children and get them back for him.

That rich man could think that unless he poured everything into his business, he would not have anything to leave to his children. His name would die out. Little would he realize that his name would be listed in the archives of God's Holy Scriptures for all time. When you are a part of a great project, you get to become a part of history. When you are a part of building God's kingdom, you get to become a part of eternity.

¹ Exodus 36:3-7

² Image from <http://www.companymagazine.org/v174/comp7a.jpg>

³ Image from <http://bigsislisis.com/wp-content/uploads/2009/01/vegetarian-big-breakfast1.jpg>

Building memorials requires a “glory mindset”

I’m not suggesting that everyone quit their jobs and work on the church. I’m not trying to lay out a plan for doing a list of better, more important things. No. What I am suggesting is that you live with glory in mind. I want you to do the same everyday tasks but with a bigger, better purpose in mind. Turn the mundane moments of your life into chances to become a part of the transcendent purposes of God.

Go to work. Bring home a paycheck. Eat. Sleep. Love your family. Spend time with them. However, while you’re doing all these things, find some way to turn them into chances to add to or improve the kingdom of God. We tend to look at the grand wall, failing to note all the individual little stones of which it is composed. In a similar way, the kingdom of God will be built into your life, one small, insignificant act at a time.

Don’t worry – be “glory minded”.

Who hasn’t wished at some point in their lives to be a part of something bigger, something greater than their own meager existence would seem to be? That desire, universally demonstrated in humans, comes from a spiritual source. Deep down we all long to return to our original state. Like Moses, we have a built-in need to touch the glory of God, if ever so briefly. This desire is a gift from God. It demonstrates that He has hardwired each of us for glory.

- **Matthew 6:25-33 HCSB** "This is why I tell you: Don't worry about your life, what you will eat or what you will drink; or about your body, what you will wear. Isn't life more than food and the body more than clothing? (26) Look at the birds of the sky: they don't sow or reap or gather into barns, yet your heavenly Father feeds them. Aren't you worth more than they? (27) Can any of you add a single cubit to his height by worrying? (28) And why do you worry about clothes? Learn how the wildflowers of the field grow: they don't labor or spin thread. (29) Yet I tell you that not even Solomon in all his splendor was adorned like one of these! (30) If that's how God clothes the grass of the field, which is here today and thrown into the furnace tomorrow, won't He do much more for you--you of little faith? (31) So don't worry, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear?' (32) For the idolaters eagerly seek all these things, and your heavenly Father knows that you need them. (33) But seek first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things will be provided for you.

Too often we get all balled up with worry over the passing things of this world. We worry about food, bills, jobs, promotions, the economy, our relationships...if there is anything we’re good at, it’s worry!

In contrast, Jesus says “seek first the kingdom of God.” What? How is adding one more thing to my list of responsibilities going to lessen my worries? It won’t. Jesus is not asking you to add it to your list. Doing that is not “seeking first”. If you add it to the list it’s at the bottom! Jesus is asking you to throw away your list and to seek the good of the kingdom first; foremost; above all else and instead of all else if need be.

The secret is that in so doing we are taking care of all the other things. God’s kingdom is about the good of God’s people. To seek His kingdom is to seek our good.

- **James 4:10 HCSB** Humble yourselves before the Lord, and He will exalt you.

To humble ourselves before God is to be exalted in a way that we could never dream. Cultural Christianity tells you to seek the “purpose driven life” but fails to redirect you from your own narcissism. I’m telling you that it is only when we overcome the lure of the “kingdom of self” that we can finally connect with glory and ultimate fulfillment.

We live in a culture that has institutionalized self-focus and personal entitlement. If you look around, it is very clear that we need to be rescued from ourselves. Things like debt,

addiction, obesity, divorce, etc. are the fruits of a self-centered culture. We are trained almost from birth to look for meaning in every way except the ONLY way in which it may be found. True meaning and lasting glory can only be found in living for something bigger than yourself.

You may say "I don't want glory. I'm satisfied with my humble little life." Bunk! Hogwash! If that's true then you'd better repent of your rebellion and false-humility!

God's will is your glorification.

To say that you don't want glory is to say that you don't want to be conformed to the image of the Son of God!

- [2 Corinthians 3:18 HCSB](#) We all, with unveiled faces, are reflecting the glory of the Lord and are being transformed into the same image from glory to glory; this is from the Lord who is the Spirit.
- [Colossians 1:27 HCSB](#) God wanted to make known to those among the Gentiles the glorious wealth of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory.
- [2 Thessalonians 2:13-14 HCSB](#) But we must always thank God for you, brothers loved by the Lord, because from the beginning God has chosen you for salvation through sanctification by the Spirit and through belief in the truth. (14) He called you to this through our gospel, so that you might obtain the glory of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Our future glorification is what gives us hope. It's what allows us to overcome terrible circumstances.

- [2 Corinthians 4:16-18 HCSB](#) Therefore we do not give up; even though our outer person is being destroyed, our inner person is being renewed day by day. (17) For our momentary light affliction is producing for us an absolutely incomparable eternal weight of glory. (18) So we do not focus on what is seen, but on what is unseen; for what is seen is temporary, but what is unseen is eternal.
- [Ephesians 3:13 HCSB](#) So then I ask you not to be discouraged over my afflictions on your behalf, for they are your glory.
- [2 Timothy 2:10 HCSB](#) This is why I endure all things for the elect: so that they also may obtain salvation, which is in Christ Jesus, with eternal glory.
- [Hebrews 2:10 HCSB](#) For it was fitting, in bringing many sons to glory, that He, for whom and through whom all things exist, should make the source of their salvation perfect through sufferings.
- [1 Peter 1:6-7 HCSB](#) You rejoice in this, though now for a short time you have had to be distressed by various trials (7) so that the genuineness of your faith--more valuable than gold, which perishes though refined by fire--may result in praise, glory, and honor at the revelation of Jesus Christ.
- [1 Peter 5:1 HCSB](#) Therefore, as a fellow elder and witness to the sufferings of the Messiah, and also a participant in the glory about to be revealed, I exhort the elders among you:

Paul agrees with Jesus' admonition to not worry about stuff and instead to seek the Lord's kingdom:

- [Philippians 3:19 HCSB](#) Their end is destruction; their god is their stomach; their glory is in their shame. They are focused on earthly things, Where sin's wages are death, God pays His people in glory.
- [Romans 2:6-10 HCSB](#) He **will repay each one according to his works**: (7) eternal life to those who by patiently doing good seek for glory, honor, and immortality; (8) but wrath and indignation to those who are self-seeking and disobey the truth, but are obeying unrighteousness; (9) affliction and distress for every human being who does

evil, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek; (10) but glory, honor, and peace for everyone who does good, first to the Jew, and also to the Greek.

- 1 Thessalonians 2:11-12 HCSB As you know, like a father with his own children, (12) we encouraged, comforted, and implored each one of you to walk worthy of God, who calls you into His own kingdom and glory.
- 1 Peter 5:4 HCSB And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.

Memorials are a type of intergenerational teaching.

God doesn't take the majority of His workers from the ranks of the wise, mighty, or noble.⁴ Omnipotent God could run the universe by Himself and do it all without our aid and be absolutely fine. In His grace and condescension He chooses to use foolish, weak, base human beings to build His kingdom.

In today's passage we see a long list of people from all walks of life who understood, at least to some limited degree, the importance of God's work and got on board. In exchange God not only gave them safety and provided for their food and their economic needs; He inscribed them in the Book of Life and in the Holy Scriptures to their eternal glory. For thousands of years, believers have read of their exploit and rejoiced vicariously with them.

Today – here – now – you are being presented with an opportunity to join with other believers and become a part of something bigger than yourself. You are invited to participate in some way in the building of a congregation of people that will raise the flag of Yahweh Sabaoth over our county.

Fathers – do you want to leave a legacy for your children? Like Abram, do you want to be chosen because God knows you will command your children and your house after you to keep the way of the Lord by doing what is right and just?⁵ Do you want to affect the future condition of generations of your offspring? Then help us build a church here. Be a godly man. Teach your children Adonai's ways and ensure that their children will be taught similarly. Get involved. Get your kids involved. Let them see how important the kingdom of God is to you and maybe – just maybe they will choose to have the same priorities in their lives. Maybe, somewhere, sometime during the Millennium Kingdom, someone will read your name on a list of those who rose above the common herd and actually did something that mattered.

⁴ 1 Corinthians 1:26-27

⁵ Genesis 18:19