

Thought for the Day 6th August - Joan Loane

Nehemiah 2:10 - 3: 32

Next in the saga of Nehemiah and the Case of the Fallen Walls.....

Nehemiah had come down from the court of King Artaxerxes in Persia, where he had occupied an important position, to Jerusalem. His mission was to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem. They lay in ruin leaving the city defenceless.

He had spent at least 3 months journeying to get there so must have been eager to start. But did he immediately announce his intentions to the people there? He did not. He stayed put for three days. He may have been exhausted from the journey or maybe he wanted to lie low and assess the situation. So, instead of asking their opinions as to what to do, he did a night time survey of the walls to assess the situation himself. Had he initially consulted the people, he would no doubt have been told that it was an impossible task. After all, they had not been able to do it. It had been put in the 'too hard' basket! Also, they may have resented this outsider coming from Persia telling them what to do.

So how was Nehemiah to get the people on side? He said, 'You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins and its gates have been burned with fire! Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem and we will no longer be in disgrace.' He then told them how 'the gracious hand of my God' had been upon him, and how the king had been moved to give him timber and an escort.

The people responded with enthusiasm and began to rebuild...the high priest and the other priests, goldsmiths, perfume-makers, rulers, Shallum and his daughters (except the nobles of Tekoa...they would not stoop to do such manual labour!). All the people simultaneously worked on the section allocated to them, often the part near where they lived.

They had opposition...Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem were threatened by the building of the walls and ridiculed them but Nehemiah told them that 'the God of heaven' would give them success. (Satan loves to undermine our confidence as we do what God leads us to do!)

So here we have people from all different trades, coming together to do manual labour...the work God called them to do.

We too may be called to do a work that we have never done before and for which we feel unqualified. Are we prepared to go outside our comfort zone and be available to do His work? This 'God of heaven' will give us success.