

BUILDING UP YOUR FAITH
1 PETER 2:2

INTRODUCTION:

1. Rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem involved three factors.
 - a) They had a passion to rebuilt. (Neh. 1.1-4)
 - b) They had a purpose to rebuild. (Neh. 2.3-5)
 - c) There was progress in rebuilding. (Neh. 2.17,18; 6.15,16)
2. The last chapters detail their spiritual rebuilding.

I. THERE WAS A PASSION

- A. **NEHEMIAH 8.1:** *“the people gathered together as one man”*
 1. The purpose of their gathering. (Neh. 7.73)
 2. **NEHEMIAH 8.1:** They asked to hear the Law.
 3. **NEHEMIAH 8.3:** The people were attentive.
 4. **NEHEMIAH 8.4-9:** The people wept when they heard it.
- B. To grow in the faith, there is to be a passion for the word.
 1. With desire, *“you may grow thereby.”* (1 Pet. 2.2)
 2. Are you hungry for the word? (Matt. 5.6)

II. THERE WAS A PURPOSE

- A. The people read the Law with the purpose of obedience.
 1. **NEHEMIAH 8.13:** *“to understand the words of the Law.”*
 2. **NEHEMIAH 8.14:** *“the Lord had commanded by Moses”*
 3. **NEHEMIAH 8.16:** *“Then the people went out...”*
- B. To grow in the faith, there is to be a purpose of obedience.
 1. We are to be *“doers of the word”* (James 1.21,22)
 2. Faith is not to be stagnant, but growing. (2 Pet. 1.5-7)

III. THERE WAS PROGRESS

- A. With a passion and a plan their spiritual growth was evident.
 1. They acknowledged their sins. (Neh. 9.1,2)
 2. They worshipped God. (Neh. 9.3)
 3. They devoted themselves to God. (Neh. 9.38)
- B. Passion, purpose, that in progress. (2 Pet. 1.8; Matt. 13.23)

CONCLUSION: To grow, the seed needs to first be planted.

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“Go into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature”
-Mark 16.15

March 23, 2025

MEETING TIMES:

SUNDAY MORNING BIBLE CLASS : 9:00 AM

SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP: 9:50 AM

SUNDAY EVENING WORSHIP: 6:00 PM

WEDNESDAY EVENING BIBLE CLASS 7:30 PM

The Separated Ones

Death is a subject that invokes a lot of avoidance. We don't like to talk about it or think about it. Much of the reason is a lack of understanding. Most people just cannot grasp the concept of death. In the Bible, death is clearly defined, and understanding it will help us better to deal with it.

Biblically, death is very simple. In every case the word is found, it is some kind of separation. Physical death is the separation of the body and soul (James 2.26). Spiritual death is the separation of man and God (Isa. 59.2; Rom. 6.23). Obeying the gospel and becoming a Christian is to become dead to sin, that is, separated from sin (Rom. 6.2).

In the specific context of physical death, we constantly read about the separation of body and spirit. For example, Rachel died giving birth to Benjamin. In **Genesis 35.18**, it says *“And so it was, as her soul was departing (for she died)...”* When Jesus died, His body and soul were separated. His soul went to Paradise that very day, but His body was buried (Luke 23.43,53,54). When He was raised from the dead, His body and soul were reunited (Acts 2.27).

The separated ones are the ones who have separated from their bodies and are now in Paradise waiting for the day of our resurrection (1 Cor. 15.50-54).
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HELP IN TIMES OF GRIEF

MARK 6:46

INTRODUCTION:

1. Do you ever wonder if there is anything good that comes from grief? Where is the good in broken hearts filled with sorrow?
2. Stepping into the life of Jesus, we can learn some things about how to manage our grief.

I. JESUS PERFORMED TWO MIRACLES

- A. Jesus feeds the five thousand.
 1. **MATTHEW 6.30-32:** Jesus was exhausted and was looking for a place to rest.
 2. **MATTHEW 6.33,34:** Though He was looking for solitude, He was *“moved with compassion.”*
 3. Why did Jesus feed the five thousand? He had a heart of a servant. (Mark 6.38,42,43; Matt. 20.28)
- B. Jesus walks on water.
 1. **MARK 6.45-47:** Jesus was finally able to be alone.
 2. **MARK 6.48-52:** Jesus saw His disciples in distress.
 3. Why did Jesus leave His place of solitude and help His disciples? He had the heart of a servant. (Phil. 2.5,7)
- C. These were two miracles performed during a time of grief.
 1. **MATTHEW 14.13:** *“When Jesus heard it...”* Jesus had been told about the death of John the Baptist. (v. 12)
 2. John the Baptist was special to Jesus. (Matt. 11.11)
 3. Jesus had the heart of a servant, but that heart was also filled with grief.

II. HOW CAN I BETTER MANAGE MY GRIEF?

- A. Find some time to be alone.
 1. Jesus looked for some alone time. (Mark 6.31,32,47)
 2. To help us manage grief, take some time by yourself to process everything. (cf. 2 Sam. 12.16)
- B. Find some time to be alone with God.
 1. Jesus was looking to be alone for a specific reason. He *“departed to the mountain to pray”* (Mark 6.46).
 2. Grief ebbs and flows. Taking it to God will make life a little easier to handle.

CONCLUSION: There is something special about being a Christian to whom God gives hope and our family gives support.

BEING WITH THE LORD TOGETHER

When a brother or sister in Christ steps into eternity, their absence is deeply felt. Their name is removed from the church directory. They no longer serve in the church by leading songs, prayers, or holding a position as an elder or deacon. Their delightful smile, sense of humor, and sage wisdom is no longer shared. However, did you know that those who leave this world are still members of the church?

In Hebrews 12, reference is made to *“the general assembly and church of the firstborn who are registered in heaven”* (Heb. 10.23). Though they are no longer with us, their names are still on the Lord’s church directory. Then we can turn to 1 Corinthians 15 and read about the resurrection. In this chapter, we are given the sequence of events. After the dead in Christ are raised, Jesus *“delivers the kingdom of God to the Father”* (1 Cor. 15.24). That means that every faithful subject of the kingdom, every faithful member of the church, alive or dead, will be granted an entrance into heaven where all of us will be with the Lord forever.

That thought is further explained in 1 Thessalonians 4. In this passage, there are two different kinds of grief. There is the grief of those who have hope and the grief of those who have no hope (1 Thess. 4.13). Losing a brother or sister in Christ will bring us grief. But the grief that we experience is tempered by hope. What is the hope that helps us during our time of grief? If you keep reading the passage, the Holy Spirit explains: *“For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, even so God will bring with Him those who sleep in Jesus”* (1 Thess. 4.14). Keep reading and verse 17 says that *“those who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet the Lord in the air”* (1 Thess. 4.17). On the day of our resurrection, we will all together ascend upward and meet Jesus. From that point on, *“thus we shall always be with the Lord”* (1 Thess. 4.17).

The chapter ends with this imperative: *“Therefore comfort one another with these words”* (1 Thess. 4.18). Literally, we are to keep on comforting one another. This was a congregation that was grieving. They had lost some of their brethren in death. But the Holy Spirit reminds us that we can find comfort in the hope that someday we will see them again. And that comforting thought is to be conveyed constantly to one another. We are all grieving, but let’s find comfort in hope (cf. Rom. 5.5).
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