



RE:BUILDING

Guard

Sunday 14th June 2026

Nehemiah 7:1-4

Jerusalem was the heart of Israel. At its very centre, God's people came to meet with God, and the oxygen of heaven met with the impurity of the hearts of men and brought them life once more. It was built on rhythms of sacrifice, life, and commerce. It was a place where the stranger and the chosen met.

1 And its health was never so ruined as when the walls were broken. As **Proverbs 25:28** tells us,

A man without self-control is like a city broken into and left without walls.

When we do not take charge of what goes in and what comes out of our hearts we become as a city with broken walls – ruined, ashamed, vulnerable, and violated.

2 The book of Proverbs is a lavish feast for those who want to take responsibility for what goes in and what comes out of their hearts. Over **70** times it speaks of the heart: **wisdom, commandments, steadfastness, trust, vigilance, perversions, wicked plans, etched wisdom, crookedness, deceit, knowledge, anxiety, hope, bitterness, laughter, backsliding, tranquillity, rest, gladness, understanding, cheerfulness, plans, eyes, arrogance, discernment, justice, joy, haughtiness, intelligence, rage, discipline, pride, purity, envy, direction, violence, kingship, heaviness, evil, abominations, perfumes, reflections, hardness, and delight.**

3 **Proverbs 27:19** says,

As in water face reflects face, so the heart of man reflects the man.

And for Israel, Jerusalem reflected the heart of the nation. And this is why we see Nehemiah being so careful in today's passage to guard Jerusalem. Let's

4 read **Nehemiah 7:1**,

Now when the wall had been built and I had set up the doors, and the gatekeepers, the singers, and the Levites had been appointed

Her walls were built, her gates finished, gatekeepers appointed to guard over what went out and what went in and to look out for enemies on the horizon. Singers and Levites (the tribe from which all priests came) had been appointed for praise and sacrifice.

5

This is the picture of the believer who knows the salvation of the Lord. Our hearts have been redeemed, we have the Spirit watching over us, and we have been appointed to give praise and to know sacrifice. As **Ephesians 1:13-14** says,

In him you also, when you heard the word of truth, the gospel of your salvation, and believed in him, were sealed with the promised Holy Spirit, ¹⁴ who is the guarantee of our inheritance until we acquire possession of it, to the praise of his glory.

You understand the power of His sacrifice, and your hearts have been designed to return praise and have been sealed by the Holy Spirit.

6

But just like Jerusalem, we are vulnerable, and we must guard our hearts with care. Back in **Nehemiah 7:2** Nehemiah makes an important appointment,

I gave my brother Hanani and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem, for he was a more faithful and God-fearing man than many.

Jerusalem was vulnerable and needed careful oversight. Nehemiah hand selected two men, one in particular because he was more faithful and God-fearing than many. Do not entrust your hearts to your social media feed. Do not entrust your heart to your job title, your post code, your TV binges, your fridge, your feelings, your favourite outfit, or your financial status.

7

Simply put, **do not trust anything or anyone other than God to protect and make of your heart what only He can make of your heart.** Psalm 56:4 says this,

8

In God, whose word I praise, in God I trust; I shall not be afraid. What can flesh do to me?

9

And so Nehemiah brings careful instruction to those appointed to watch over Jerusalem, Hanani and Hananiah, **(v3)**

And I said to them, "Let not the gates of Jerusalem be opened until the sun is hot. And while they are still standing guard, let them shut and bar

the doors. Appoint guards from among the inhabitants of Jerusalem, some at their guard posts and some in front of their own homes.”

His instructions were designed with clear intent. To enable Jerusalem to begin to function again as a place of genuine worship and commerce, and to guard Jerusalem from her vulnerabilities.

10 It's just like us as believers. **Philippians 1:6** speaks of the same process,

And I am sure of this, that he who began a good work in you will bring it to completion at the day of Jesus Christ.

You are a work in progress. That means you are vulnerable. You are not fully all that you will yet be, you do not yet have your resurrection body. You are in the process of being transformed. As Paul describes it in **2 Corinthians 4:7**,

11 But we have this treasure in jars of clay, to show that the surpassing power belongs to God and not to us.

Just down the road from our house a water supply sprung another leak. So there are cones, barriers, traffic lights, workmen, speed restrictions – all designed to protect a vulnerable section of the infrastructure. And when you drive past coned-off lanes with no visible work you get frustrated. Right now some of you are experiencing God's roadworks in your heart. You're frustrated, honestly, you've had enough of these speed restrictions. But you need to honour his sovereignty, there's a work in progress on He can truly see.

12 **Nehemiah 7:4** reminds us of something important,

The city was wide and large, but the people within it were few, and no houses had been rebuilt.

13 Your heart is complicated. But it's also keeping you alive. So **you need to pay attention to every area of your heart, because it is much bigger and impactful than you realise**. But it also has more potential than any other part of your being.

14 Now whilst your heart is saved it is also being sanctified – worked on, cleaned out, renewed – and therefore be reminded of this in **Matthew 14:19**,

Then he ordered the crowds to sit down on the grass, and taking the five loaves and the two fish, he looked up to heaven and said a blessing. Then he broke the loaves and gave them to the disciples, and the disciples gave them to the crowds.

15 The bread was no good until it was broken. **Good news...God only uses broken vessels.** Do not rejoice that you are broken, for that would be singing over sin, but rejoice that He uses people in spite of their brokenness, all the time in all places.