



Sermon Outline

May 31, 2009

Overcoming the Overwhelming A Burden for Change

I. Look at the Context

Psalm 137

¹ By the rivers of Babylon we sat and wept when we remembered Zion. ² There on the poplars we hung our harps, ³ for there our captors asked us for songs, our tormentors demanded songs of joy; they said, "Sing us one of the songs of Zion!" ⁴ How can we sing the songs of the LORD while in a foreign land? ⁵ If I forget you, O Jerusalem, may my right hand forget its skill. ⁶ May my tongue cling to the roof of my mouth if I do not remember you, if I do not consider Jerusalem my highest joy. ⁷ Remember, O LORD, what the Edomites did on the day Jerusalem fell. "Tear it down," they cried, "tear it down to its foundations!" ⁸ O Daughter of Babylon, doomed to destruction, happy is he who repays you for what you have done to us- ⁹ he who seizes your infants and dashes them against the rocks.

2 Chronicles 36:18-19

¹⁸ He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the LORD's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. ¹⁹ They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there.

2 Chronicles 36:20

²⁰ He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his sons until the kingdom of Persia came to power.

2 Chronicles 36:22

²² In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the LORD spoken by Jeremiah, the LORD moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and to put it in writing:

II. What's the Big Deal About a Wall?

Nehemiah 1:1-4

¹ The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ² Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. ³ They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire." ⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and



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wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Isaiah 49:15-16

¹⁵ "Can a mother forget the baby at her breast and have no compassion on the child she has borne? Though she may forget, I will not forget you! ¹⁶ See, I have engraved you on the palms of my hands; your walls are ever before me.

Isaiah 60:18

¹⁸ No longer will violence be heard in your land, nor ruin or destruction within your borders, but you will call your walls Salvation and your gates Praise.

Psalms 20:7

⁷ Some trust in chariots and some in horses, but we trust in the name of the LORD our God.

Psalms 27:1

¹ The LORD is my light and my salvation—whom shall I fear?
The LORD is the stronghold of my life—of whom shall I be afraid?

III.

A Burden to Change

1. Mourning over the situation

Nehemiah 1:4

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

2. Prayer and Fasting

Nehemiah 1:4

When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

3. Confessing sins

Nehemiah 1:6-7

⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

4. Remembering God's promises

Nehemiah 1:8-11

Remember instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.' ¹⁰ "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand.

¹¹ O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to

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the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man." I was cupbearer to the king.

Ezekiel 22:30

³⁰ "I looked for a man among them who would build up the wall and stand before me in the gap on behalf of the land so I would not have to destroy it, but I found none.

