

Nehemiah

From Passion to Action

Committing Your Vision to God

Nehemiah 7:1-3--November 17, 2019

Welcome and review of the previous weeks in the series...

Key Words

- God gives a burden
- Waiting is an important part of process
- A burden leads to passion
- Passion leads to action

Let's talk about one more aspect of the whole process of taking a burden and turning it into action. We've been looking at the guy named Nehemiah and a period in history when the city of Jerusalem had been all but destroyed and a group of people committed themselves to rebuilding and fortifying it once again. The whole event is recorded in the Old Testament book of Nehemiah. We've been pulling out these gems that can help us live our lives according to the burden God has given us. This one last piece is pretty significant though and it would be easy to give you this formula of "burden to passion to action" and miss this last piece.

What we all know is that the great minds who have thought of awesome things, inspired by a burden that moved them to a place of passion that caused them to get things done did one more thing...they made sure it would last. The great things around us are there because someone built systems and developed protocols that ensured that what they built would last beyond them and into the future. You see, **if it's important enough for God to give you the burden, then it's valuable enough to make sure it lasts.**

I want to use a local example. Not that this guy is equal to Nehemiah but, he lived out the process we've been talking about in such a way that what he created a long time ago still exists today, as a matter of fact, it continues to grow bigger and better. I know, some of you are thinking that I was going to talk about Walt Disney but, remember – I said this guy is local, right. Milton Hershey is the guy who lived out this process in a huge way. [\[Pic of Milton and Catherine Hershey\]](#) Milton and his wife Catherine or Kitty were unable to have children of their own. So, out of what might have been a loss, they got a burden for orphaned boys. [\[Pic of Milton w/ Child\]](#) Their goal was to provide a stable home environment and a combination of agriculture, vocational and academic learning. So, on November 15, 1909, just a mere 110 years ago, Milton and Kitty allowed their burden to become a passion that turned into an action. Hershey would commit his entire fortune to this project as well as much of his life. His hope was that 100 boys would have their lives changed. [\[Pic of School\]](#)

To make that a reality, Hershey made sure that the buildings, the curriculum, the processes, the systems, the finances were all in place so that the school would live on after him. His goal of providing a real home for boys who needed a place to live was not only met but, exceeded his widest imaginations. To this very day, thousands of boys and girls call Milton Hershey School their home. The connections they feel to that place are deep and lasting. And because Hershey set the systems in place long ago, each child who attends the school is promised college tuition if they so desire. Not only did Hershey allow his burden to become an action but, he made sure it had a legacy that would last. Hershey passed away in 1945 – that's 74 years ago. But, the school not only lives on – it's flourishing at an exponential rate.

Hershey exemplifies what Nehemiah knew and what God wants all of us to hear today, **a burden that becomes a passion that turns into action must continue beyond us.** God is doing something in you that has the potential to last beyond you. The burden God has planted in your heart is one that is not just for you and your edification. God wants to reach a generation. In Hershey's example, he's reaching generation after generation. In Nehemiah's story, he is assuring that what they've built will last. [\[Pic of Old City of Jerusalem\]](#) There are still parts of the building that Nehemiah had a burden for that are in Jerusalem to this very day.

So, let's take a look at three verses in Nehemiah that highlights what all of us can do to make sure that what God has entrusted to us will last into the future. In Nehemiah chapter 7 it says that: **After the wall was finished and I had set up the doors in the gates, the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites were appointed.** Nehemiah did what we need to do with the things God has given us a burden for. Nehemiah began the process of setting up systems that would ensure that the wall would be cared for. He starts with gatekeepers and singers and Levites. Why are these positions

important. These are the people who are going to take care of the walls that have been built and who are going to maintain the life of those who are going to live inside of those walls. Nehemiah knew that they would need the gatekeepers. These are the accountants, the lawyers, the bankers, the bookkeepers, and those who are watching the details. These are the people who are going to keep the wheels turning and make sure we stay out of trouble.

Nehemiah understood that they would need the singers. These are the artists among them. These people are the painters, the playwrights, the printers, the band members, the creatives, and the out of the box thinkers. Nehemiah knew the importance of both sides of the brain and the value that both sides bring to the community in sustaining life. We need each other and I wonder, where are you serving so that who you are and the gifts you have are giving life to the community.

Next, Nehemiah makes sure that there are those who are going to pastorally care for the people. The Levites are charged with being the religious leaders of the community so that the community has someone to perform the religious services and sacraments as well as maintaining the connection of the people with the God who gave them the burden and passion for the city. Each of these people are important members of the community and need to be there if what they've built is going to last.

² I gave the responsibility of governing Jerusalem to my brother Hanani, along with Hananiah, the commander of the fortress, for he was a faithful man who feared God more than most.

Nehemiah then appoints people to be in charge of the overall working of the city. He made sure that there were two in charge, Hanani and Hananiah, who would balance each other out and who would hold each other accountable. Notice that they were men of integrity and who feared or respected God. Nehemiah knew that personal integrity and core values were important to leadership and to the future life of the city.

³ I said to them, "Do not leave the gates open during the hottest part of the day. And even while the gatekeepers are on duty, have them shut and bar the doors. Appoint the residents of Jerusalem to act as guards, everyone on a regular watch. Some will serve at sentry posts and some in front of their own homes."

Then Nehemiah institutes systems that will help the city to function at a level that will assure it's future. All of us need systems. The city of Jerusalem needed systems and the thing that God has given you a burden for needs systems developed to make sure that the actions you put into place work at their best and that they will last after you're gone. If this is something that God has stirred then it is a great work that you or your group has been given and therefore there needs to be systems put into place. **Great things have great systems for the future.**

What is it that God has given you to do? What is it that God has stirred in your heart? What burden has God given you that has grown into a passion and you're ready to act? God is not finished with this world yet and He wants to use you – He wants to use us as a church to make a difference in someone's life.

We have worked hard this year to build the systems that need to be in place if we are going to reach our community. We have those systems in place and we're ready. So, it's time for all of us to start asking the question – what burden has God given me that is ready to become an action? God has entrusted you with a vision, with a passion, with a burden...what are you going to do about it? Maybe you need to sit with it a bit. Maybe you and God need to have a conversation about what He is causing you to be restless about. Maybe you have a burden but, it's not a passion yet. It's not at that place where you've done the research and you've investigated the issues and you can't get it out of your head or out of your heart. Maybe you're ready for action. Maybe you've done all of the work needed and it's time to get started. What is it you're going to do?

About ten years ago, we started working with a young woman, a member of our church, named Amy who had a burden. Kids in school who were receiving a meal were going hungry on the weekends. She started having a passion as her research into this problem revealed the number of kids who were going hungry each weekend. One day, when the passion could no longer be maintained, CrossPoint worked with Amy to start a backpack program that made sure that kids who needed food over the weekend received a backpack filled with food items that would see them through until Monday. The program was called the Power Pack Program and it grew and grew and is now one of the largest food outreach programs in the area reaching thousands of kids. Under its new name – the Nutripacks Program, thousands of kids get meals.

Next Sunday we're going to talk about the burden God has given us here at CrossPoint Church and how that burden has become a passion and how that passion will take action steps in the months and years to come. Why, because God's not finished reaching people, saving people, helping people, and loving people through His church.