

# Lifting Up The STANDARD

“When the enemy shall come in like a flood, the Spirit of the LORD shall lift up a standard against him” (Isaiah 59:19).



Challenging And Encouraging God's Remnant To Remain Faithful

## A BIBLE REVIVAL

### Nehemiah 3:1-2,

*1 Then Eliashib the high priest rose up with his brethren the priests, and they builded the sheep gate; they sanctified it, and set up the doors of it; even unto the tower of Meah they sanctified it, unto the tower of Hananeel.*

*2 And next unto him builded the men of Jericho. And next to them builded Zaccur the son of Imri.*

### **Who Were These Men?**

We read about Eliashib, the high priest, the men of Jericho, Zaccur. He is called the son of Imri. Who were these people? Knowing who they were is not as important as the fact that the Lord knew them, and Hebrews Chapter six, verse ten, tells us, “*For God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labour of love, which ye have shewed toward his name, in that ye have ministered to the saints, and do minister.*” The people listed here gave their time and gave of their life for the cause of the Lord. If we give our money, and we can go out and earn some more money; but if we give our time, we can't get that back. God knew who they were and listed their names in His Bible. There are about 2,600 people named in the Bible. We talk about a few of the people who are more famous, but God knows all of them. He knows the workers in the nursery; He knows those who are helping with bus ministries; He knows those who are helping to clean up after everybody leaves. God is not unrighteous to forget your work and labor of love.

### **The Most Important Gate:**

We read here that the people were building the sheep gate. It says they sanctified it and they built doors and they put towers up there. A couple of towers are mentioned here. And we read these men of Jericho were involved. Who were these men of Jericho? If we go back to Ezra Chapter two, verse one, we read, “*Now these are the children of the province that went up out of the captivity, of those which had been carried away, whom Nebuchadnezzar the king of Babylon had carried away unto Babylon, and came again unto Jerusalem and Judah, every one unto his city.*” Then in Ezra 2:34, it names all those people, and when we get down to verse thirty-four, we read about the children of Jericho which were 345 of them that came back.

We have ten gates represented in this portion of Scripture, and this is the first of those ten gates, and this one has to do with our relationship with Jesus Christ. A “*relationship*” is the way in which two or more people regard and behave toward each other. The word “*behave*” means to conduct oneself in accordance with the accepted norm. A “*norm*” is a standard or pattern of behavior that is expected.

## Who Is Agreeing With Whom?

**Amos 3:3** asks the question, “*Can two walk together, except they be agreed?*” That little word “*be*” usually gets left out. We often hear it quoted, “*Can two walk together except they agree?*” That’s not what it says. It says, “*Can two walk together, except they **be** agreed?*” That means somebody has to change. Most Christians expect God to accept what they think has to be norm, and they hope that God lines up with them. It’s not going to happen that way. Ephesians 5:10 says we are to be proving what is “*acceptable unto the Lord.*” He’s not going to approve what is acceptable unto us. So when it comes to building the sheep gate, what we need to do is determine if we can conduct ourselves in accordance with what is acceptable unto the Lord. It is impossible to have a relationship with anybody if we never communicate, so if we’re going to communicate with the Lord, we need to listen to Him speak to us through His Word, and then we need to talk to Him through prayer. So it says here that “*they builded the sheep gate.*” We read, they “*repaired*” some of these gates, but in this situation, they needed to “*rebuild*” the sheep gate.

## How To Build A Relationship:

In Matthew 26:40, Jesus said to the disciples, “*What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*” I’m going to give you a little outline on how easy it is to pray for an hour. I’ll give you ten words that I hope are as much help to you as they are to me when it comes to a time of prayer:

### **Praise**

Take time to praise the Lord. We’ve got so many things to praise Him for.

### **Soul Searching**

Take time for soul searching; that is, take time to ask the Lord if there was anything in your **thought life** yesterday that was not pleasing to Him. Ask Him to reveal that to you. The Bible says, “*If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*” Then ask, “Are there any **actions** that I was involved in yesterday that are not acceptable in thy sight? If you would just reveal those to me, Lord, I will confess them as sin.” Then what about my **attitude**? Maybe I had an attitude that wasn’t very good. And what about my **motives**? That one is a little harder to stop and think about for a while. Sometimes our motives may not be as pure as we think they are.

### **Confession**

If God reveals to us that we had some unscriptural thoughts or actions or attitudes or motives, then what we need to do is “*confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.*”

### **Family**

This is a time to stop and pray for your immediate family and pray for your extended family.

### **Praying The Word of God**

Then another area where you can really enjoy a time of prayer is to pray the Word of God back to Him. Below is an example.

**Romans 6:12-14,**

- 12 *Let not sin therefore reign in your mortal body, that ye should obey it in the lusts thereof.*  
 13 *Neither yield ye your members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin: but yield yourselves unto God, as those that are alive from the dead, and your members as instruments of righteousness unto God.*  
 14 *For sin shall not have dominion over you...*

If we're going to pray this portion of Scripture back to the Lord, we would do it something like this:

**Verse 12:** "Today, Lord, I do not want sin to reign over my mortal body that I should obey it in the lusts thereof, so with your help today, I want that to become a reality." Verse 13: "Neither will I yield my members as instruments of unrighteousness unto sin, but I yield myself unto God as one that is alive from the dead and my members as instruments of righteousness unto God."

If we are going to pray in that way, we have to yield our members as instruments of righteousness unto God, and also going to yield ourselves. Now, what is "ourselves"? That is our mind, our will, and our emotions.

"So, Lord, today I give unto you my mind, I give unto you my will, and I give unto you my emotions. Please take control of those today. And now I want to give you my members as instruments of righteousness today, so I yield control of my eyes, my ears, my mouth, and my hands and feet. Take control of those things today."

If we will honestly do that and ask the Lord to take those members and use them for His glory, then we can then honestly say:

**Verse 14:** "*By the power of God, sin shall not have dominion over me today.*"

Another portion of Scripture that could be used in devotions in praying back to the Lord is Psalm 119. Except for the first few verses, these little sections of eight verses each are all a prayer. For instance, reading in verses nine through eleven, it says:

- 9 *Wherewithal shall a young man cleanse his way? by taking heed thereto according to thy word.*  
 10 *With my whole heart have I sought thee: O let me not wander from thy commandments.*  
 11 *Thy word have I hid in mine heart, that I might not sin against thee.*

**Intercession**

Intercession is when we pray for others. We've already had a separate section for family members, and now we can intercede for others. That would be members of our church, friends, or people that God might bring to your mind. I hope you would put me on that list and pray for me.

**Circumstances**

We would call this the providence of God. There are circumstances that came into our life yesterday that didn't come into anybody else's life, and we need to stop and just spend some time in prayer saying, "*Lord, why did those circumstances come into my life? Were you trying to teach me something? Is there something I can learn from those circumstances?*"

## **Petitions**

This is when we ask God for things that we might want for ourselves. The Bible says we have not because we ask not. Unfortunately, many of us might put that at the top of the list and start praying there first. No. Praise the Lord for a while, have some soul searching, confess some sins, pray for your family, pray the Word of God back to the Lord, intercede for some others, pray about yesterday's circumstances, and now you can take some time and say, "*Lord, I would really like to have this or that.*" God has answered every prayer I've ever prayed in my life. Now, actually His answer was "No" to probably 99 percent of those prayers, but He does answer prayer. But I'd hate to get to Heaven and find out I could have had something but I just didn't ask for it, because He says, "*...ye have not, because ye ask not.*" So it's not wrong to ask for things for yourself unless you're putting that at the top of the list.

## **Thanksgiving**

We're talking about the verse, "*What, could ye not watch with me one hour?*" We have so many things that we can be thankful for—so many hundreds of things, like health and strength and friends and the Bible and our local churches and just the things that God does for us; our children, our grandchildren, our fridge, our stove, our dishwasher, our families. We could go on and on and on.

## **Praise**

And then finally I want to use the word praise again. Praise the Lord. One way to praise the Lord is to do it through hymns. There are all kinds of hymns in the hymn book. Take one of those hymns and just sit down in the quietness by yourself and sing to the Lord. Now, if you're like me, you won't want anybody listening to you when you sing. You know, the Lord made the crows as well as the canaries, and I fit in that crow department. But the Lord just loves to hear you sing to Him, like:

*Have thine own way, Lord! Have thine own way! Thou art the potter, I am the clay.  
Mold me and make me after thy will, while I am waiting, yielded and still.*

There are four verses to that song, and the Lord would love to hear you sing to Him, even if you sing off key like I do. He would love to hear us sing to Him more than just something we do at the end of a church service. There are so many hymns in the hymn book that we could sing to the Lord.

## **The Most Important Gate:**

There are nine other gates here that we're going to look at, but if we're going to see God do something, it's going to be because we determine to build the sheep gate. Our relationship with Jesus Christ must be number one.

## **God's Leadership:**

Eliashib was the high priest represents leadership concerning spiritual things. God has given us pastors in Ephesians 4:12. The Bible says we are given for the perfecting of the saints, and our main purpose as pastors should be that we would teach our people who we are responsible for in our church how to have a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and how to maintain that relationship with the Lord.

**Another area of leadership is parents, and specifically the fathers.** The Bible says in Ephesians 6:4, “*And, ye fathers...bring [your children] up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord.*” So as leaders, we need to make sure that we have a relationship with the Lord that is honoring to Him, and then as pastors and parents, we need to be teaching and working together to help build the sheep gate.

We read, “*they sanctified it.*” That word “*sanctified*” has been translated “*dedicated*” ten times. And they also built a tower in order to keep watch. If you're going to maintain that relationship with the Lord as it should be, you're going to have to keep **watch**:

- **First Peter 4:7**, “*...be ye therefore sober, and **watch** unto prayer.*”
- **Colossians 4:2**, “*Continue in prayer, and **watch**...*”
- **Second Timothy 4:5**, “*But **watch** thou in all things, endure afflictions...*”
- **First Thessalonians 5:6**, “*Let us **watch** and be sober.*”
- **First Corinthians 16:13**, “***Watch** ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong.*”
- **Acts 20:31**, Paul says, “*Therefore **watch**, and remember...*”
- **Mark 14:38**, Jesus said, “***Watch** ye and pray, lest ye enter into temptation.*”

### **Unless We Have A Right Relationship With Christ All Our Efforts Are Done In The Power Of The Flesh**

In Chapter three the building program is underway. We read, “*and they builded the sheep gate.*” They also built the fish gate, the old gate, the valley gate, the dung gate, the gate of the fountain, and all the other gates. All of the gates were important, but unless the sheep gate is built first, there's nothing for the other gates to lean against. We don't want to start out and say, “*I'm going to build this fish gate.*” That gate represents winning lost people. Building the fish gate is very important. We need to reach lost people, but if we do not build the sheep gate first, that is, if our relationship with Jesus Christ is not what it should be, then we are building all the other gates in the power of the flesh, and that will accomplish nothing.

### **Personality Won't Do It**

Personality, wit, speaking ability, or talent without a right relationship with Christ can sometimes do more harm than good. The victory against the Amalekites was not because of what was happening in the midst of the battle but what was happening on the mountain. Moses, Aaron and Hur were praying, and as long as they prayed the victory was theirs. The Word of God says, “*Finally, my brethren, be strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might.*” Notice it is in “*his might,*” not our strength, “*his might.*”

David slew Goliath with a slingshot. Gideon won the battle with clay pots, and lanterns. Moses defeated Egypt with a shepherds rod. The reason they won was not because of talent or ability. The reason they won was because they had a genuine relationship with the Lord. Zechariah 4:6 tells us it is, “*Not by might, nor by power, but by my spirit, saith the Lord of hosts.*”

“***If** my people, which are called by my name, shall humble themselves, and pray, and seek my face, and turn from their wicked ways; **then** will I hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin, and will heal their land*” (Second Chronicles 7:14).

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