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FEBRUARY 25, 2024

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# THE GRACIOUS HAND OF MY GOD

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The Guarantee of Success

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# Jesus' Construction Advice—

“Suppose one of you wants to build a tower. Won't you first sit down and estimate the cost to see if you have enough money to complete it? For if you lay the foundation and are not able to finish it, everyone who sees it will ridicule you, saying, 'This person began to build and wasn't able to finish.'” (Luke 14.28-30)



*Unless the Lord builds the house,  
the builders labor in vain.*

—Psalm 127.1



# The difference between success and failure—

- In calling people into partnership with Him in His work, God always calls His people to undertake projects that are beyond their resources and abilities.
- Nehemiah knew that the odds were absolutely against his success. Therefore, he positioned his heart and spirit to be completely dependent on God's favor.



“O LORD, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to 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.” (Nehemiah 1.11)

*And because the gracious hand of my God was on me, the king granted my requests.* (Nehemiah 2.8)



# Positioning my heart—

- In Scripture, the “heart” is the center of who and what we are. It is the source of feelings, words, and actions. It is the center of gravity and equilibrium in our lives.

*Above all else, guard your heart,  
for it is the wellspring of life.*

—Proverbs 4.23



- Therefore, the “position” of my heart will determine what I respond to. We must intentionally seek a position for our hearts that is above everything else—sin, weakness, limitations, lack of resources, or abilities.

*Since, then, you have been raised with Christ, set your hearts on things above, where Christ is, seated at the right hand of God. Set your minds on things above, not on earthly things. (Colossians 3.1-2)*



- Over four months of prayer, Nehemiah was positioning his heart on God's covenant purposes and promises, and on the gracious favor of God to accomplish them.
- From that position he gained the faith and authority that enabled him to move forward— confronting the disgrace that covered his people, the opposition that intimidated them, and purposes of God that had been neglected.

*“The God of heaven will give us success. We his servants will start rebuilding, but as for you, you have no share in Jerusalem or any claim or historic right to it.” (2.20)*



# God's Desire to Be Gracious

- Incorporated into the Law with all of its regulations and sacrifices for sin was this explicit blessing which the Lord God gave to Moses to be spoken over the congregation:

*“The LORD bless you and keep you;  
the LORD make his face shine on you and be gracious to you;  
the LORD turn his face toward you and give you peace.”* (Numbers 6.24-26)



- The root word for “gracious” is grace: the unmerited favor, blessing, and assistance of God. Grace is God’s response to our sin; motivated by mercy and desiring to reconcile us rather than condemn us, God forgave our sins on the basis of Christ’s sacrificial death.

*But because of his great love for us, God, who is rich in mercy, made us alive with Christ even when we were dead in transgressions—it is by grace you have been saved.* (Ephesians 2.4-5)



- Even when His people were turning away and refusing to heed Him, God was still longing to be gracious and to bless them.

*This is what the Sovereign LORD, the Holy One of Israel, says:*

*“In repentance and rest is your salvation,  
in quietness and trust is your strength,  
but you would have none of it.*

*Yet the LORD longs to be gracious to you;  
he rises to show you compassion. (Isaiah 30.15-18)*



“People of Zion, who live in Jerusalem, you will weep no more. How gracious he will be when you cry for help! As soon as he hears, he will answer you. . . . Whether you turn to the right or to the left, your ears will hear a voice behind you, saying, “This is the way; walk in it.”

He will also send you rain for the seed you sow in the ground, and the food that comes from the land will be rich and plentiful.

—Isaiah 30.19, 21, 23



- “How gracious He will be when you cry for help.” No doubt Nehemiah was familiar with these words, spoken through the prophet Isaiah. Nehemiah knew the desire of God to bless, and he knew the history of God’s gracious favor toward Israel. He had confidence in appealing to the gracious nature and heart of God – confidence that God would hear, grant favor where Nehemiah was lacking merit, and ensure his success. God longs to show favor to those whose hearts are committed to His purposes.



# Three Critical Life-Truths

- God is always at work, in every generation, pursuing His mission of redemption and the revelation of His name.
- God is always looking for those whose hearts are aligned with His and whose highest priority is to fulfill His ambitions.
- God will always fully committed to the success of those who are available, who will step out in faith, and who are convinced that the gracious hand of God will be on them.