

## Notes for Sunday September 10<sup>th</sup> 2023

### Power of Praise – A Walled City without Gates is NOT safe

#### Introduction:

- Reference Summer Sundays - the names of God and Dave's talk last week on "Standing". This week we are looking at how we stand guard at the gates of our lives, because "a walled city without gates is not safe!"
- Our gates can be attacked at any time in many ways and so we need to be on our guard.
- I went through a situation a few years ago where I was not guarding certain gates in my life; which caused me some serious issues.

#### So Bible Context:

- ☐ Nehemiah was serving as a cup bearer to the King of the Persian Empire, King Artaxerxes
- ☐ Nehemiah was feeling sad, as he served wine to the King, who noticed.
  
- ☐ The king asked "Why do you look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart."
  
- ☐ He tells the King that his brother has brought news and that the city where his forefathers are buried, lies in ruins.
  
- ☐ The King asks him what he wants, and Nehemiah having prayed asked if he could be sent back to the city of Judah to rebuild it.
  
- ☐ So he received letters from the King to provide him with safe conduct; access to forests for wood for the work he had in mind to do.
  
- ☐ In Jerusalem, he snuck out at night with a few men to survey the damage to the broken walls and the burnt gates.
  
- ☐ He put a plan in place, and they set about rebuilding the walls and gates. The people got involved, not all were all builders. People who lived near certain parts of the wall took that part on and many others took responsibility for the gates.
  
- ☐ They faced opposition & terrorism as they rebuilt the city walls and gates, but they completed the task in under 2 months ..about 52 days.
  
- ☐ One of the things apart from completing the walls was setting guards in the gates to stop the enemies getting in and causing further havoc.

## **GATES**

- The city in Nehemiah's time had 10 gates
- Over time the number of gates altered; location and names changed
- Gates are places of entry and exit, whether it was people, animals, trash etc.
- It has been said that "A walled city without gates is not entirely safe".
- When Nehemiah was overseeing the rebuilding of the walls he placed soldiers to stand in the gaps where the gates should have been and control what went in and out.
- A Wall is about **SALVATION**. Jesus is our salvation; firm and immovable; a strong tower an immovable rock
- A gate in scripture is a dwelling place
- Gates are about **PRAISE** and scripture reminds us that God dwells/inhabits the praises of his people
- Praise is about what we do with him as he inhabits our praise.

### **OUR GATES:**

#### **THE MIND – 2 Corinthians 10:5**

We demolish arguments and **every** pretension that sets itself up against the knowledge of God, and we **take captive every thought** to make it obedient to Christ.

(birds & nests) – Joyce Meyer book Battlefield of the MIND

**John Mark Cromer – LIVE NO LIES – The Devil; the Father of Lies**

#### **THE MOUTH – Ephesians 4:29**

Do not let any unwholesome talk come out of your **mouths**, but only what is helpful for building others up according to their needs, that it may benefit those who listen.

### **THE HEART - Proverbs 4:23**

Above all else, **guard your heart**, for everything you do flows from it.

### **Philippians 4:7**

And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will **guard your hearts** and **your** minds in Christ Jesus.

### **THE BODY – 1 Corinthians 6:19-20**

Do you not know that your bodies are **temples** of the Holy Spirit, who **is** in you, whom you have received from God?

You **are not your own**; you were bought at a price. Therefore, honour God with your bodies

### **BUILDING A GATE OF PRAISE**

- We build a gate though PRAISE
- So we praise God in the good times, recognising his blessings, goodness, provision, care – Think about the names of God that we looked at over the summer.....
- But it's also about praising him for who he is in the difficult times and situations we face and experience
- Just like the gates of a city are the entrance to the city, so we too have spiritual gates that we need to guard (e.g. HEART –"Guard your heart for it is the wellspring of life.") because it affects the core of who we are.
- Therefore we have a choice about what we allow into our lives, or to put it another way what we allow through our gates!!!
- So in painful times do we moan, groan and complain or do we call on and worship the God of all comfort and call to mind the good things he has done?
- In the times we are sick, do we connect with Jehovah-Rophi/Rapha God our healer? (SU colleague story re: ill child)
- When finances are stretched, and we have needs, do we call on Jehovah Jireh our provider
- In times of disappointment, do we remind ourselves that he is the restorer of our souls; that he is our good father
- When things fall apart, do we come to him, the one who is our strength the one who exchanges ashes for beauty Jehovah Shammah – the Lord who is there

- When we suffer loss, do we know him as the God of all comfort who gives us the oil of joy for our mourning -Jehovah El Rachum
- When confusion or mental torment reigns, do we declare that he is the Prince of Peace - Jehovah Shalom
- If unguarded we can allow the negatives in, we deny the goodness of God and allow offense, unbelief, criticism and negative thoughts to enter the gates of our soul
- However, it's about taking the negatives and offering them in praise to God...a sacrifice of praise so we don't lose sight of who God is and the vision of eternity, when all darkness will be no more
- As we praise and celebrate God for who he is in the situation our perspective changes and in so doing we guard our gates
- Scripture reminds us to "Taste and see that the Lord is good; blessed is the one who takes refuge in him." Psalm 34:8

So your take away is REMEMBER TO GUARD YOUR GATES