making room

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Devotional Series

Week 4: A Sacrifice Worth Making

Defining Question: *"What am I willing to give - and will I persevere?"*

Prayer Challenge: *Give God your resources. Ask Him: "Lord, what can I sacrifice for Your work? Help me to sacrifice for something greater than myself."*

Day 22: Building with a Weapon in One Hand

Scripture: *"But when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry, and was very indignant, and mocked the Jews... So we built the wall; and all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work."* - Nehemiah 4:1, 6

Reflection: Over these past three weeks, we've wept with Nehemiah, walked the broken walls at night, caught the vision, and found our places to build. Now we're in the thick of it - and the opposition is real.

Sanballat mocks them. "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they finish in a day?" The insults are designed to make them feel small. To make the work feel pointless. To make them quit.

But verse 6 says something remarkable: *"The people had a mind to work."*

That phrase in Hebrew is *lev echad* - one heart. Unified. Together. They didn't stop building because someone mocked them. They kept going.

I think about the voices that try to make us feel small in this season. "You can't afford this." "This is too ambitious." "You're just a small church." And I hear Nehemiah's answer: *We kept building.*

Sacrifice isn't just about what you give. It's about what you endure while giving. Will you keep building when it's hard?

Takeaway: Mockery is not a reason to stop. A unified heart is the greatest weapon against opposition. Keep building.

Prayer: *Lord, I give You my resources. What can I sacrifice for Your work? Help me to persevere when the voices get loud. I'm building with one hand and trusting You with the other. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 23: When Your Own People Are Struggling

Scripture: *"Then there arose a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brothers the Jews. For there were some who said, 'We, our sons and our daughters, are many. Let us get grain, that we may eat and live.' There were also some who said, 'We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses. Let us get grain, because of the famine.'"* - Nehemiah 5:1-3

Reflection: The opposition from outside was expected. But this? This was different. The pressure wasn't coming from Sanballat. It was coming from inside - from families who were drowning financially.

People were mortgaging their fields. Their kids were hungry. They were crying out - not against the enemy, but against their own brothers.

I'll be honest with you: this is the part of building that nobody talks about. When you commit to something big - when you go all in on a vision - the financial strain is real. Especially for families who don't have much margin.

Nehemiah doesn't dismiss their pain. He doesn't say, "Just trust God and keep building." He addresses the injustice. He confronts the wealthy who were exploiting the poor. He makes it right.

If you're in this season and the numbers feel impossible, hear this: God sees your struggle. He's not asking you to sacrifice your family on the altar of a building. He's asking for faithfulness within your means. And He will provide.

Takeaway: Sacrifice doesn't mean destruction. God sees the strain. Be honest about what you can give - and trust Him with the rest.

Prayer: *Lord, I give You my resources. I'm honest about what I have and what I don't. Help me sacrifice for something greater than myself - but not at the cost of my family. Provide for us. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 24: Strengthen My Hands

Scripture: *"Then Sanballat sent his servant to me the same way the fifth time with an open letter in his hand... For they all would have made us afraid, saying, 'Their hands will be weakened from the work, that it not be done.' But now, strengthen my hands."* - Nehemiah 6:5, 9

Reflection: Five times Sanballat sends the same message. Five times the same tactic: fear. "They want to kill you. Stop building. Come meet with us." It's manipulation dressed up as concern.

And Nehemiah's response is one of my favorite prayers in all of Scripture: *"But now, strengthen my hands."*

Not "strike them down." Not "give me revenge." Just: *strengthen my hands.* Keep me going. Don't let me quit. Don't let fear win.

I've prayed that prayer more times than I can count. When the campaign feels overwhelming. When the numbers don't add up. When I'm tired and tempted to scale back. *Strengthen my hands.*

That's the prayer of perseverance. Not dramatic. Not flashy. Just faithful. *Keep me going, God. One more day. One more step. One more act of obedience.*

Takeaway: Perseverance isn't about being fearless. It's about praying through the fear. What is God asking you to keep doing - even when it's hard?

Prayer: *Lord, I give You my resources. Strengthen my hands. When fear whispers, "quit," let Your voice be louder. I won't stop building. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 25: It Has to Cost Me Something

Scripture: *"The king said to Araunah, 'No, but I will most certainly buy it from you for a price. I will not offer burnt offerings to Yahweh my God which cost me nothing.' So David bought the threshing floor and the oxen for fifty shekels of silver."* - 2 Samuel 24:24

Reflection: David could have taken the free offer. Araunah offered the threshing floor, the oxen, everything. And David said no.

"I will not offer burnt offerings to Yahweh my God which cost me nothing."

A real commitment to Christ will always cost you something. It's not a bumper sticker - it's a lived reality. David understood that worship with no price tag is just a formality. Real sacrifice has a cost. And David insisted on paying it.

Fifty shekels of silver was real money. Not pocket change. Not leftovers. It cost him something. And that threshing floor became sacred ground - the place where God's presence would dwell.

What's your fifty shekels? What's the thing God is asking you to invest that actually costs you something? Not the easy amount. The real amount. The one that requires faith.

Takeaway: Worship that costs nothing changes nothing. What is God asking you to invest that actually costs you something?

Prayer: *Lord, I give You my resources. I don't want to offer You something that costs me nothing. Show me what sacrifice looks like for me - and give me the courage to pay the price. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 26: Fix Your Eyes

Scripture: *"Therefore let's also, seeing we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, lay aside every weight and the sin which so easily entangles us, and let's run with perseverance the race that is set before us, looking to Jesus, the author and perfecter of faith, who for the joy that was set before him endured the cross, despising its shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God."* - Hebrews 12:1-3

Reflection: We've spent this week talking about sacrifice - building under pressure, giving until it hurts, persevering through fear. Now the writer of Hebrews gives us the secret to enduring it all: *fix your eyes on Jesus*.

Not on the goal. Not on the building. Not on the campaign thermometer. On *Jesus*.

He's the author - the one who started this. He's the perfecter - the one who will finish it. And look at what He did: *"For the joy that was set before him, endured the cross."* Jesus didn't endure by gritting His teeth. He endured by looking forward to the joy on the other side.

That's the pattern for our sacrifice. We don't endure by focusing on what we're giving up. We endure by focusing on what we're giving *toward*. Lives changed. Families restored. A church full of people who found Jesus because we made room.

Takeaway: You can endure any sacrifice when your eyes are fixed on Jesus. He's the reason we give. He's the reason we persevere.

Prayer: *Lord, I give You my resources. I fix my eyes on You. When I grow weary, remind me of the joy set before me. I'm all in. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 27: Generous in Poverty

Scripture: *"Moreover, brothers, we make known to you the grace of God which has been given in the assemblies of Macedonia, how in a severe ordeal of affliction, the abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their generosity... This was not as we had expected, but first they gave their own selves to the Lord."* - 2 Corinthians 8:1-2, 5

Reflection: The Macedonian churches were broke. Not "tight budget" broke. *Deep poverty* broke. And they were the most generous churches Paul had ever seen.

"The abundance of their joy and their deep poverty abounded to the riches of their generosity." Joy and poverty producing generosity. That's not normal math. That's kingdom math.

They didn't give from surplus. They gave beyond their power. And they didn't wait to be asked - they *begged* Paul for the privilege of giving.

But the secret is in verse 5: *"First they gave their own selves to the Lord."* Before the money. Before the offering. They gave themselves. Their hearts. Their allegiance. Their whole lives.

I think about the families in our church who don't have much. God isn't asking you to give what you don't have. He's asking for what you do have - given freely, joyfully, beyond your power. That's the kind of giving that builds sanctuaries.

Takeaway: Generosity isn't about what's in your account - it's about what's in your heart. Give yourself to God first, and watch what follows.

Prayer: *Lord, I give You my resources. I give myself to You first. Like the Macedonians, I don't want my circumstances to dictate my worship. Help me give beyond my power because I trust in Yours. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

Day 28: Sow Bountifully

Scripture: *"Remember this: he who sows sparingly will also reap sparingly. He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully. Let each man give according as he has determined in his heart, not grudgingly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver. And God can make all grace abound to you, that you, always having all sufficiency in everything, may abound to every good work."* - 2 Corinthians 9:6-8

Reflection: Sowing and reaping. It's a principle of the kingdom of God - like gravity to the earth. You throw a ball up; it always comes down. You sow, you will always reap.

But Paul isn't talking about farming. He's talking about generosity. And he's making a promise: the measure you use is the measure you'll receive back. Not as a transaction. As a principle woven into the fabric of how God's kingdom works.

"He who sows bountifully will also reap bountifully."

I've seen this play out in my own life - not always in the way I expected, but always in the way I needed. Seasons where giving felt impossible, and God provided something I couldn't have planned for.

And notice the promise: *"God can make all grace abound to you, that you, always having all sufficiency in everything, may abound to every good work."* Not just enough. *All sufficiency.* Not just surviving. *Abounding*. That's life to the full.

"Not grudgingly or under compulsion." God isn't measuring the dollar amount. He's looking at the heart. He loves a cheerful giver.

Takeaway: God's economy doesn't run on scarcity. It runs on grace. Sow bountifully - and watch what He does.

Prayer: *Lord, I give You my resources. Help me sow bountifully - not recklessly, but joyfully. Not under compulsion, but with a heart so full of trust that giving feels like breathing. I'm all in. In Jesus' name, Amen.*

This devotional series is part of the "Making Room" Capital Campaign at Grace Covenant Church in Harrisonburg, Virginia. For more information or to participate, visit gcch.org/mr or contact the Church Office via email: questions@gcch.org or by phone: (540) 433-9244.

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