

The Man Who Recognized Greatness

by Warren Wiersbe

Recognizing the greatness of God is essential to seeing great opportunities and achieving success.

Duration: 50:22

Scripture: Exodus 6:6, Exodus 33:14, Nehemiah 1:1, Nehemiah 2:18, Jeremiah 15:5, Matthew 6:33

Topics: "Christian Leadership", "Faith And Obedience"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker emphasizes the importance of leadership in the work of God. He highlights examples from the Bible where God used leaders to accomplish His plans, such as Abraham, Sarah, Samuel, David, and the twelve apostles. The speaker also discusses the obstacles that leaders face, including recruiting people and getting them to follow willingly. He encourages leaders to pray, watch, and overcome tribulations and temptations. The sermon concludes with the reminder that leaders should believe that their work is a great work and not be distracted or compromised.

Transcript

People didn't come to hear me, and now that I'm down the road a bit, I'm amazed that people do come to hear me. So I appreciate you. I learn when I'm in circumstances like this.

Always learn. I learn so much. I don't want to become one of these dinosaurs that walks around griping because things are not like they were in the good old days.

The good old days are a combination of a bad memory and a good imagination. Now it doesn't mean we can't learn from the past. We can.

In fact, some of the younger people need to catch up with the past, just as some of the older ones need to catch up with the present. And so my ministry has been primarily that of a bridge builder. I'm bridging the gap between some of the older folks, my peers, and some of the younger folks who think that nothing really happened before 1975.

What kept Nehemiah going? Well, turn to the book of Nehemiah and we'll find out. Years ago, there was a great and godly president of Wheaton College in Wheaton, Illinois, whose name was V. Raymond Edmund. He'd been a missionary to South America, an educator, a godly man.

If you ever see in a used bookstore a book by V. Raymond Edmund, E-D-M-E-N, buy it. He was a great and godly man. And he used to preach often in the chapel at Wheaton College.

In fact, he died doing that. When he was in the pulpit at chapel, he just went to glory. Great way to go.

And he used to say to the students frequently, It's always too soon to quit. It's always too soon to quit. Sometimes when I get a little nervous about things and I say, well, let's just forget about it, my wife will quietly say, it's always too soon to quit.

Now, you've all been through building programs in one way or another. I've been through two building programs and two remodeling programs, and I'll take a building program to a remodeling program any day. Nehemiah had to go through a remodeling program, a rebuilding program.

Many of the churches today, I don't mean the structure, I mean the ministry, they've got to be rebuilt. They laid a foundation for a skyscraper and put a chicken coop on it. And they need to be rebuilt.

God called Jeremiah and He said, Jeremiah, I've got a job for you to do. What is that, Lord? I want you to root out and then plant. And I want you to tear down and build.

Now, the planting part I like. I enjoy just planting the seed of the Word of God. I don't like the rooting out part.

People do not like to have things rooted out that have been a part of the church and a part of their lives for so long. I like the building part. It's exciting to watch something go up.

I don't like the tearing down part. And blessed is that spiritual leader who knows when to take down and how much to take down and when to build and how much to build. Nehemiah was that kind of a person.

Now, the thing that kept Nehemiah going was not his training. Nehemiah was what we'd call a layman. He was not ordained.

I'm not against ordination. It's amazing how many of God's choice of servants were not ordained. D.L. Moody was never ordained.

They introduced him as Dr. Moody. He got up and said, I am Mr. Moody. Never ordained.

I'm not against that. Neither was he. He never went to a seminary.

No, I'm not against that. I teach for five different schools. Nothing wrong with seminary.

Handle it the way you would poison. Let me explain what I mean by that. Handle it the way you would poison.

Know what it is. Don't let it get in your system. Don't let it get in your system.

Campbell Morgan never went to a Bible institute or a Bible college. My predecessor, several years removed at Moody Church, Harry Ironside, was never ordained. Never went to a special school.

He taught at several schools. I'm not against education. Otherwise, I wouldn't write books or teach.

But you depend on that, you're in trouble. God called Nehemiah to do a very difficult job. Rebuild the walls.

Rehang the gates in Jerusalem. And he did it with the help of God in 52 days. We can't even get a committee together in 52 days.

Spurgeon said the ideal committee is three people, one of whom is sick and one doesn't come. You know what kept Nehemiah going? It wasn't his training. He was a layman.

He had a soft job in the palace. The king's cup bearer made sure they weren't going to poison the king. Could have used his office for making a lot of money.

Because people wanted to get their message to the king. They could come to Nehemiah and say, Hey, Nehemiah, the king needs to know this. Here's a few bucks.

God said, Nehemiah, I've got a job for you to do. And the thing that kept Nehemiah going was the greatness of God. Not the greatness of his ability.

Not the greatness of his training. The greatness of God. Chapter 1 of Nehemiah verse 5. And I said, I pray, Lord God of heaven, oh great and awesome God.

That's quite a way to pray. Chapter 4 verse 14. And I looked and arose and said to the nobles, to the leaders, and to the rest of the people, Do not be afraid of them.

Remember the Lord, great and awesome. Chapter 8. Ezra's on the scene now. They're having a Bible conference.

Nehemiah chapter 8 verse 6. And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God. And then all the people answered, Amen, Amen, while lifting up their hands. Many people today would have no problem with the theology of the great God.

Or even saying Amen. Although it's hard to get Amens out of some people. Some folks wouldn't like the lifting up of the hands.

I don't know where we ever got this practice of folding our hands to pray. It's not anywhere in the Bible. Actually it's oriental.

It comes from the east. They pray like this. Now when the Jewish people prayed, they prayed like this.

They expected to get something. We don't expect to get anything, so we go like this. The Lord couldn't squeeze a blessing in there.

The great God. Now you can go through this book and start counting the number of times you find the word great. And it's over 30 times.

It starts off with chapter 1 verse 3. Great distress. Great distress. That's a great place to start a book.

Great distress. Great reproach. But I want you to know by the time you get to chapter 12, there's great joy.

Great joy. If you want to see the rainbow, you've got to go through the storm. If you want to have the joy of completing ministry for God, you have to go through the battle.

It's not easy. Anybody ever told you that ministry was easy was never in ministry. They may have been in religious work, but they weren't in ministry.

It's a battle. It wasn't easy for Moses. It wasn't easy for Joshua.

It wasn't easy for Jesus or for Paul. It's not going to be easy for you and me. We have a short time in which to work and suffer and sacrifice and serve and then all eternity to rejoice.

And Nehemiah kept going because he believed in the greatness of God. How can you tell whether or not you or your associate or the chairman of your board, the minister of worship, how can people tell whether or not we believe in the greatness of God? Many of us have to confess our theology is better than our practice. When I was in seminary, we had systematic theology.

That's good. We had biblical theology. I like that better.

Then they had a section called practical theology. And that was how to have funerals and weddings and conduct the Lord's Supper and baptize and this sort of thing. But everything we do is practical theology.

How can anybody tell whether or not I really believe that God is great? Well, Nehemiah shows us. Chapter 1, verse 1. The words of Nehemiah, the son of Hekeliah. It came to pass in the month of Chisleh, that's November, December, in the 20th year, that would be 446, as I was in Shushan the citadel, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came with men from Judah, and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

Nehemiah's brother had won a trip to the Holy Land. And when he came back, Nehemiah did the normal thing. He said, how are things going down there? By the way, I don't know if he realized it or not, but when he did that, he was fulfilling prophecy.

Don't look it up. You can remember the reference, Jeremiah 15.5. Let me read it to you. Jeremiah the prophet says in 15.5, For who will have pity on you, O Jerusalem? Or who will bemoan you? Or who will turn aside to ask how you're doing? And they said to me, The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach.

The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down. And its gates are burned with fire. And so it was when I heard these words that I sat down and wept and mourned for many days.

I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. And it was during that fasting and praying time that Nehemiah conceived of the vision to go down and do something about it. When you have a great God, you see great opportunities.

Nehemiah didn't have to ask about Jerusalem. That was miles and miles away. Was he to blame for the fall of Jerusalem? No.

Was he trained as an engineer? No. So often God calls the weak things of this world to confound the mighty. God calls the zeros to become heroes.

He loves to do that. Did you ever notice in the Bible that the people who stumbled and fell, they failed because of their strength? Not their weakness. What was Abraham's great strength? His faith.

Where did he fail? His faith. Ran down to Egypt. Lied about his wife.

What was Moses' great strength? His meekness. Where did he fail? He lost his temper and lost the trip to the Holy Land. He finally got there though during the Transfiguration, didn't he? People fail in their strengths, not their weaknesses.

What was David's great strength? His integrity. His integrity. He had two opportunities to kill Saul.

No way. That's where he failed. His integrity.

What was Peter's greatest strength? His courage. Where did he fail? His courage. You and I have a tendency to look at our strengths and say, well, I can do this.

I've done this for three years now. I can do this. No, no, no.

Strength that knows itself to be strength is weakness. But weakness that knows itself to be weakness is strength. Paul said, when I'm weak, I'm strong.

Now, if I were going to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem and reset the gate, I'd look down from heaven and I'd say, was there somebody down there who was a graduate of MIT? Anybody down there that... No, God didn't do that. God said, there's a fellow down there who's had a soft job taking care of the king's wine. He's a politician and he's a servant, but I think I can use him.

And he called him. And when Nehemiah heard that the walls of Jerusalem were down and the gates were burned, he was distressed by it. Because when you have a great God, you want to do something about it.

He cared enough about God's city to ask, how are things going? I don't know about your home, but in our home we get stacks of mail. We get phone calls too, trying to sell us all sorts of things. We get stacks of mail.

And much of it is missionary mail. And Betty's kind enough to go through and she'll read many of these things and she'll point things out to me. It would be so easy for us to get a letter from a missionary friend and let it sit there and let it sit there.

We're not concerned. Nehemiah was concerned enough to inquire, how are things going? And they said, terrible. Now, Nehemiah didn't have to get involved.

He didn't need money. He didn't need anything. He had a good job.

Things were going well. He could have said, it's not my fault. But instead, he got so burdened about this thing that he fasted and prayed.

And he saw a great opportunity. For what? To glorify God. I confess I don't always do this.

I confess there are times when situations come along and I get irritable. I get nervous. I get critical.

And I've got to calm down. Because every difficult situation is an opportunity to show how great God is. The ultimate of that is Calvary.

When Jesus died on the cross, not only did he complete the work of redemption, but he gave to us an example that when everything looks like it is absolutely at its worst, God is going to do His greatest. And God's going to be glorified. So when you believe in a great God, you don't see great problems.

Or you don't deny that there are problems there. You don't minimize the problems. But when you have a great God, you see great opportunities.

One of the great problems in the church today is we're letting the opportunities just slip right through our fingers. You folks aren't, but some other people are. Secondly, if I really believe in the greatness of God, I will pray with great faith.

Have you ever preached a series of messages on the prayers of the Bible? Not just the New Testament prayers. Paul has five or six, and there's a few others. But these great Old Testament prayers.

Listen to this prayer from Nehemiah. Here's a man who sees the possibilities. Here's a man, though he is a month and a half journey away from the problem, is praying like this.

And I said, verse 5, I pray, Lord God of Heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open that You may hear the prayer of Your servant. Do I pray as a servant or as a master? Many people when they pray, now God, I'm here to tell You what to do. I've got it all worked out.

Here it is. Now, Nehemiah came and said, listen to the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel, Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we, not they, we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned.

You see, he not only cared enough to inquire and cared enough to intercede, but he cared enough to identify with them and say, I am a part of the problem and by the grace of God, I'm going to be a part of the answer. You pray with great faith. This is a book of prayer.

Ten times, ten times in this book you find Nehemiah praying. Sometimes little quick telegraph prayers. Lord, remember me.

Lord, take care of that. When you spend much time in secret talking to God, then you can send up those quick telegram prayers. But if He hasn't heard you much in secret, that's not going to work.

To make prayer an emergency system, to change prayer into 911, that doesn't work. It can work if you've prayed privately and if you've prayed enough. Peter's about to go down.

Lord, save me! He didn't have time for the Athanasian Creed and the Lord's Prayer. Lord, save me! And Jesus saved him. There are times when that happens.

Where I live, we sometimes find ourselves skidding on the ice. And you haven't even got time for words. All you can say is, ahhh! When you have a great God, you pray with great faith.

You notice how biblical this prayer is. It's a prayer of confession. It's a prayer that lays hold of the attributes of God.

The better you know God, the better you can talk to Him. He is the great God. He is the awesome God.

He's the God who forgives sins. He's the God, in verse 8, who makes promises. Remember, I pray the word, you commanded your servant Moses.

Here is a man who comes to God and says, Now God, I'm going to hold you to your word. And God loves that. God loves it when we come with some promises.

Some people, I don't understand some people, but then, that's alright. There's some folks, first thing in the morning when they wake up, they've got to turn on the television and get the news. The last thing I want to know is the news.

The first thing I want is God's promise. And so the first thing I do in the morning is get my Bible. Pick up my Bible and say, Lord, I don't know what this day is going to bring forth, but here are promises that are never going to change.

And so I open my Bible and read my Bible and let God talk to me. Then I can face the news if I have to. Here we have a doctrinal prayer.

I'll not read every word, but he quotes the promise from Moses. If you return to Me, I'll gather you. I've chosen you.

Now, we're your servants. Oh, look at verse 10. And your people whom you have redeemed by your great power, the great God, and by your strong hand.

Oh, when you've got a great God, you can pray with great faith. The purpose of prayer, said Robert Law, the purpose of prayer is not to get man's will done in heaven. It's to get God's will done on earth.

And here is Nehemiah fulfilling what Jeremiah said. Is anybody going to ask about Jerusalem? Yes. Nehemiah is.

And Nehemiah, do you realize what a mess that place is in? The Gentiles laugh. The bus tours of the Gentiles that go around Jerusalem. The tour guides have a great time.

This is the city of the great king. This is the beauty of all the earth. This is the city of Jerusalem.

And they laugh. It's a reproach. In recent years, we Christians have had to suffer reproach because of the way some people have acted.

He prayed with great faith. Now, he hasn't called a committee meeting. He hasn't built a plan.

He hasn't consulted an architect. He hasn't done anything other than pray. Because if you haven't prayed, you can't do anything.

Jesus said, without me you can do what? Nothing. He didn't say without me you're handicapped. Without me you're going to have a rough time.

He said, without me you're going to do nothing. George MacDonald said, in whatever man does without God, he must fail miserably or succeed more miserably. And I've seen some ministries succeed very miserably because they left God out.

When you believe in a great God, you pray with great faith. Nehemiah gets permission from the king to go to Jerusalem. There's a period here of four months in between his prayer and chapter 2 where he approaches the king.

Now, he was afraid when he approached the king. You don't tell the king that you're going to go down and help the Jews. And so for four months now, he's been waiting and praying.

We get impetuous. Psalm 32, David heard God say, David, be not as the horse or as the mule. Now, some of the saints are like the horse.

They're impetuous. They want to rush ahead. Some of the saints are like the mule.

They want to dig in their heels and not move. They call it conviction. Nehemiah, because of his faith, could wait.

My Bible says, He who believes shall not make haste. One of the evidences of unbelief is we run ahead of God. I can have a good desire and a good prayer life and a good burden to get God's work done.

But the will of God involves not only what, but it involves when. And Nehemiah was able to wait on the Lord. Now, it wasn't the waiting of doing nothing.

It was the waiting of preparation. Just waiting for God's time. When we believe in a great God, we will see great opportunities.

They're all around us. We will pray with great faith and we'll overcome great obstacles. I'm sure you've noticed that the people in your church are divided into two parts.

You say, Oh yeah, some are for me and some are against me. Don't worry about that. If God be for us, who can be against us? I think the only time I ever had a unanimous vote was when I resigned.

No, there are two kinds of people on every board. Two kinds of people in every congregation. There are those who see the opportunities and there are those who see the obstacles.

I suppose you could say the pessimists and the optimists. That may be too broad. When Dr. Redpath was pastor at the Moody Church, almost every Sunday, one of the elders would come back to the room where the choir and the pastor were going to meet before they went in.

He'd say, Oh, we're going to have a hard time today. This place is half empty. Ten minutes later, another elder would come in and say, Pastor, we're in for a wonderful day today.

Place is half full. All depends on your outlook. When you believe in a great God, you overcome great obstacles.

Obstacle number one, the king, the king. I think that some of God's people have gone about trying to influence government the wrong way. If you want to influence the government, pray.

We're commanded in Scripture. We're commanded in Scripture to pray for those in authority. Whenever I've ministered in Canada, I've noticed in the public meetings they always pray for those in authority, for the premier, for the queen.

When I've ministered in Great Britain, every church, large and small, in the pulpit prayer, the pastor would pray for the queen and the royal family and for the prime minister. We don't do it in America. When was the last time somebody publicly prayed for those in authority in your church? By the way, while I'm on the subject, do you ever pray publicly in your services for any other church in town? I recommend you do it.

We're commanded to do that, to pray for all the saints. Every day is All Saints Day. Say what it'll do.

If you pray for some other pastor in a church in town, it'll get the signal out that you folks aren't out competing with the servants of God. You know, and every town has its nomads who go from church to church. The nomads.

They get mad, they say no, and off they go. And so, some of them show up in your service next Sunday, and they hear you praying for the church they just left. And then immediately they say, we're not going to get very far here.

Nehemiah wasn't afraid of the king although he was in fear. His fear was the fear of God. Pray.

Pray. There's no king or president or prime minister. There's no judge or policeman.

There's no lawyer. There's no one in authority who has higher authority than Jesus. He has been exalted above every name.

And that's the name in which we pray. Obstacle number one. God overcame it.

The king said, alright, how long are you going to be gone? He told him. What are you going to do? What do you need? In fact, while he was talking to the king, Nehemiah prayed. Verse 4, So I prayed to the God of heaven.

Verse 6, So it pleased the king to send me. That's obstacle number one. Now he gets down there.

Obstacle number two. Will the people follow me? Unless people are following you, you aren't a leader. That's the test of a leader.

Is anybody following? And are they following willingly? Leadership is getting people to do enthusiastically what they know they ought to do and doing it because they want to. Leaders are not dictators. They lead the way.

And these people have been demoralized for centuries. And I'm sure every once in a while some young man would get up and say, why don't we do something about these walls? Why don't we do something about these gates? Somebody would say, look, we've heard that before. There's always somebody on the board or in the congregation.

We tried that once. Or we never did it that way before. So he goes and surveys the situation.

That's a good thing to do. And then he calls together the elders and tells them what God has laid in his heart. And they said, let's rise up and build.

Isn't that great? I recall the first church we pastored, we were meeting in a tin building that seated maybe, I guess if they were friendly, 200 people. And it was nothing to brag about and it was uncomfortable both in winter and summer. It didn't even have a baptistry for us to baptize people.

We had to go to another church. We had to build. I'm the last guy in the world that should build a church.

I've been through two building programs. I can't even read a blueprint. I couldn't build a birdhouse from a kit.

And that's how God got the glory. Everybody said, how'd this happen? But you know what? If you can explain what's going on, God didn't do it. God didn't do it.

They said, let's rise up and build. And I remember a board meeting we had and I said, you've got to do something about this building. But where we were in northern Indiana, every six months there was a strike.

Either the steel mills were on strike or the refineries were on strike. And, oh, you can't build a pasture. And one man spoke up.

One young man spoke up. He said, I think we can do it. I think God wants us to do it.

And we began to pray. And God began to remove obstacles and by the grace of God it was done to His glory. Well, obstacle number three.

Can we get people to help us? Well, you know, chapter 2, verse 18 is a secret. And I told them of the hand of my God which had been good upon me. God uses leadership.

Everything in a local ministry rises and falls with leadership. A congregation does nothing collectively except get together. From then on it is individual.

Somebody takes care of the nursery. Somebody takes care of recruiting people from the junior department. Somebody takes care of the sound system.

Somebody cleans the building. God uses people. I don't know how many times I've heard Dr. Lee Roberson say everything, everything rises and falls with leadership.

God wanted to start the plan of salvation. You've got to hold Abraham. Sarah.

God wanted to rescue the nation from bondage. He got a hold of Samuel and David. God wanted to take the gospel to the whole world.

He got a hold of twelve apostles. Everything rises and falls with leadership. And a leader is somebody who has God's good hand upon him or her.

Chapter three. They overcame the third obstacle. Recruiting the people.

We could spend a week just on chapter three. We won't. All kinds of people.

Men and women. Professional people and non-professional people. Some are named.

Some are not named. All kinds of people work together to get the wall built and to get the gates put up. It takes all kinds.

And the thing that amazes me about the work of the Lord is somebody you think who really can't do it, God's going to call and let them do it. Nobody can do the work of God alone. Nobody.

I've been studying the book of Romans. I'll be teaching it, Lord willing, down at the Cove in October. And it amazes me.

I get to chapter sixteen and Paul starts rattling off. And I'll greet this one, greet that one. I'm so thankful for this.

I think he names 26 different people. There's a bunch he doesn't name, but he alludes to, who are all a part of his ministry. We said the great apostle Paul.

Hey, what about Priscilla and Aquila? Hmm? What about Crispus? He can't do it alone. So God overcame the next to third obstacle by giving him the people that he needed. God does that.

As you pray, you say, Lord, we've got to have somebody for this. How do you get laborers into the harvest? You advertise. Sometimes you get up and say we need volunteers.

You get some odd volunteers. Sometimes when the light shines the brightest, the bugs come flying in. How do you get laborers for the harvest? Our Lord tells us.

Pray! Pray the Lord of the harvest that He'll get a hold of the laborers. And He does. Well, then they started to have opposition from the outside.

You know the story. You know the story. They were ridiculed.

They were threatened. Thank God for ministries that stir up the enemy. Thank God for ministries that people oppose.

We have the idea that you are the most successful if you're getting all kinds of praise from the world. My Bible says just the opposite. In the world, you're going to have what? Tribulation.

Persecution. Not vacation. Tribulation.

But they overcame that. They prayed. They watched.

That's where the phrase watch and pray comes from in the Bible. They prayed. They watched.

Chapter 6, the enemy said, well, we can't frighten them. We can't stop them. Let's make them compromise.

That's the biggest and most subtle temptation of all. They said, oh, Nehemiah, would you come and meet with us? Come and meet with us. Let's meet together among the villages in the plain of Ono.

And Nehemiah said, oh no. He wouldn't go. I like that statement he makes there.

I like that statement. Verse 3, I hope you believe this about your ministry. I am doing a great work so that I cannot come down.

Do you believe your work is a great work? Pastors phone me and they say, I'm pastor of a small church. And I stop them. I say, hold it.

There are no small churches. And there are no big preachers. But there is a great God.

When I came into this world, I started small. I was so ugly the doctors slapped my father. I wasn't supposed to live beyond the age of two.

That's right. But everything that I ever needed for the rest of my life was in me. Everything I ever needed.

All I had to do was have food and clothing and exercise and cleansing. And I got a little bigger. And I've got two sons who are bigger than I am.

I've got a grandson who is getting much bigger than his parents. Don't talk about small church. Everything is there for the growth.

So Nehemiah overcame that. I'm doing a great work because I have a great God. They slandered him.

Don't spend your time putting out brush fires. Your job is to put down your fire extinguisher, pick up your Bible, and do the work of God. Charles Spurgeon collected and bound six volumes of pamphlets written against him.

I defy anybody here to name me one person who wrote one of those pamphlets. Nobody remembers them. And Spurgeon's name, everybody knows.

Don't worry about it. You've got a great God. And they overcame every obstacle.

When you have a great God, you see great opportunities, you pray with great faith, you overcome great obstacles, and you make great sacrifices. The mark of a leader is sacrifice. A leader is someone who takes a little more blame and a little less credit and pays a lot more price.

But it's worth it. It's worth it. When you read chapter 5 of Nehemiah, you find out that Nehemiah fed a bunch of people, paid the bill.

I'm not suggesting you have to do that. All I'm saying is, we wouldn't know this except the Holy Spirit wrote it down. And all the sacrifices you've made and the pain you've felt and the prices you've paid and the things you've done for which nobody's ever thanked you or else they took credit for it, what difference does it make? When you have a great God, you make great sacrifices.

He fed 150 people at his table. You think when four or five show up at the last minute, you're in trouble. This man fed 150 people, paid the price himself.

You make great sacrifices. And finally, when you have a great God, you bring him great glory. In 52 days, the walls were finished, the gates were hung, and the Gentiles were standing, looking shame-faced.

No longer could the tour guides say, this is the run down, fallen down, it's been this way for centuries, city of Jerusalem. No, no. The great God had brought great glory to himself through a group of dedicated people in 52 days.

Chapter 6, verse 15. So the wall was finished. Do you finish things? I'll confess to you that in my file I have some manuscripts I've never finished.

It's a good thing. It's a good thing. Those books weren't needed.

I have some sermons I've started. I've never finished them. But God is glorified by what we finish.

Jesus said, I've glorified you on the earth. I have finished the work you gave me to do. I don't know what your work is, and I can't finish it for you.

I can maybe help you. You can help me. When you have a great God, you bring Him great glory by finishing the work.

Chapter 12 of Nehemiah, and verse 43. They've dedicated the wall when gladness says, verse 27, I like the way they did it. I like the way they did it.

Suppose that this is the wall right here. They had a choir over here and a choir over here. Two choirs.

Vernon McGee said to me one day, he said, I tell you, Warren, when Satan fell, he landed in the choir loft. I don't think that's true, but he thought it was. They had two choirs, and the choirs began to sing and to march around the wall.

Then they met and had a great service to praise God. And you could hear it a long distance away. Now, there are times when God says, be still.

Be still. There are times when in quietness and confidence shall be your strength. There are times when the holiest thing we can do is to do nothing.

Wait before God. Be silent. The Lord is in His holy temple.

Let all the earth keep silence before Him. But don't stay like that. God's frozen people.

Here was a worship service and the music was heard afar off. And they didn't have amplification. They couldn't plug anything in.

They did it from their heart. And everybody out there said, what's that noise we hear? Well, they're singing back at Jerusalem. They're praising God.

I think one of the greatest witnesses we have to the unsaved world is just praising God and reminding them that there's a heaven as well as an earth. And there's a God and we're serving Him. When you believe in a great God, you bring great glory to His name.

These are some of the greatest days of opportunity and obstacle I've ever seen or read about. And I meet with some folks who say, well, it's over with. It's over with.

Nehemiah wasn't that kind of a person. Nehemiah said, I'm not very great. And my people aren't very great, but our God is great.

Our God is a great God. And I believe in a great God. And so I'm not going to see obstacles.

I'm going to see opportunities. And I'm going to pray with great faith. Not in myself and not in my prayers, but in my great God.

We're going to overcome those obstacles. We're going to finish the work. And I'm going to make the sacrifices.

That's all right. I'll make sacrifices. Because I want to bring great glory to God.

You came discouraged. Look at yourself, and you'll be depressed. But don't waste your time on autopsies.

Look at other Christians. You'll be distressed. Look at your great God, and you'll be blessed.

And so, Father, we give ourselves to You in our weakness to lay hold of Your greatness, in our nothingness to lay hold of Your abundance. And our prayer is, be glorified in all the earth through Your people, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.

Source: <https://sermonindex.net/speakers/warren-wiersbe/the-man-who-recognized-greatness/>

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