|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Neh 3:1-61 Cor 12: 12-27 (MSG) | Kingdom WallsJenga tower illustration | Pinelands – 9am – 27/08/2023Thornton – 10:30am – 27/08/2023 |

**Put up your hands if** **you want our church to…**

 Grow, Be involved in Mission, Be Alive and Active

Be relevant and contextual, Make a Difference

There is a story… Conversation between Jesus and Angel Gabriel

 On a balcony in heaven…

 **Gabriel says :**

 “Well Jesus do you really think you achieved anything on earth......I mean look at it:

 James and John - Sons of Thunder

 - Argue about Greatness

 Peter - the Rock

 - Denies knowing you

 At the Cross - Fear + Disappointment

 - Most of your Disciples went into Hiding

 Surely there is not much to show for your time on earth...”

 **Jesus Replied :**

 “I went to earth to share the Good News,

 God’s Good News… And to establish the Church…

 …Now I have left my disciples in **CHARGE !”**

 **Gabeil....**

 “You did **WHAT?…** Left your disciples in **CHARGE...**

 They messed up so often.

 I trust you have a back-up plan…

 **Jesus Said:**

 “NO !! THERE IS NO BACK-UP PLAN.

 ***THEY ARE THE ONLY PLAN ”***

**YOU ARE GOD’S PLAN FOR THIS CHURCH**

**THERE IS NO OTHER PLAN**

***BUT***  - We are so good at making excuses

- We are good at blaming someone else

*Move to the Jenga Tower (where all can see)*

*as an excuse is given take out a block and place on top*

What are some of the excuses… *(feed back)*

 - too busy

 - too tired

 - Do not have the skills

 - Nobody will listen to me

 - Do not have the time

 - I am a nobody

 - That is somebody else’s job

With all these **excuses** the Church gets **weaker.....**

 **BUT** the church still **NEEDS** ***(and is expected)***

 to be there for those people.

**Excuses are nothing new…** We see them throughout scripture…

**Eve** said… The snake made me do it.

**Adam** said… The woman you gave to me made me do it.

**Naaman** said… The river was not clean enough

**Gideon** said… His family was the weakest

**Moses** said… Who am I?... to go to Pharoh.

I don’t speak well.

 They will not listen to me

**Jeremiah** said… I’m too young.

**Gospel Excuses…**

I cannot come… I need to bury my father first.

I cannot come… I need to test out my new oxen.

 I cannot come… I have just bought a piece of land

I was afraid… So I buried what you gave me.

**Thomas** said… I will not believe… Unless I see his hands

**1 Peter 2:16…** says… ***“Do not use your freedom as an excuse to do evil.***

Every time we make an **EXCUSE…**  **NOT to do…**

What God is asking us to do…

 We ***WEAKEN*** the Body of Christ.

Hear again these words from 1 Cor 12:21 –

***“Can you imagine Eye telling Hand.***

 ***‘Get lost; I don’t need you’?***

 ***Or, Head telling foot, ‘You’re fired;***

 ***your job has been phased out’?”***

**NOW… HEAR** the ***Good News*** - **JESUS NEEDS YOU !!!**

Mother Threresa, *“We all have something beautiful to do for God.”*

 God needs each of us here at Pinelands / Thornton

 ***No one is excluded***

Paul reminds us… *(1 Cor 21:27)*

***“You are Christ’s body-that’s who you are! You***

 ***must never forget this. Only as you accept your***

***part of that body does your “part” mean anything.”***

**Nehemiah 3** Each built a section of the wall…

 No one was excluded

**What part of this Kingdom Wall will you be building?**

**One last illustration** to conclude todays message…

**CARPENTER’S WORSHOP**

There was trouble in the workshop. The tools were having a row.

Some blamed it on the hammer, he was much too noisy so he must go. But the hammer blamed the saw, he was constantly going back and forward. No! the saw would not be blamed, he accused the plane. The plane’s work was much too shallow, always skimming the surface.

But the plane was sure there was someone else at fault, it was the screwdriver, because surely he was constantly going around in circles. The screwdriver said it was the ruler because he was always measuring other people by his own standard, but the ruler complained about the sandpaper whom he accused of rubbing people up the wrong way. The sandpaper protested loudly and said there could be no doubt that the drill was the culprit as everybody knew he was soo boring.

With that the carpenter arrived and the tools fell silent as he picked up each one in turn to finish the pulpit he was making. When completed it was mounted by many a servant of God who preached the Word and multitudes were blessed.

**What part of this Kingdom Wall will you be building?**

Worship Services Always place to be involved

 Door Stewards, Data Projector,

 Sound desk, Tea after Service,

 Readers, Music,

 Flowers, Ushers,

Church Logistics Admin, Maintenance,

 Finances,

Outreach Wednesday 30 August @ 7pm – 8pm

Inreach Thursday 7 September @ 7pm – 8pm

Deepreach Wednesday 30 August @ 8pm – 9pm

Ecureach Tuesday 29 August @ 5pm - 6pm

**Nehemiah 3:1-6 Rebuilding the Wall of Jerusalem**

This is how the city wall was rebuilt. The High Priest Eliashib and his fellow priests rebuilt the Sheep Gate, dedicated it, and put the gates in place. They dedicated the wall as far as the Tower of the Hundred and the Tower of Hananel.

The men of Jericho built the next section.

Zaccur son of Imri built the next section.

The clan of Hassenaah built the Fish Gate. They put the beams and the gates in place, and put in the bolts and bars for locking the gate.

Meremoth, the son of Uriah and grandson of Hakkoz, built the next section.

Meshullam, the son of Berechiah and grandson of Meshezabel, built the next section.

Zadok son of Baana built the next section.

The men of Tekoa built the next section, but the leading men of the town refused to do the manual labor assigned them by the supervisors.

Joiada son of Paseah and Meshullam son of Besodeiah rebuilt Jeshanah Gate. They put the beams and the gates in place, and put in the bolts and bars for locking the gate.

**1 Corinthians 12:12-31 (**The Message)

You can easily enough see how this kind of thing works by looking no further than your own body. Your body has many parts—limbs, organs, cells—but no matter how many parts you can name, you’re still one body. It’s exactly the same with Christ. By means of his one Spirit, we all said good-bye to our partial and piecemeal lives. We each used to independently call our own shots, but then we entered into a large and integrated life in which he has the final say in everything. (This is what we proclaimed in word and action when we were baptized.) Each of us is now a part of his resurrection body, refreshed and sustained at one fountain—his Spirit—where we all come to drink. The old labels we once used to identify ourselves—labels like Jew or Greek, slave or free—are no longer useful. We need something larger, more comprehensive.

I want you to think about how all this makes you more significant, not less. A body isn’t just a single part blown up into something huge. It’s all the different-but-similar parts arranged and functioning together. If Foot said, “I’m not elegant like Hand, embellished with rings; I guess I don’t belong to this body,” would that make it so? If Ear said, “I’m not beautiful like Eye, transparent and expressive; I don’t deserve a place on the head,” would you want to remove it from the body? If the body was all eye, how could it hear? If all ear, how could it smell? As it is, we see that God has carefully placed each part of the body right where he wanted it.

But I also want you to think about how this keeps your significance from getting blown up into self-importance. For no matter how significant you are, it is only because of what you are a part of. An enormous eye or a gigantic hand wouldn’t be a body, but a monster. What we have is one body with many parts, each its proper size and in its proper place. No part is important on its own. Can you imagine Eye telling Hand, “Get lost; I don’t need you”? Or, Head telling Foot, “You’re fired; your job has been phased out”? As a matter of fact, in practice it works the other way—the “lower” the part, the more basic, and therefore necessary. You can live without an eye, for instance, but not without a stomach. When it’s a part of your own body you are concerned with, it makes no difference whether the part is visible or clothed, higher or lower. You give it dignity and honor just as it is, without comparisons. If anything, you have more concern for the lower parts than the higher. If you had to choose, wouldn’t you prefer good digestion to full-bodied hair?

The way God designed our bodies is a model for understanding our lives together as a church: every part dependent on every other part, the parts we mention and the parts we don’t, the parts we see and the parts we don’t. If one part hurts, every other part is involved in the hurt, and in the healing. If one part flourishes, every other part enters into the exuberance.

You are Christ’s body—that’s who you are! You must never forget this. Only as you accept your part of that body does your “part” mean anything.