

March Forward

17 - Nehemiah: A Time for Restoration
Church on the Park | Sunday, 28 FEB 2021 | Glen Gerhauser

Text: “With all prayer and petition pray at all times in the Spirit, and with this in view, be on the alert with all perseverance and petition for all the saints, and *pray* on my behalf, that utterance may be given to me in the opening of my mouth, to make known with boldness the mystery of the gospel” (Eph. 6:18-19, NASB).

Theme: We march forward by living right in God’s eyes.

Intro: The Lord wants us to march forward and take ground. That’s why we put on God’s whole armour. We equip ourselves so that we can take back what the enemy has stolen from us. And we also arm ourselves so that we can advance the Good News. That’s why today, I want to propose to our church something we are calling the March Challenge. It’s simple and not complicated. The March Challenge is this:

1. Practice a daily quiet time every day of March.
2. Journal your quiet time.
3. Share the highlights of your quiet times at least once a week.

Its purpose is to build community around sharing God’s word with one another, to encourage accountability and develop a godly habit.

1) Every day, get dressed in the secret place of prayer (Eph 6:10-18).

- You don’t get dressed in front of people.
 - You get dressed in secret, and then you go out into the world.
 - It’s the same God’s armour (Eph. 6:10-18).
 - You get dressed in the secret place of prayer, and then you can stand firm in this world of temptation.
- Have you had one of those dreams where you go out into the world naked? But you didn’t know at first that you were naked?
 - This is what it’s like when you go out into your day without first having time with God.
 - Your time with God is where you get equipped.
 - This is the time the belt of truth gets buckled around your waist, and the breastplate of righteousness gets fit into place.
 - This is when you put on your marching boots, put on your helmet, grab your shield and take up your sword.
- My challenge for you this March (and it correlates with Lent): take have a daily quiet time.
 - And I’m going to give you practical points to make this happen.

2) Live right to pray right (James 5:16).

- “The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man avails much” — James 5:16
 - In other words, prayer is powerful, but it’s only powerful if you are righteous.
 - “If I had cherished iniquity in my heart, the Lord would not have listened” (Ps 66:18, ESV).
- So your times of secret prayer are about putting on this breastplate of righteousness.
 - Through prayer, worship and reading the Word—through listening to God—you are learning to live right.
- “If you know that he is righteous, you know that everyone who does what is right has been born of him” (1 John 2:29, NIV).
- This brings us to a story in Joshua that has been on my heart this week: Joshua 7.
 - It’s about the battle for Ai and Achan.
 - Since Israel just defeated Jericho’s towering city, the small town of Ai looked like a piece of cake.
 - However, no battle is won through our strength and resources.
 - The battle is the Lord’s, and this means its only won through righteousness.
 - Israel was totally shocked that Ai drove them away.
 - But there is a lesson here about how we can stand firm against the devil and march forward, taking God’s promises.
 - Read Joshua 7:10-13

- So what's the solution to their defeat?
 - They need to get rid of the secret sin.
 - How does Joshua do this?
 - First, he gets up early in the morning (Joshua 7:16).
- He finds out what the secret sin is.
 - Joshua does this by casting lots; we do by asking the Holy Spirit to search us.
 - The Holy Spirit's fire is like a searchlight.
 - And praise God if you have no secret sin. Yet, "be careful when you stand lest you fall" (1 Cor. 10:12).
 - What's the secret sin?
 - Achan has stolen and hidden some beautiful garments, silver and gold (Joshua 7:21).
 - These were things from Jericho that were meant to be completely destroyed. They were God's and not to be taken.
- Lastly, they had to get rid of Achan and his family.
 - Today, we don't stone anyone to death, but we need to confess hidden sin to God and crucify it with Christ.
- This is the only way to true victory, and it's the only way we can stand against the evil one.
- After dealing with the secret sin, Israel defeated Ai.
 - God gave Israel a unique strategy—different from Jericho—to take Ai.
 - In the same way, I believe God is giving us a unique strategy this March, and it has to do with this March Challenge.
 - So how can you have a quiet time?
 - Here are the five 'p's'.

3) Find a place (Matt. 6:6).

- What is your place or places?

4) Choose a period of time (Mark 1:35).

- When is your time or times of secret prayer?

5) Have a plan (Matt. 6:7-15; 1 Chron. 16:8-36).

- What is your plan? What will you do in your quiet times?
 - Psalm 119:11

6) Use a journal (Rev. 1:11).

- Do you have a journal and a nice pen to write or draw with?

7) Practice praying daily (Daniel 6:10).

- Are you committed to practicing prayer daily like Daniel?

Conclusion: Let's spend some time waiting before God and writing down the answers to these questions of the five p's. If you are willing to take the March Challenge, scan on the QR code.

