



For we are God's
handiwork,
created in Christ Jesus
to do good works,
which God
PREPARED IN ADVANCE
for us to do.

-Ephesians 2:10

Great Swamp Baptist Church
Sanctity of Life Sunday
January 21, 2024

Great Swamp Baptist Church

Sunday Morning Worship

10:30 AM

Announcements

Pastor Ralph Lee

Call to Worship

Invocation

Keith Gamo

Praise & Worship

Pastoral and Offertory Prayer
Worship by Giving
Offertory Special

Pastor Ralph Lee

Message

Pastor Ralph Lee

Invitation

Benediction Prayer

Sunday Mornings
Following The Song Service:



Nursery



Teacher:
Olivia Stanley

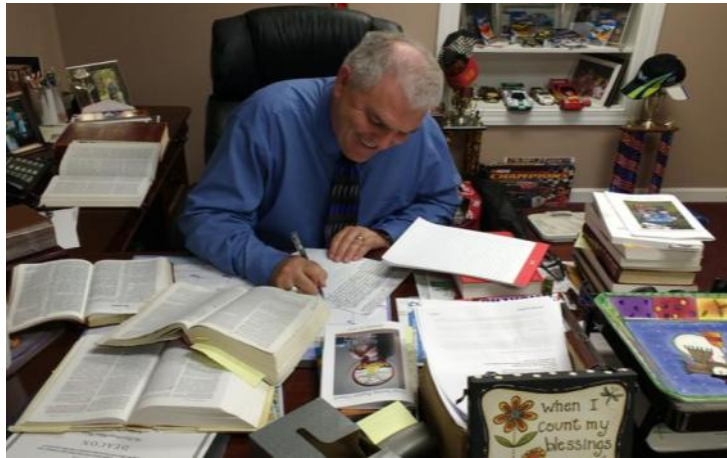
DEACON OF THE WEEK:

Keith Gamo



Phone: 843-986-8525

*From
Pastor
Ralph's
Desk:*



Rebuilding the Walls **(Nehemiah 1:1-4, 2:11-20)**

Introduction:

My studies in the Book of Nehemiah for our Wednesday night Bible study has convinced me that I need to bring the primary focus of the Book to our overall membership. So the obvious question is just exactly what is that theme?

Nehemiah held a high position in Persian kingdom. He was the cupbearer for King Artaxerxes. One day Nehemiah had gotten word from some of his Jewish family that had visited Jerusalem that the city of Jerusalem was in shambles because the walls of the city still laid in ruins, and the gates of the city were burned down. This news convinced Nehemiah that under God's leadership he had to leave his high position and his home and travel to Jerusalem to lead the people of Jerusalem ,and it's surrounding area to rebuild the walls of the city that had at this point been broken down for over 140 years. Thus the focus of the book is to rebuild the walls of the city.

So this spoke to me as the emphasis that we, too, need to be zeroing in on. For every day we see brokenness all around us. In our own lives there are strong walls that have come crumbling down that at one time were of great support to our walk with the Lord, but then we also see others whose lives are breaking down. We see families that are breaking down as well as churches, communities, towns, cities, states, and nations. As a matter of fact we pretty much all agree that the whole world appears broken down.

So what should our response be to all this brokenness? It should be exactly the same as Nehemiah's response. We need to seek God's leadership to guide us and help us to rebuild the walls. As a matter of fact that's exactly what Jesus came to do. He didn't leave Heaven to come in our midst to tear us down. Rather He came to do just exactly the opposite. He came to build us up.

Matthew in his gospel shares with us some verse from the Book of Isaiah which so adequately describe the ministry of Jesus as He walked and worked in our midst. One of the verses tells us in a unique way that Jesus is not about tearing us down but rather building back up.

"A bruised reed He will not break, and a smoldering wick He will not snuff out till He leads justice to victory." (Matt 12:20).

So with this message and others to follow, we are going to be considering how we can rebuild the walls. We will only consider one point today, and that one point has to do with how the walls of Jerusalem were torn down to begin with. This will also help us to understand why the walls of our own lives have come crumbling down as well.

I. First, let's notice the reason for the destruction of the walls.

The walls of Jerusalem were completely demolished in 586 BC by the Babylonians under King Nebuchadnezzar. King Nebuchadnezzar ruled over a vast empire and had a large army with all the latest military equipment that was available at that time.

So the logical conclusion for why the walls of Jerusalem were destroyed would simply be that Jerusalem faced a far superior enemy than they were prepared to deal with, and therefore they were overwhelmingly defeated which resulted in the walls coming down. It also resulted in the removal and captivity of all of the Jews in Jerusalem who were not slaughtered.

However let me clearly state that the defeat of Jerusalem did not happen because their enemy was vastly superior than them, and they indeed were, but throughout Israel's history they had faced far superior enemies whom under God's power and strength they were able to overwhelmingly defeat and destroy, again and again. As a matter of fact if we were to begin listing all the times that God gave Israel victory against overwhelming odds it would take up several pages.

So the question is what happened this time why did they not defeat this larger army as they had so many times before? Well, as we will discover in the following points it's because God purposely chose not to fight for or with Israel on this occasion, and He did so purposely. So let's find out why God refused to save Jerusalem from the Babylonians, and allowed for their defeat and the destruction of the city walls. This will help us to see why our own walls have come crumbling down as well.

A. First reason that we see why the destruction of the walls took place comes from the instructions God gave Israel before they even entered the promise land (Duet 28:58-64).

Now the instructions that I'm referring to took place somewhere between 800 to 900 years prior to the destruction of the walls. Israel was wandering through the wilderness on their way to the promise land. During that 40 year journey, though Moses, God was giving to the nation rules, commands, and instructions for them to follow and live by. Amidst those instructions is a grave warning that God gave to the nation that if they fail to keep His commands and His Word there would be horrible consequences.

"If you do not carefully follow all the words of this law, which are written in this book, and do not revere this glorious and awesome name -- the Lord your God -- the Lord will send fearful plagues on you and your descendants, harsh and prolonged disasters, and severe and lingering illnesses. He will bring on you all the diseases of Egypt that you dreaded, and they will cling to you. The Lord will also bring on you every kind of sickness and disaster not recorded in this Book of the Law, until you are destroyed. You who were as numerous as the stars in the sky will be left but few in number, because you did not obey the Lord your God. Just as it pleased the Lord to make you prosper and increase in number, so it will please him to ruin and destroy you. You will be uprooted from the land you are entering to possess. Then the Lord will scatter you among all nations, from one end of the earth to the other. There you will worship other gods -- gods of wood and stone, which neither you nor your ancestors have known." (Deut 28:58-64).

So Israel had no one but themselves to blame for the destruction of the walls of the city and their captivity. It was their rebellion against God, His holy and sacred name, as well as His holy commands that brought about their downfall.

We, too, need to understand that we have watched the walls crumble, and lives broken, and consequence be experienced, because of our sin and rebellion against God as well.

There's not a one of us born with a heart that is good. As King David said, "...In sin did my mother conceive me." (Ps 51:5). David means from this statement that from his very conception he was a sinner and so are all of us.

The Apostle Paul further reveals that we are born sinners which we inherited from Adam. "Therefore just as sin came into the world through one man, and death through sin, and so death spread to all men because all have sinned." (Romans 5:12).

Our own children are a perfect example of the truth that we are all born sinners. For their first three to four years the number one word that we use with them is the word "no." They have inherited a heart to rebel against our instructions.

This has happened ever since the beginning when Adam and Eve chose to sin against God. As part of their consequence the walls, so to speak, of the garden of Eden were brought down and they were kicked out of the garden, and were never allowed to return.

However let me make a wonderful and amazing aspect this point and that is that God cared enough to give us a warning. It indicates that God desires that we not rebel against Him, but rather that we walk with Him.

B. Second reason we see why the destruction of the walls took place is revealed at the time of the destruction itself. (2 Chron 36:11-19)

These verses here tell us exactly when and why the walls came down and Jerusalem was carried off into captivity.

"Zedekiah was twenty-one years old when he became king, and he reigned in Jerusalem eleven years. He did evil in the eyes of the Lord his God and did not humble himself before Jeremiah the prophet, who spoke the word of the Lord. He also rebelled against King Nebuchadnezzar, who had made him take an oath in God's name. He became stiff-necked and hardened his heart and would not turn to the Lord, the God of Israel. Furthermore, all the leaders of the priests and the people became more and more unfaithful, following all the detestable practices of the nations and defiling the temple of the Lord, which he had consecrated in Jerusalem.

The Lord, the God of their ancestors, sent word to them through his messengers again and again, because he had pity on his people and on his dwelling place. But they mocked God's messengers, despised his words and scoffed at his prophets until the wrath of the Lord was aroused against his people and there was no remedy. He brought up against them the king of the Babylonians who killed their young men with the sword in the sanctuary, and did not spare young men or young women, the elderly or the infirm. God gave them all into the hands of Nebuchadnezzar. He carried to Babylon all the articles from the temple of God, both large and small, and the treasures of the Lord's temple and the treasures of the king and his officials. They set fire to God's temple and broke down the wall of Jerusalem; they burned all the palaces and destroyed everything of value there." (2 Chron 36:11-19).

In these verses God said, I've finally had all I can take. I gave you warning after warning through my prophets, and messengers, but you not only ignored them rather you killed them. Your rebellion reached a zenith when you became like all the other wicked nations. You left me with no option but to fulfill justice by bringing destruction upon you.

As we look at our own nation, one that's been greatly blessed by God, we see the same kind of measures taking place here as took place back when God took Israel into captivity. For years God has flooded this land with great and powerful preachers and messengers.

However instead of heeding them, we have spurned them, ignored them, and even persecuted them. It has resulted in us becoming more and more wicked like many others have become, and this has resulted in the brokenness that we see all around us, and even within us.

Oh, but what a patient God we serve! These verses reveal that He didn't suddenly bring destruction upon them after their initial rebellion. Rather it was not until years after years and warning after warning because it says that He had pity and compassion on them.

So it is today that our God is once again showing patience with us because He's not willing that any of us perish but rather that we all come to repentance. (II Peter 3:9).

But let us not forget that one day His patience will come to an end and judgment will begin.

C. Third reason we see why the destruction of the walls took place is revealed in the promise of restoration that was made (2 Chron 36:0-23)

Though the destruction of the walls was a clear picture of judgment, as we've demonstrated from the scripture verses in the previous points, they also remind us of the promise that God made to the nation that once He brought judgment He would also bring restoration.

"He carried into exile to Babylon the remnant, who escaped from the sword, and they became servants to him and his successors until the kingdom of Persia came to power. The land enjoyed its Sabbath rests; all the time of its desolation it rested, until the seventy years were completed in fulfillment of the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah. In the first year of Cyrus king of Persia, in order to fulfill the word of the Lord spoken by Jeremiah, the Lord moved the heart of Cyrus king of Persia to make a proclamation throughout his realm and also to put it in writing: 'This is what Cyrus king of Persia says: 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth and he has appointed me to build a temple for him at Jerusalem in Judah. Any of his people among you may go up, and may the Lord their God be with them.'" (2 Chron 36:20-23). So God destroyed the city and its walls to bring judgment upon them but He also did it so He could begin the process of redemption and restoration. In reality judgment brought about redemption, restoration, and reconciliation.

As we come to the New Testament we discover the same truth, because we are all sinners, and have rebelled against our holy God, judgment was required, and that's exactly what Jesus did. He took our judgment for us, which in turn made redemption, restoration, and reconciliation available to all who would believe. "God made Him who had no sins to be sin for us, so that in Him we might become the righteousness of God." (2 Cor 5:21)

Conclusion:

So as we conclude this message it's important for us to understand that the walls were broken because of the nations rebellion. As well as the brokenness of our own lives has come from our rebellion and sin against God.

However with judgment, redemption, and restoration can be obtained and must be sought after through Christ Jesus our Lord.

Jesus Love You

Ralph Lee



Goal: \$3,000.00
To Date: \$2,779.00

AGENDA

Business Meeting

Wednesday, February 14th at 7:00 p.m.

Deacons' Meeting

Monday, February 12th at 6:00 p.m.

Prayer Meeting

Every Tuesday morning at 9:00 a.m.

Grandmothers' Group

Monday, February 5th at 11:30 a.m.

All ladies welcome!

Swamp Kids

Every Wednesday night at 6:00 p.m.



<i>Tuesday</i>	<i>23rd</i>	<i>Tex Lowther</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>24th</i>	<i>Bernice Malphrus</i>
<i>Wednesday</i>	<i>24th</i>	<i>Helen Malphrus</i>

UPCOMING EVENTS

Sanctity of Life Sunday

Sunday, January 21st

Kick off of our Baby Bottle Drive!!!

SFCA Spirit Week

Monday, January 29th through February 2nd

SFCA Homecoming

Friday, February 2nd during the basketball game

SFCA Winter Break

Friday, February 16th through the 19th

SFCA Basketball Tournament

Thursday, February 15th & Friday, February 16th

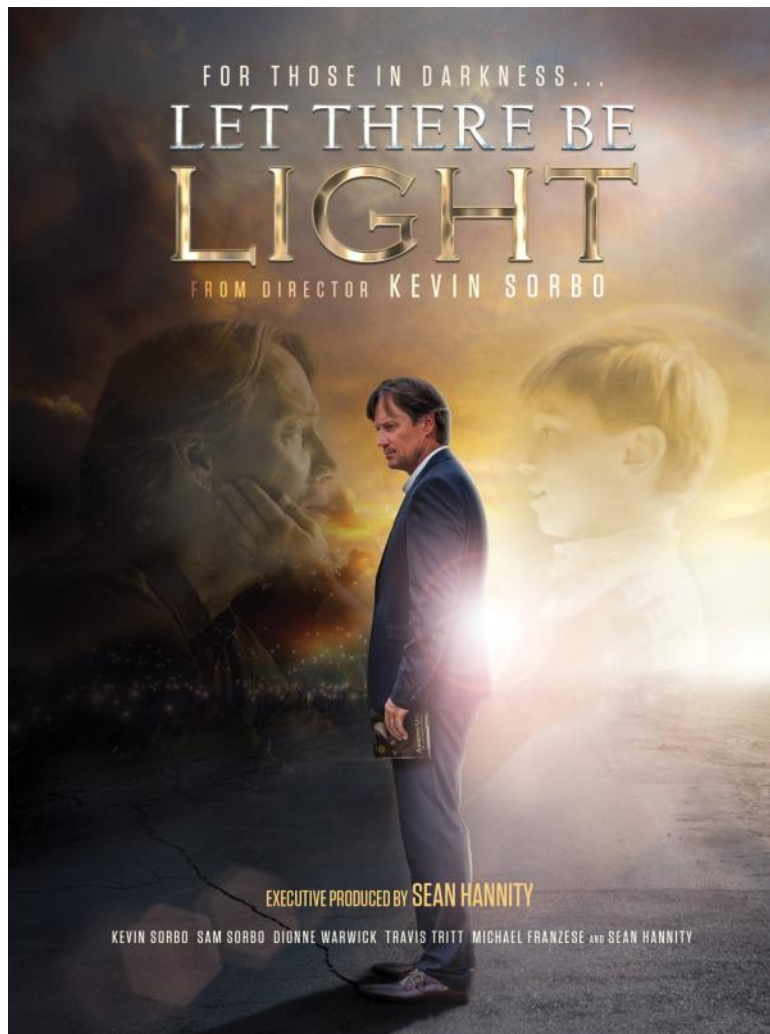
Shellem Cline Concert

Sunday, February 25th

SFCA Blood Drive

Monday, March, 4th

Sign up online now to get a spot!! They book up fast!



MOVIE NIGHT!!

Showing: Let There Be Light

TONIGHT!!!!

Sunday, January 21st

Concessions at 6:00 p.m.

Movie starts at 6:30 p.m.



Please bring finger foods to share!

Tea and Popcorn provided.

Come watch an amazing movie with us!

Sunday School Classes

@ 9:15am

CAMO CLASS - Room 406 - Bobby Smith

GLEANERS CLASS - Room 401 - Darlene Bollack

VISIONARIES CLASS - Building 3, Old Social Hall

Leader - Greg Mariocourt

SOJOURNERS CLASS - Room 417 - Mack Pope

YOUTH - Youth Annex Leader - Amanda Hodges

BLUE ANGELS - 1ST & 2ND GRADES - Room 417 -

Nicole Mauriocourt

RAINBOW KIDS - 3RD GRADE AND OLDER - Room 415 -

Kelly Scherger

Wednesday Night Services

@ 7:00 pm

WORSHIP SERVICE Multi-Purpose Building

Leader-Pastor Ralph Lee, Jr.

YOUTH GROUP Youth Annex

Leader-Michelle Waitt

SWAMP KIDS Nursery Hall

Leader - Kim Malphrus



Wednesday Night Supper

Meals served from 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.
every Wednesday night.

Team Keith will be cooking Wednesday, January 24th.

\$5.00 per person or \$15.00 per family of four or more.

No meal deliveries.



Sunday Morning Breakfast

Breakfast will be served
from 8:00 a.m. to 9:00
a.m.

\$5.00 per person or
\$15.00 per family of
four or more.

GSBC Prayer Page

Church Leadership

Sunday School
SFCA-Donna Carter
Child Development
Ministries
Ralph Lee, Jr. - Pastor
Richard Waitt- Music Director
Deacons
Church Finances

Leadership

President / Vice President of
the United States of America

Bereavement

Family of Lewis Hughes

Unspoken

Other Health Needs

Mary Kay Cade
Debbie Hale
Julia Rushing
Pinky Rushing
Amy Hannah
Kathy Breland
Grace Hetrick
Arthur Pierson
Clark Daring
Arlette Jones
Jennifer Wall
Arthur Pearson
Pete Williamson
Mike Davis
Maxie Mason
Lester Daring

Hospitals

Allen Tindal, Junior
Judy Holmes - MUSC

Cancer/Treatments

Revel Crosby - 4 years old
(Leukemia)
Morgan Warren
Ken Lawler

Surgery/Recovery

Debbie Hale
Chyleen Mock

Nursing Centers

Bobby Mohn - Ridgeland Nursing Home
Byron Vaigneur - Legacy at South Pointe
Erma Cooler - Ridgeland Nursing Home
David Sauls - Morrell Nursing Center

Please Continue To Remember

Homebound

Shirley Malphrus *Tom Hinely*
Rose Boyles *Ann Blocker*
Judy Smith *Red & Helen Malphrus*
Vera Floyd *Thomas Cooler*
Barbara Mills *Marie Malphrus*
Kenny Smith
Diane Hannah

Pray For Our Military

Sgt. Jared Blanton-Deployed
Matthew Mills-US Marines
Jericho Malphrus-Sp. Agent/Air Force
Washington, D.C.
Michael Sottile - Ret.
Tristan Blanton-Louisiana
Andrea C. Daring-Charleston, SC
Schuyler Johnson - Basic Training Marines

Church Staff

Pastor: Pastor Ralph Lee, Jr. *jehu27@gmail.com*

Music Director: Richard Waitt

Sunday School Director: Mike Davis

Pianist: Michelle Waitt *waittfamily83@gmail.com*

Administrative Assistant: Jennifer Meador *greatswampbaptist@hargray.com*
843-726-3631

School Administrator: Donna Carter *dcarter@sfcaweb.org*

Stewardship

Tithes	This Week	Weekly Budget	Surplus/Deficit + / -
	<i>\$4,253.00</i>	<i>\$ 5,012.49</i>	<i>\$-759.49</i>
<i>Online Offerings</i>	<i>\$350.00</i>		
Designated Funds			Acct. Balances
<i>Lottie Moon</i>	<i>\$179.00</i>	*****	<i>\$2,779.00</i>
<i>Dot Lee Scholarship</i>	<i>\$50.00</i>	*****	<i>\$400.00</i>
<i>SMB</i>	<i>\$68.00</i>	*****	<i>\$764.12</i>
<i>WNS</i>	<i>\$334.00</i>	*****	<i>\$-31.39</i>



Great Swamp Baptist Church
9009 Tarboro Rd.
PO Box 446
Ridgeland, SC 29936

Sunday School.....9:15AM
Morning Worship.....10:30AM
Wednesday Night Service.....7:00PM

Email: greatswampbc@gmail.com
Website: greatswampbaptistchurch.com
Church Office: (843) 726-3631