

WALLS

Slide 1:

For quite some time now I've been thinking about this message, which I have titled Walls. Breakfast church folk have already heard a little about this when I shared with them one morning.

When I first received this message, I was about to embark on writing an essay for my postgraduate study.

I'm not really a last minute person, and when it comes to writing academic essays, I have often written them well in my head for a couple of weeks before I commit to paper. So, knowing that my essay was due that weekend, I sat down to complete it and as always, began by having a short time of devotions and bible reading.

Slide 2:

As part of my devotions, I read this scripture: NIV Psalm 18: 29 You, Lord, keep my lamp burning; my God turns my darkness into light. 29 With your help I can advance against a troop[e]; with my God I can scale a wall.

Slide 3:

* Or as the Message says:

Psalm 18:29-42 The Message (MSG) **28-29** Suddenly, God, you floodlight my life; I'm blazing with glory, God's glory! I smash the bands of marauders, I vault the highest fences.**30** What a God! His road stretches straight and smooth. Every God-direction is road-tested. Everyone who runs toward him makes it.

(Just in case you are confused, no, that isn't me!)

Sometimes God speaks at **THE** most inconvenient time. Immediately after reading this scripture my mind was filled with questions for God. What do you mean by Walls? What walls do I need to vault? And, Lord if you keep talking to me how on

earth am I going to get my essay written?! I just knew that I was to put aside my urgent essay writing, and spend time listening to the Lord so that He could talk to me?

I can trace back some of my walls to my childhood. I had a great childhood. I was loved. I didn't always feel loved but the fact remains I was. When I was about a year old, and after six children, my parents gave up the hope of having a son, so they adopted my little brother Iain. We've all probably heard about the personality of the child being determined by where they come in the family? According to research "generally aren't the strongest or the smartest in the room, so they develop their own ways of winning attention. They're natural charmers with an outgoing, social personality; no surprise then that many famous actors and comedians or that they score higher in "agreeableness" on personality tests than firstborns"

Like every family we had dramas and issues and with sport, school, a small farm and dad working other jobs we were busy – or my mum and dad were the busy ones. Sometimes, mum and dad just forgot to count. I have a vivid recollection, of mum and dad leaving me behind by mistake with a "wicked" aunty (I was convinced she was a witch) and being devastated that they could do such a thing. We lived in a very isolated farm, so it was a full hour, in the old red van, before someone said "where's Robbie?" and they had to turn around and come back. Now, we've probably all had similar experiences to that but why would it impact me so much? Because it wasn't once, but this happened many many times. Mum tells me she accidentally left me in the cot for the day when they were busy hay making – I am convinced I can remember parts of this experience! So in my growing up years, with my sisters getting boyfriends and the dramas associated with that (poor mum and dad) and my little brother being the only boy and getting lots of attention I developed two very strong character traits. One was the need to be a peacemaker and to make everyone happy, to serve and care for others and the other was about self-preservation

... Although I was loved, I had to look after myself. The result of this is that on an Independence scale I maxed out. I could give you lots of examples of this, but one in particular was when I was 15 years old, we'd moved to the city and I needed to enrol at the local college. So I went along, and enrolled myself. I can remember the Principal asking where my mother was. My response was, "what has my mother got to do with where I go to school?" Ironically, I taught in that same school later in life and that Principal was still there – he remembered this event.

Some of us need to be more independent, but when independence is a result of lack of trust/faith which can flow over into our relationship with God and others then this is an area that needs to have the word of God spoken into it for healing and renewing of our minds.

The independence has had and still has huge implications for my life today. It has huge implications for my marriage "when the two become one" is something both Jim and I work on constantly, but I have to work on it super hard.

So today, let's just spend a few minutes looking at walls individually and collectively and see how we go and I hope that as we explore this topic a little, the implications as a church will become more clear. (if we get to it!)

Readings

Nehemiah 2: ¹⁷⁻¹⁸ Then I said to them, "You see the trouble we are in: Jerusalem lies in ruins, and its gates have been burned with fire. Come, let us rebuild the wall of Jerusalem, and we will no longer be in disgrace." ¹⁸ I also told them about the gracious hand of my God on me and what the king had said to me.

Slide 4: Joshua 6:1-2 & 20 (Claire)

Two different kinds of walls, one Nehemiah, **returns, rebuilds** and calls the people of God to **repent**. The three R's. Return, rebuild and repent. This was a wall of

protection and defence. It guarded the walls of Jerusalem. Walls are very useful. Some people call these boundaries, others fences.

Slide 5: (Tim the Tool man Taylor)

As the saying goes “good fences make good neighbours”.

Slide 6: Alcatraz

Some people have walls surrounding them for a number of reasons. This slide is Alcatraz (The Rock). Jim and I visited this prison when we were in San Francisco at Christmas. Some interesting facts about Alcatraz which have absolutely nothing to do with my message:

1. Al Capone played banjo in the inmate band.
2. There were no confirmed prisoner escapes from Alcatraz.
3. In spite of his nickname, the “Birdman of Alcatraz” had no birds in the prison.

On Friday I visited an organisation called ARL (Animation Research Limited). This is the company, here in Dunedin which does all the graphics and animation for the cricket, America’s cup, golf etc. One of their current projects, for prison inmates is designed to teach numeracy and literacy skills in a virtual reality mechanics shop. A scary stat I heard recently was that 65% of prison inmates have an education level below an average 11 year old, When ARL trialed this virtual reality programme with some of the inmates, the first comment one of them said was “hey man, I’m out!”. Being free from the walls, even in a virtual environment was an amazing experience for him.

Slide 7: Good Walls

Walls can keep the bad guys out, walls can help you to keep control of things, walls can be used to maintain a balanced life. Walls are essential. Jim and I have “walls” or boundary lines over a number of areas in our lives - for example: We have a boundary line for how much we are allowed to spend each month “that makes the INDEPENDENCE radar rise to 90 pretty quick!”. If you are not

married yet, or hope to be married one day - learn how to communicate, compromise and negotiate!

We have a regular marriage WOF just to check in and ensure that we are communicating, sharing our dreams and ideas, and encouraging each other.

We all have walls in our lives that need to be built, this is where the wisdom of God is much needed.

The other wall, the wall of Jericho is an incredibly powerful story of again the people of God - called by God - given the promised land of Canaan but unable to enter in - because before them, is this enormous walled city of Jericho, and in this city, there were enemies who would not allow them to pass. This is a story about **Faith, Following** and **Freedom**.

Until the wall came down, and the enemies destroyed the people of God could not enter into the promised land.

Tell me, has God given YOU promises which you have not entered into yet?

We all, are likely to have walls in our lives which need to be torn down (sometimes brick by brick, stone by stone, layer by layer).

What are the good walls in your life? Are there walls in your life which you need to work on which are holding you back from healthy relationships, financial freedom, job satisfaction, learning etc

Slide 8: Math is Hard, so is life.

Sometimes, our self perception stops us from moving forward into the promises of God. Being a teacher and Careers Adviser for young woman, I have to spend a lot of time working with the girls and encouraging them to take up the challenges that might be before them. It seems my job has evolved, in that, many of the students who are at risk of not achieving, or simply “at risk” are referred to me.

Many of these amazing girls have persuaded themselves that something is too hard to give it a try because they might not get it perfect or right. They have this **wall of high expectations and perfectionism** which stops them from even attempting something if they feel like they won't gain excellence results. Interesting enough, This problem, of girls not taking risks, in jobs and education is well recognised. Even Martel, has just developed a line of barbie dolls which are in what was traditionally male dominated professions, so we have an astrophysist barbie, an engineering barbie, etc. All this, to encourage young woman to enter into careers that they have previously not undertaken.

Slide 9: Debt Slide

Here's an example of a few other walls. Perhaps you could fill in the last one with something you are working on at the moment.

So why does it matter?

Why is this even important?

Why was it important enough for God to show me the walls in my life?

Slide 10: John 10:10

The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy; I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full.

God, is calling us, His children to enter into the promises of God, and to live life and live it abundantly through the power of His Holy Spirit so that

- We meet our full potential in God
- **We live as victors in this world, not victims of the world**
- We truly represent the person of Jesus Christ
- We are trees of righteousness, the planting of the Lord that He might be glorified
- As Julian said a couple of weeks ago "we can take responsibility for our own lives, living with meaning and purpose"
- We are a vibrant church, attractive to others the light on the hill

Slide 11: Jeremiah 29:11

For I know the plans I have for you declares the Lord ...

For I know the plans I have for Cavy Baptist declares the Lord ...

So, as we transition into a new season ... how does God want us both individually and the church community to go forward? How do we be the light on the hill for the local community?

What walls do we need to work on as individuals with Gods help?

Or, as a church community?

How does the Caversham Community see us? What walls do they see?

Slide 12: of cavy church

These are the things that some folk in our community are already saying.

- The Cavy Baptist people are really kind
- I know a person who goes to that church, they carried my groceries home for me
- They run an amazing course about money called CAP - now I'm debt free
- My kids go to playgroup on Friday mornings Everyones really nice
- After my divorce, the people at Cavy Baptist really supported me with a divorce care programme
- If Jesus is like those people, He's a good bloke
- They helped me get help for my drug and alcohol addictions

Something to focus on as a community of believers may be:

The Wall of Welcome and Hospitality

Toula and Yani, Theo

Working on our own personal journey - I know for a fact, that we are a hospitable, friendly and caring group of believers. As part of the Search Committee the Swat Analysis really highlighted the positive things we do as a church community. We need to continue in this way. Jim and I loved visiting different churches in the

States, the hospitality in many of them was amazing. It is incredible what a welcoming smile, a handshake and an offer of lunch can do.

To conclude, we all have walls that we need in our lives, we also have walls which the Lord may be asking us to work on taking down so that we can too, can enter into the fullness and freedom of the promises of God, taking responsibility for our own spiritual maturity as a part of the wider body of Christ.

How do we do this?

Hey, we need each other! We need to keep supporting each other, loving each other and encouraging each other.

Slide 13: We need to renew our mind by the reading of the word, or the listening to the word or by singing the Word of God. When the Word of God becomes stronger than your own thoughts, more habitual than our other devices, then by making His word a daily habit, you will be amazed at how the walls which have been a stronghold on your life, begin to fall.

I believe that God is calling me out from behind some walls, and I wonder if He's asking the same of you?

I hope that in this coming week you trust the Lord enough to allow Him the freedom to help you leap over the walls in your life.

Thank you.

Benediction:

2 Corinthians 9:8

And God is able to bless you abundantly, so that in all things at all times, having all that you need, you will abound in every good work. May He give you the courage to scale the walls that need scaling, and to tear down the walls that need tearing down, so that you too, may enter into all that He has promised you.

Walls around my heart

By Emma (Aged 17)

I have a wall you cannot see

Because it's deep inside of me.

It blocks my heart on every side

And helps emotions there to hide.

You can't reach in,

I can't reach out,

You wonder what it's all about.

The wall i built that you can't see

Results from insecurity.

Each time my tender heart was hurt

The scars within grew worse and worse.

So stone by stone,

I built a wall,

That now so thick it will not fall.

Please understand that it's not you-

Continue trying to break through.

I want so much to show myself

And love from you will really help.

So bit by bit,

Chip at my wall,

Till stone by stone it starts to fall.