

Building What Lasts

A SERIES IN NEHEMIAH

LIFE
GROUPS

WEEK 5 • OCT 11

NORTHSHORE'S COMPELLING STATEMENT

Hope changes everything.

ICE BREAKER

Describe a time when you have seen someone use their wealth to benefit others.

BACKGROUND

In Nehemiah 4, the Jews were facing external threats from their enemies, as it says, *they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it* (v. 8). The persecution was initially successful, causing them to doubt their cause. However, Nehemiah redirected their attention from their circumstances towards their God. He inspired them, proclaiming, *“Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes”* (v. 14). They remembered their God and worked together to protect each other and continue building the wall, as it says, *So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out* (v. 21).

In Nehemiah 5, however, the internal strife began. Since the people were putting so much effort into the wall, they weren't able to make much of a living. To make matters worse, there was a famine in the land (v. 3). And on top of that, the people needed to borrow money to pay the Persian king's taxes. The Jews who lent them the money took advantage of them, charging them interest for the money, making life even more difficult for the poor.

Nehemiah's response to this is appropriate: *“I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words”* (v. 6). The nobles and officials had directly violated the Law, as it says, *If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him* (Exodus 22:25). In this chapter, we will continue to see how Nehemiah brings a godly resolution to this internal conflict.

REVIEW

What was meaningful from the above context or the sermon from last Sunday?



KEY VERSES: Nehemiah 5:13

I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said "Amen" and praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

READ: Nehemiah 5



HEAD LEVEL: *What does it say? These help us to examine what the Word tells us.*

1. What were all the things that caused the people to cry out against their fellow Jews?
2. What steps did Nehemiah take to resolve the issue?
3. How did the nobles and officials respond to Nehemiah's rebuke?
4. How did Nehemiah's method of ruling differ from those before him? Provide examples. What caused him to rule this way?

DEEPER DISCOVERY:

Read the following verses and see if Nehemiah's approach to governing follows these examples:

- 1 Corinthians 9:9-12
- Matthew 20:25-28
- 1 Peter 5:2-4
- Philippians 2:3-4



HEART LEVEL: *What does it mean? These questions help us shape our beliefs around the objective truth of God's word.*

1. The fear of God is mentioned in verse 9 and again in verse 15. Why is fearing God important? What are some examples of how fearing God should change the way you live your daily life?
2. When is it appropriate to be angry? What are the risks of letting yourself stay angry (v. 6)?
3. How do you determine when you need to bluntly rebuke someone versus taking a different approach (vv. 8-11)?



HANDS LEVEL: *What does it mean to me? These questions help us commit to live out the truth in our everyday lives and commit to potential next steps.*

1. Is there someone you have wronged? What can you do to make it right?
2. After seeing the way Nehemiah handles his resources, is there anything that you are inspired to change about the way you handle your resources?
3. What are the outcries and burdens that you have seen in your community? How can you become a part of making it right?



MEMORY VERSE: Exodus 22:20

If you lend money to any of my people with you who is poor, you shall not be like a moneylender to him, and you shall not exact interest from him.

PRAYER REQUESTS:

(Please remember that these requests are confidential and need to stay within the group.)