

STRENGTHENED

O GOD, STRENGTHEN MY HANDS

NEHEMIAH 6:9

Sunday Morning, February 23, 2025 » Pastor Josiah Kagin

Message Title: Overcoming Internal Challenges

Message Text: Nehemiah 5:1-13

Introduction:

The walls around Jerusalem were being built with stunning efficiency. The scheme that the enemies of the Lord's work and God's people had been exposed and thwarted. The people have been strengthened by God to continue in the work. In the midst of all these victories, a difficult challenge arose that truly would threaten the success of the work. It was not an external challenge, but an internal one. Let's see how Nehemiah navigated this situation and so that the work could go forward for God's glory.

1. A Disabling _____ (1-5)

Nehemiah 5:1a And there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.

DEFINITION—CRY: cry of distress; a cry of emotional distress or anguish

A. Unsustainable _____ (2-5)

THEY DID NOT HAVE ENOUGH FOOD (2)

Nehemiah 5:2 For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live.

THEY HAD TO MORTGAGE THEIR PROPERTY (3)

Nehemiah 5:3 Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth.

NOTE — They gave up essentials assets for their daily food.

DEFINITION—DEARTH: famine; a severe shortage of food

THEY HAD TO BORROW MONEY TO PAY TAXES (4)

Nehemiah 5:4 There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards.

NOTE — They had borrowed money from their fellow Jews for taxes to King Artaxerxes.

THEIR CHILDREN WERE DEBT SLAVES (5)

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Nehemiah 5:5 Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children: and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards.

NOTE — In the ancient Near East, individuals sold themselves or their children into the service of a creditor to pay off debts, a practice known as debt slavery. —FSB

James 1:2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations...

B. _____ People (4, 5, 11)

Nehemiah 5:4 ...We have borrowed money...

Nehemiah 5:5 ...for other men have our lands and vineyards.

Nehemiah 5:7 ...the nobles, and the rulers...Ye exact usury, every one of his brother.

NOBLES AND RULERS — those holding positions of leadership

DEFINITION—USURY: interest; a payment or fixed charge for borrowing money that is often a percentage of the amount borrowed. {100th = 1%}

DEFINITION—EXACT: to charge (money); to demand payment.

Romans 12:9 Let love be without dissimulation. Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good.

2. A Deliberate _____ (6-10)

Nehemiah 5:6 And I was very angry...

DEFINITION—VERY ANGRY: to burn (emotionally); to feel strong emotion, especially anger or passion.

See 1 Corinthians 6:7–8, 2 Corinthians 4:3–4

A. He _____ (6)

Nehemiah 5:6–7 And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words. 7 Then I consulted with myself...

NOTE — Nehemiah listened to their emotion and their situation.

James 1:19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath:

B. He _____ (7)

Nehemiah 5:7 Then I consulted with myself...

DEFINITION—CONSULTED: to consult (confer); to have a conference in order to talk something over.

NOTE—Sometimes when facing challenging situations, we feel the pressure to immediately respond. It is important to take time to consider.

Ecclesiastes 5:2 Be not rash with thy mouth, and let not thine heart be hasty to utter any thing before God: for God is in heaven, and thou upon earth: therefore let thy words be few.

Proverbs 29:20 Seest thou a man that is hasty in his words? There is more hope of a fool than of him.

C. He _____ (7-10)

HE CONFRONTED THE PEOPLE INVOLVED (7b)

Nehemiah 5:7 ...and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother.

HE EXPOSED THEIR WRONGDOING (7c-9)

Nehemiah 5:7c-9 And I set a great assembly against them. 8 And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. 9 Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies?

QUOTE: Some of the people sold back to Nehemiah by the non-Jewish nations had first been traded to them by the callous rich Jews. This made their sin all the more disgraceful.—Evers

Proverbs 16:6 By mercy and truth iniquity is purged: And by the fear of the Lord men depart from evil.

HE SET EXPECTATIONS GOING FORWARD (10)

Nehemiah 5:10 I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: I pray you, let us leave off this usury.

3. A Delightful _____ (11-13)

A. A Restoration of _____ (11-13a)

AN ORDER TO RESTORE (11)

Nehemiah 5:11 Restore, I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them.

NOTE — They were to restore all the property and the interest taken whether money or provision.

A PROMISE TO RESTORE (12a)

Nehemiah 5:12 Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest.

A PROMISE BEFORE GOD (12b-13)

Nehemiah 5:12b-13 ... Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. 13 Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied.

QUOTE: The solemnity of the oath was impressed on the nobles by Nehemiah's gesture of shaking his robe, indicating that God would 'shake out from his home and possessions each one who did not keep the oath'. — Luck

Luke 19:8 And Zacchaeus stood, and said unto the Lord; Behold, Lord, the half of my goods I give to the poor; and if I have taken any thing from any man by false accusation, I restore him fourfold.

B. A Restoration of _____ (13b)

Nehemiah 5:13b ... And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the Lord. And the people did according to this promise.

NOTE — When God's people do the right by one another in the work of the Lord, there can be unity and true worship of the Lord.

Conclusion

Acts 6:7 And the word of God increased; and the number of the disciples multiplied in Jerusalem greatly; and a great company of the priests were obedient to the faith.

Questions to Consider

Is there a pressure that I am facing that is hindering my effectiveness in the work of the Lord? Have I expressed this to the Lord and to a leader who could help?

As a leader, when a problem is brought to my attention, do I listen, consider and then act?

How do I receive confrontation about wrongdoing? Am I willing to make restoration when I have done wrong?

Do I seek to do what I can to bring about rejoicing among God's people in the work of the Lord?

