

A LEADER IS BORN

Nehemiah 1:1-11

January 4, 2009 Sunday am.

INTRODUCTION

- A. Regardless of whether you voted for President Elect Obama, you hope and pray he is the leader America needs at this time.
- B. What makes a good leader?
 - 1. Nehemiah was a great leader. His story is found in the Old Testament book by the same name.
 - 2. He came from humble beginnings to accomplish great things for God and the people of Israel.
 - 3. He was able to recruit thousands to share his vision and risk money and life to fulfill that vision.
 - 4. John Maxwell says a leader is someone who is able to get people to follow him. Nehemiah was that kind of leader.
- C. What do we know about Nehemiah?
 - 1. His story began in 446 B.C.
 - 2. About 140 years earlier, Israel was defeated by the Babylonians and most were exiled there.
 - 3. After 70 years thousands began to return to Jerusalem and rebuild their Temple, homes and shops.
 - 4. The city walls, however, were not rebuilt. In that day a city without surrounding walls had no security and were asking to be invaded again.
 - 5. When Nehemiah heard this he was still a slave in Babylon.
 - 6. He asked the King of Babylon, now called Persia, to allow him to return to his beloved city and rebuild its walls.
 - 7. In Chapter One we discover the kind of person God calls to be a leader. What is a leader?

I. FIRST, A LEADER IS WILLING TO BECOME MORE THAN THEY ARE.

- A. Nehemiah was a cupbearer when God called him to be a leader—11.
 - 1. This means he was the king's food taster i.e. poison tester (Gay makes me taste Milk when she thinks it may have gone bad).
 - 2. Although this could be a hazardous position, it was also one of luxury and ease living in the palace. He could have stayed there but God called him to be more than he was.
- B. Anyone can be more than they are. Anyone can be a leader.
 - 1. J.C. Penny once said, "Give me a stock clerk with a goal and I will give you a man who will make history. And give me a man with no goals and I will give you a stock clerk."
 - 2. King David, although just a boy, became more than he was when God used him to defeat the giant Goliath.
 - 3. We too can become more than we are. We can become leaders.

II. SECOND, A LEADER MUST HAVE PASSION FOR SOMETHING.

- A. Nehemiah had passion for protecting Jerusalem—v.4.
- B. What makes you cry? What are you passionate about?
 - 1. Your bowl team loses?
 - 2. You miss your favorite TV show?
 - 3. You miss the after Christmas sale?
- C. Leaders are passionate about something.
 - 1. Some kind of injustice.
 - 2. Some king of wrong that needs to be righted.

- D. Many years ago David Wilkerson became passionate about helping young boys get out of New York gangs.
1. When he was the pastor of a small rural church in PA he read an article in TIME about gangs in New York city.
 2. He left his church and moved to New York to share the gospel with young gang members. He started a group called "Teen Challenge" which today is called "World Challenge".
 3. He founded the Times Square Church in New York which today runs 8,000 in weekly attendance.
 4. This all happened because he became passionate about helping boys in trouble.
 5. God uses people who's hearts are broken about the needs they see around them.
 6. What breaks your heart? The lost? Singles? Divorced? Seniors? Students? Children? Poor? Families?

II. THIRD, A LEADER IS WILLING TO TAKE THE LEAD.

- A. Its easy to identify a problem and say "someone needs to do something about that".
- B. Nehemiah not only saw the need for the walls to be rebuilt. He did something about it—v.11.
- C. Eugene Lang did too.
 1. In 1981 he gave a speech to 61 Middle Schoolers in New York city. He knew that 75% of them would not finish high school.
 2. On the spur of the moment he promised all those who graduated from high school he would pay for their college education. Six years later half of them took him up on his offer.
 3. Today his idea has developed into the "I Have A Dream Foundation" in 57 cities.
 4. That's what can happen when you are willing to take the lead.

CONCLUSION

- A. God uses people who are willing to be used.
- B. I hope and pray he uses our next President.
- C. He can use you too. You could be the next Nehemiah.