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**LESSONS FROM NEHEMIAH ON BEING STEDFAST IN THE WORK OF THE LORD!
A OVERVIEW OF THE BOOK OF NEHEMIAH**

Intro: In the book of Nehemiah we see the example of a worker for God. A man who was committed to that work, sacrificed for that work. Faithfully served the Lord making great sacrifices, and obeying Him with great sacrifices. So we have these admonitions in Scripture:

I Corinthians 15:58 Therefore, my beloved brethren, be ye stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord.

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

Nehemiah was an example of a man who was stedfast in the work of the Lord!

I. NEHEMIAH WAS A MAN WHO HAD A HEART FOR THE THINGS OF GOD.

We are in need of men like Nehemiah today. The problem is simply this, some people just do not have a heart for the things of God.

For Paul made this sad statement. But this was not the case with Nehemiah!

Philippians 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's. Nehemiah had everything he needed, he had a position, wealth, comfort yet he had a heart for the Lord!

Nehemiah 1:1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,

Nehemiah 1:2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 1:3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.

Nehemiah 1:4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,

Nehemiah 1:5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:

Nehemiah 1:11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

We need a group of people today that have a heart for the things of God and will take a personal interest in His work is glory and honor, and that the reproach would be taken from that work. Today, because of humanism, atheism, and worldliness, there is a great reproach in the church. Yet it seems no one cares.

Most people could care less, all they care about is the welfare of God's work.

Nehemiah was well off, all was well with him, he had no need. But when he heard about the reproach of the work of God he was burdened.

Most people look at the church as someone else's responsibility. Some invisible persons or group of people's responsibility, but not theirs! Maybe they see it as Pastor Bissol's church, or so and so's church. Maybe some people view it as a social club that they visit but really are not part of.

People, and often members, are detached from the work, and have little care about what is going on. This was not the case with Nehemiah.

Most people are detached. No burden, could not really care less. They just come. They really don't love the work of God.

WHEN NEHEMIAH HEARD THAT THINGS WERE NOT GOING WELL FOR GOD'S PEOPLE, GOD'S WORK, HE WEPT AND MOURNED.

Some people are so cold towards the work of God, as if it is none of their business and they have their own burdens and problems.

Nehemiah could have said, well what can I do I am hundreds of miles from Jerusalem what concern is it of mine?

God is looking for people that have a heart for the things of God..

WHEN THERE IS A NEED IT BECOMES THEIR BURDON.

Philippians 2:21 For all seek their own, not the things which are Jesus Christ's.

GOD WILL TAKE NOTE OF THOSE WHO MAKE THE CHURCH'S BURDENS THEIR BURDENS.

It all starts with a heart that cares.

It all starts with a burden.

Think about it, if you love God you will love what God loves.

Christ loved His church, He gave His life for His church.. His church is called His bride.

I praise the Lord for men and women who have a heart for the work of God at our church. Men who have a desire to come and serve, and want to beautify God's house and property. Much work has been done recently, and I thank God for the few that have sacrificed and worked hard to make this happen. Next week we are going to dedicate our new building to the Lord. I think some people won't even be inconvenienced to come.

We need more people that are like Nehemiah. Will you be a Nehemiah?

II. MEN NEED TO NOT ONLY PRAY ABOUT THE MATTER BUT TO DO WHAT THEY CAN AND UTILIZE THEIR RESOURCES TO HELP IN THE WORK.

Notice how Nehemiah wanted to use his position in the court of the King to further the cause.

Nehemiah 1:11 O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.

Nehemiah 2:2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid, Nehemiah 2:3 And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?

Nehemiah 2:4 Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? **So I prayed to the God of heaven.**

Nehemiah 2:5 And I said unto the king, If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send me unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it.

Nehemiah 2:6 And the king said unto me, (the queen also sitting by him,) For how long shall thy journey be? and when wilt thou return? So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time.

Notice the queen is mentioned in this account:

One commentator says,

“After the immediate danger to her community passed, Queen Esther stayed with Ahasuerus (Xerxes). Why did she stay with him, rather than restart her life? We need to put the Book of Esther into an historical context to better understand Esther’s choice. The story of Esther happened after Cyrus, the first Persian King, called for all deported Jews to return to Jerusalem to build the House of God (538 B.C., Ezra 1:2). Most of the Jews preferred the comfortable life of the Persian Empire to an arduous life rebuilding their devastated homeland. The Talmud sees Haman’s decree as a punishment from Heaven to these Jews. When, several years later,

Nehemiah asked the Persian King for permission to return to Zion and rebuild Jerusalem, “the Queen is sitting by him” (Nehemiah 2:6), and she influenced the King’s decision to approve Nehemiah’s request. The Queen described in the Book of Nehemiah is Queen Esther. She stayed with Ahasuerus and sacrificed her personal happiness to complete her ultimate mission to enable the building of the Second Temple and the return to Zion”.

It is possible that this King was Esther's husband, and this may be the reason Nehemiah found such favor in his eyes. God in His providence allowed all this to help His people return to the land and build the second temple.

1. NOTICE HOW NEHEMIAH WAS WILLING TO UTILIZE HIS TALENTS AND INFLUENCE FOR THE GLORY OF GOD.

God has given each of us certain talents and resources. You know what you are able to do, and if it is in your power to help relieve the burden and you don't do it, God is going to deal with you.

Nehemiah was in a position to speak to the king, and if he didn't use his power of influence he would be guilty.

A. We are held responsible to utilize our resources for the work of God.

B. If we have the right heart for the things of God it will become evident to others and we will be given opportunities to serve Him.

Nehemiah was a cupbearer, not an architect or stone mason, but he had opportunity to speak to the King to get the resources to build the walls of Jerusalem.

International Bible Encyclopedia Describes a Cupbearer as follows:

An officer of high rank at ancient oriental courts, whose duty it was to serve the wine at the king's table. On account of the constant fear of plots and intrigues, a person must be regarded as thoroughly trustworthy to hold this position. He must guard against poison in the king's cup, and was sometimes required to swallow some of the wine before serving it. His confidential relations with the king often endeared him to his sovereign and also gave him a position of great influence. This officer is first mentioned in Scripture in Genesis 40:1 ff, where the Hebrew word elsewhere translated "cupbearer" is rendered "butler." The phrase "chief of the butlers" (40:2) accords with the fact that there were often a number of such officials under one as chief

Nehemiah (compare 1:11) was cupbearer to Artaxerxes Longimanus, and was held in high esteem by him, as the record shows. His financial ability (Nehemiah 5:8,10,14,17) would indicate that the office was a lucrative one. Cupbearers are mentioned further in 1 Kings 10:5;

2 Chronicles 9:4, where they, among other evidences of royal splendor, are stated to have impressed the queen of Sheba with Solomon's glory.

II CH 9:3 And when the queen of Sheba had seen the wisdom of Solomon, and the house that he had built,

II CH 9:4 And the meat of his table, and the sitting of his servants, and the attendance of his ministers, and their apparel; his cupbearers also, and their apparel; and his ascent by which he went up into the house of the LORD; there was no more spirit in her.

Nehemiah used his power of influence to petition the King on behalf of Jerusalem. NOTE NEHEMIAH FEARED TO MAKE THIS REQUEST.

Nehemiah 2:2 Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,

Remember the cupbearer that displeased the King of Egypt landed in jail with Joseph.

When people have a heart for the things of God they are willing to take risks to please God! Risks to be in trouble at work if necessary. To make requests for the work of God.

I recall years ago, there were so many things that were a reproach in our church. OUR PEWS FOR EXAMPLE.

Back then my old Pastor called and asked if I could get his church an organ. He was building a new building for his church and wanted to purchase a new organ for it. I asked him if we could purchase his old pews and bartered the pews for an organ. I Asked my boss to give me an organ at cost. I would forfeit my commission because our pews were a reproach.

We need to utilize our talents for God, in whatever capacity we have.

PEOPLE WHO ARE MECHANICS COULD CARE LESS ABOUT THE CHURCH VEHICLES.

PEOPLE WHO ARE PAINTERS COULD CARE LESS IF THE CHURCH NEEDS PAINTING.

PEOPLE WHO ARE IN THE BUSINESS OF CLEANING COULD CARE LESS IF THE CHURCH IS CLEAN.

INVEST YOUR TALENTS FOR THE LORD!!!

There is no such thing as sacred and secular. Everything is sacred if you are a Christian.

When I first came to this church the first thing I did was rip out the old PA and put a new one in.

SHAME ON YOU IF YOU HAVE THE RESOURCES TO HELP THE WORK OF GOD AND YOU DON'T.

THE KING GAVE NEHEMIAH HIS REQUEST!

Nehemiah was not a priest, he was not a Pastor, he was not a full time ministry worker, he was a cup bearer! So whatever you are if you are going to be a Nehemiah you need to have a burden for the things of God.

2. *THOSE THAT HAVE A HEART FOR THE WORK OF GOD WILL MAKE PERSONAL SACRIFICES BEYOND THE CALL OF DUTY.*

A. *Cost of money:*

Nehemiah 5:14 Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor.

Nehemiah 5:15 But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.

Nehemiah 5:16 Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work.

B. *Cost in the area of Hospitality:*

Nehemiah 5:17 Moreover there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us.

Nehemiah 5:18 Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.

Nehemiah 5:19 Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

III. *THERE NEEDS TO BE A GROUP OF PEOPLE COMMITTED TO THE TASK.*

Nehemiah 2:17 Then said I unto them, Ye see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lieth waste, and the gates thereof are burned with fire: come, and let us build up the wall of Jerusalem, that we be no more a reproach.

Nehemiah 2:18 Then I told them of the hand of my God which was good upon me; as also the king's words that he had spoken unto me. And they said, Let us rise up and build. So they strengthened their hands for this good work.

It is hard to work alone.

Everybody wants things to be their idea. If they can't be the boss they won't work.

I think of the fellow many years ago who quit in the middle of a job in church because he couldn't do it his way. Shame on you if you cannot bend to the leadership of others. We need to work together for the glory of God. We need to recognize the talents of others. We are co-laborers with God. All pride needs to go out the window. Let's put our necks to the task.

We need people that will get behind the man that God called to lead.

A team is much better than a solo.

Ecclesiastes 4:9 Two are better than one; because they have a good reward for their labour.

Ecclesiastes 4:10 For if they fall, the one will lift up his fellow: but woe to him that is alone when he falleth; for he hath not another to help him up.

Ecclesiastes 4:11 Again, if two lie together, then they have heat: but how can one be warm alone?

Ecclesiastes 4:12 And if one prevail against him, two shall withstand him; and a threefold cord is not quickly broken.

How sad it is that you can't get people to work together in God's work.

No team work. And so nothing gets done, or very little gets done.

People call me to move pianos because they can't call a couple of relatives to help them. Anyone can move a piano, but not everyone can get together a team to do it. Everyone is working alone today because people can't get along.

People in the church can't get along.

Families can't get along.

Communities can't work together.

Our country is divided.

Why? These divisions are the judgment of God on ungodliness and rebels.

OH THAT PEOPLE WOULD BE UNITED AROUND GOD ORDAINED LEADERSHIP!!!!

THERE IS A WHOLE PSALM KING DAVID WROTE ABOUT UNITY!

Psalms 133:1 {A Song of degrees of David.} Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!

Psalms 133:2 It is like the precious ointment upon the head, that ran down upon the beard, even Aaron's beard: that went down to the skirts of his garments;

Psalms 133:3 As the dew of Hermon, and as the dew that descended upon the mountains of Zion: for there the LORD commanded the blessing, even life for evermore.

Nehemiah 4:6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

When a group of people unite together for a good cause and God is in it nothing can stop them, except division. The devil learned well from the tower of Babel. He is now confounding the unity of God's people and through his divisive spirit he hinders their work.

IV. THERE NEEDS TO BE RESOLVE TO FACE ENEMIES AND OBSTACLES.

1. There will be enemies without:

Nehemiah 2:19 But when Sanballat the Horonite, and Tobiah the servant, the Ammonite, and Geshem the Arabian, heard it, they laughed us to scorn, and despised us, and said, What is this thing that ye do? will ye rebel against the king?

Nehemiah 2:20 Then answered I them, and said unto them, The God of heaven, he will prosper us; therefore we his servants will arise and build: but ye have no portion, nor right, nor memorial, in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 4:1 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat heard that we builded the wall, he was wroth, and took great indignation, and mocked the Jews.

Nehemiah 4:2 And he spake before his brethren and the army of Samaria, and said, What do these feeble Jews? will they fortify themselves? will they sacrifice? will they make an end in a day? will they revive the stones out of the heaps of the rubbish which are burned?

Nehemiah 4:3 Now Tobiah the Ammonite was by him, and he said, Even that which they build, if a fox go up, he shall even break down their stone wall.

Nehemiah 4:4 Hear, O our God; for we are despised: and turn their reproach upon their own head, and give them for a prey in the land of captivity:

Nehemiah 4:5 And cover not their iniquity, and let not their sin be blotted out from before thee: for they have provoked thee to anger before the builders.

Those who do not love the Lord will not love us and they are not for our success. They actually are waiting for us to fail.

Some of the crazy things people have said about our church. Why? They are the enemies of God.

When I was trying to subdivide property, the SEO said, you have enemies. I couldn't get anywhere, until I hired someone to do the paperwork for me.

2. *There will be enemies within.*

Nehemiah 3:5 And next unto them the Tekoites repaired; but their nobles put not their necks to the work of their Lord.

There are some that will refuse to work no matter what.

They are too good to get involved.

OTHERS BECAUSE THEY ARE NOT LEADING AND GETTING THE GLORY.
OR BECAUSE OF JEALOUSY. THY TOO WILL TRY TO HINDER THE WORK.

Nehemiah 6:10 Afterward I came unto the house of Shemaiah the son of Delaiah the son of Mehetabeel, who was shut up; and he said, Let us meet together in the house of God, within the temple, and let us shut the doors of the temple: for they will come to slay thee; yea, in the night will they come to slay thee.

Nehemiah 6:11 And I said, Should such a man as I flee? and who is there, that, being as I am, would go into the temple to save his life? I will not go in.

Nehemiah 6:12 And, lo, I perceived that God had not sent him; but that he pronounced this prophecy against me: for Tobiah and Sanballat had hired him.

Nehemiah 6:13 Therefore was he hired, that I should be afraid, and do so, and sin, and that they might have matter for an evil report, that they might reproach me.

Nehemiah 6:14 My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

Nehemiah 6:17 Moreover in those days the nobles of Judah sent many letters unto Tobiah, and the letters of Tobiah came unto them.

Nehemiah 6:18 For there were many in Judah sworn unto him, because he was the son in law of Shechaniah the son of Arah; and his son Johanan had taken the daughter of Meshullam the son of Berechiah.

Nehemiah 6:19 Also they reported his good deeds before me, and uttered my words to him. And Tobiah sent letters to put me in fear.

Sometimes the greatest enemies of the work are the so called leaders who want to disrupt through their political talk.

Some are good at talking but not working. Some are good at giving all the reasons why it can't work.

These are the enemies within! People opposed the first building project we set out to do. Reason why is because they didn't want to get involved and be part of it. Or because it wasn't their idea.

Some will gripe and complain. Israel always had people who were implants of Satan himself. This was especially evident in the time of Christ. Jesus rebuked the Pharisees and Sadducees and called them whited sepulchers, children of their father the devil.

But when we are the servants of the living God. We have the power of God on our side. We can pray. We have the promise that God will hear and answer our prayer.

John 14:13 And whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that will I do, that the Father may be glorified in the Son.

John 14:14 If ye shall ask any thing in my name, I will do it.

Nehemiah 6:14 My God, think thou upon Tobiah and Sanballat according to these their works, and on the prophetess Noadiah, and the rest of the prophets, that would have put me in fear.

Here we have so-called prophets opposing the work of God. There have been and always will be false prophets.

3. *THERE WILL EVEN BE SOME WHO WILL CONSPIRE TO HURT THE WORK OF GOD.*

A. *SOME WILL PLOT TO FIGHT AGAINST US:*

Nehemiah 4:7 But it came to pass, that when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and the Arabians, and the Ammonites, and the Ashdodites, heard that the walls of Jerusalem were made up, and that the breaches began to be stopped, then they were very wroth,

Nehemiah 4:8 And conspired all of them together to come and to fight against Jerusalem, and to hinder it.

Nehemiah 4:9 Nevertheless we made our prayer unto our God, and set a watch against them day and night, because of them.

B. *SOME WILL PLOT TO TRY TO SLOW US DOWN WITH FOOLISHNESS.*

Nehemiah 6:1 Now it came to pass, when Sanballat, and Tobiah, and Geshem the Arabian, and the rest of our enemies, heard that I had builded the wall, and that there was no breach left therein; (though at that time I had not set up the doors upon the gates;)

Nehemiah 6:2 That Sanballat and Geshem sent unto me, saying, Come, let us meet together in some one of the villages in the plain of Ono. But they thought to do me mischief.

Nehemiah 6:3 And I sent messengers unto them, saying, I am doing a great work, so that I cannot come down: why should the work cease, whilst I leave it, and come down to you?

Nehemiah 6:4 Yet they sent unto me four times after this sort; and I answered them after the same manner.

Nehemiah 6:5 Then sent Sanballat his servant unto me in like manner the fifth time with an open letter in his hand;

Nehemiah 6:6 Wherein was written, It is reported among the heathen, and Gashmu saith it, that thou and the Jews think to rebel: for which cause thou buildest the wall, that thou mayest be their king, according to these words.

Nehemiah 6:7 And thou hast also appointed prophets to preach of thee at Jerusalem, saying, There is a king in Judah: and now shall it be reported to the king according to these words. Come now therefore, and let us take counsel together.

Nehemiah 6:8 Then I sent unto him, saying, There are no such things done as thou sayest, but thou feignest them out of thine own heart.

Nehemiah 6:9 For they all made us afraid, saying, Their hands shall be weakened from the work, that it be not done. Now therefore, O God, strengthen my hands.

There always seems to be something out there to try to sway us to get us off track for God.. The best thing we can do is mind our own business and stay focus on the work God has called us to do.

We need not run around trying to put out the little brush fires that will burn them selves out in die time.

Started a brush fire that scared me half to death. When the firemen came I couldn't understand why they weren't as much in a hurry to put out the fire as I was. The reason they weren't was because they knew that it would burn itself out anyway and all they needed to do was cut it off.

Sometimes people will get you chasing brush fires. That will wear you out. Experience would tell you that these fires will burn themselves out as long as you don't feed them. Cut them off and don't give them any fuel and they will burn themselves out in good time.

People who gossip about everything and get all upset may succeed in getting a few other people who have some gripes but if you don't give them more attention than they deserve they will burn themselves out in due time.

4. THERE WILL BE THE OBSTACLE AND DOUBLE BURDEN OF FIGHTING AND BUILDING.

Nehemiah 4:10 And Judah said, The strength of the bearers of burdens is decayed, and there is much rubbish; so that we are not able to build the wall.

Nehemiah 4:11 And our adversaries said, They shall not know, neither see, till we come in the midst among them, and slay them, and cause the work to cease.

Nehemiah 4:12 And it came to pass, that when the Jews which dwelt by them came, they said unto us ten times, From all places whence ye shall return unto us they will be upon you.

Nehemiah 4:13 Therefore set I in the lower places behind the wall, and on the higher places, I even set the people after their families with their swords, their spears, and their bows.

Nehemiah 4:16 And it came to pass from that time forth, that the half of my servants wrought in the work, and the other half of them held both the spears, the shields, and the bows, and the habergeons; and the rulers were behind all the house of Judah.

Nehemiah 4:17 They which builded on the wall, and they that bare burdens, with those that laded, every one with one of his hands wrought in the work, and with the other hand held a weapon.

Nehemiah 4:18 For the builders, every one had his sword girded by his side, and so builded. And he that sounded the trumpet was by me.

Nehemiah 4:19 And I said unto the nobles, and to the rulers, and to the rest of the people, The work is great and large, and we are separated upon the wall, one far from another.

Nehemiah 4:21 So we laboured in the work: and half of them held the spears from the rising of the morning till the stars appeared.

Nehemiah 4:22 Likewise at the same time said I unto the people, Let every one with his servant lodge within Jerusalem, that in the night they may be a guard to us, and labour on the day.

Nehemiah 4:23 So neither I, nor my brethren, nor my servants, nor the men of the guard which followed me, none of us put off our clothes, saving that every one put them off for washing.

One of the hardest things about the work of the Lord is that while you build the enemy is trying to tear down. So we need to bear the sword and the trowel. Let us build but let us fight also.

Notice how some held swords and spears while others worked and built. So we have the expression, the "Sword and the Trowel." The work of God requires both the sword and the trowel. We all need to be working and building while at the same time we need to be fighting and defending.

It is much easier to do business than ministry. In the ministry you need to build like a business but fight like a soldier. While you are building others who are working with the devil are tearing down.

5. THERE WILL BE THE ADDED OBSTACLE AND DISCOURAGEMENT AND BURDEN OF THERE BEING FEW WORKERS.

Nehemiah 7:4 Now the city was large and great: but the people were few therein, and the houses were not builded.

The work of God has always been carried on by a righteous remnant and minority. Never forget this.

The laborers have always been few. Nothing has changed.

Matthew 9:37 Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few;

Matthew 9:38 Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.

V. THERE NEEDS TO BE PATIENCE TO DEAL WITH PEOPLE CONFLICTS.

Wherever you have a group of people working together you will have conflicts and even injustices.

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

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.

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.

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

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.

Nehemiah 5:6 And I was very angry when I heard their cry and these words.

Nehemiah 5:7 Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. And I set a great assembly against them.

Nehemiah 5:8 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.

Nehemiah 5:9 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?

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.

People will be people, one thing is for sure, sinful people will do sinful deeds. Nothing has changed till this day. Nehemiah had to work through these conflicts. If we are not willing to work through these conflicts we will not do a work at all.

HEB 12:3 For consider him that endured such contradiction of sinners against Himself, lest ye be wearied and faint in your minds.

HEB 12:4 Ye have not yet resisted unto blood, striving against sin.

VI. THERE NEEDS TO BE PERSONAL SACRIFICES MADE.

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.

Nehemiah 5:12 Then said they, We will restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest. Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise.

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

Nehemiah 5:14 Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year even unto the two and thirtieth year of Artaxerxes the king, that is, twelve years, I and my brethren have not eaten the bread of the governor.

Nehemiah 5:15 But the former governors that had been before me were chargeable unto the people, and had taken of them bread and wine, beside forty shekels of silver; yea, even their servants bare rule over the people: but so did not I, because of the fear of God.

Nehemiah 5:16 Yea, also I continued in the work of this wall, neither bought we any land: and all my servants were gathered thither unto the work.

Nehemiah 5:17 Moreover there were at my table an hundred and fifty of the Jews and rulers, beside those that came unto us from among the heathen that are about us.

Nehemiah 5:18 Now that which was prepared for me daily was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and once in ten days store of all sorts of wine: yet for all this required not I the bread of the governor, because the bondage was heavy upon this people.

Nehemiah 5:19 Think upon me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

Here we have Nehemiah making tremendous financial sacrifices to serve the Lord and His people.

He was feeding 150 plus people daily. Could you imagine the financial burden this was? All from a cupbearer, a slave of the King! A cupbearer was nothing more than an important servant or slave of the King!

Truth be told, that we are all servants in one way or another.

Matthew 20:25 But Jesus called them unto him, and said, Ye know that the princes of the Gentiles exercise dominion over them, and they that are great exercise authority upon them.

Matthew 20:26 But it shall not be so among you: but whosoever will be great among you, let him be your minister;

Matthew 20:27 And whosoever will be chief among you, let him be your servant:

Matthew 20:28 Even as the Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister, and to give his life a ransom for many.

Everyone is seeking to be someone important. The most important person in the Kingdom of God is the person who is willing to be a servant. He that is least will be great.

VI. ULTIMATELY WE WILL SUCCEED IF WE CONTINUE STEADFASTLY IN THE WORK GOD HAS CALLED US TO.

Nehemiah 4:6 So built we the wall; and all the wall was joined together unto the half thereof: for the people had a mind to work.

Nehemiah 6:15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days.

Nehemiah 6:16 And it came to pass, that when all our enemies heard thereof, and all the heathen that were about us saw these things, they were much cast down in their own eyes: for they perceived that this work was wrought of our God.

Perseverance in the work is the primary thing. We need to not quit. Let us work and persevere.

Let us remember one thing, if you have a heart for God's business, He will take care of your business.

Seek ye first the Kingdom of God and all these things will be added to you. Recently Brother Ray was sharing how he had the state give him about 100 tons of millings recycled black top material for his driveway. I believe God blessed him because of his labor for the Lord on our pavilion. I was reading that if you bought this material it could be anywhere from \$10.00 – \$60.00 a ton plus trucking. We didn't pay Ray for his work but God did and will. God will be a debtor to no man. You cannot out give God.

PART IV.

VII. THE ULTIMATE GOAL OF THE WORK OF GOD IS TO SEE GOD'S PEOPLE TAUGHT THE WORD OF GOD.

1. First the Bible needs to be preached (People need to hear the word).

Nehemiah 8:2 And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

Nehemiah 8:3 And he read therein before the street that was before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

Nehemiah 8:4 And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose; and beside him stood Mattithiah, and Shema, and Anaiah, and Urijah, and Hilkihah, and Maaseiah, on his right hand; and on his left hand, Pedaiah, and Mishael, and Malchiah, and Hashum, and Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam.

Nehemiah 8:5 And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

Nehemiah 8:8 So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused them to understand the reading.

The Lord allowed us to build a beautiful pavilion, for what? So we could teach the word of God, and assemble ourselves together for our yearly outside revival meetings and other special meetings. This is God's desire for the church that we teach men all things that He commanded us. So this is what Nehemiah did.

So after they built the walls, they met and had meetings, and taught the world of God. So this is what we need to do! Use whatever God gives us to teach men the Word of God.

2. NEXT THE BIBLE NEEDS TO BE OBEYED:

A. They kept the holy assemblies:

Nehemiah 8:13 And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law.

Nehemiah 8:14 And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month:

Nehemiah 8:15 And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written.

Nehemiah 8:16 So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate, and in the street of the gate of Ephraim.

Nehemiah 8:17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness.

Nehemiah 8:18 Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner.

They read that in the 7th month on the 15th day, they were to dwell in booths. This was the feast of tabernacles. They probably read:

Leviticus 23:34 Speak unto the children of Israel, saying, The fifteenth day of this seventh month shall be the feast of tabernacles for seven days unto the LORD.

Leviticus 23:39 Also in the fifteenth day of the seventh month, when ye have gathered in the fruit of the land, ye shall keep a feast unto the LORD seven days: on the first day shall be a sabbath, and on the eighth day shall be a sabbath.

Leviticus 23:40 And ye shall take you on the first day the boughs of goodly trees, branches of palm trees, and the boughs of thick trees, and willows of the brook; and ye shall rejoice before the LORD your God seven days.

Leviticus 23:41 And ye shall keep it a feast unto the LORD seven days in the year. It shall be a statute for ever in your generations: ye shall celebrate it in the seventh month.

Leviticus 23:42 Ye shall dwell in booths seven days; all that are Israelites born shall dwell in booths:

Leviticus 23:43 That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God.

So they read and they obeyed, and notice this sad statement.

Nehemiah 8:17 And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: ***for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so.*** And there was very great gladness.

SINCE THE DAYS OF JOSHUA THE CHILDREN OF ISRAEL HAD NOT DONE IT.

Could you imagine, for over 500 years they neglected to obey God and keep this important feast! I think God is longsuffering towards His people. I wonder how many

things we are neglecting in our day! Things that we do not think are important. Things that we neglect. Instead of obeying the Bible we make excuses why we cannot do these things in the day that we live.

B. They separated themselves from the world.

Nehemiah 10:29 They clave to their brethren, their nobles, and entered into a curse, and into an oath, to walk in God's law, which was given by Moses the servant of God, and to observe and do all the commandments of the LORD our Lord, and his judgments and his statutes;

Nehemiah 10:30 And that we would not give our daughters unto the people of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons:

Nehemiah 10:31 And if the people of the land bring ware or any victuals on the sabbath day to sell, that we would not buy it of them on the sabbath, or on the holy day: and that we would leave the seventh year, and the exaction of every debt.

C. They gave their offering.

Nehemiah 10:32 Also we made ordinances for us, to charge ourselves yearly with the third part of a shekel for the service of the house of our God;

Nehemiah 10:33 For the shewbread, and for the continual meat offering, and for the continual burnt offering, of the sabbaths, of the new moons, for the set feasts, and for the holy things, and for the sin offerings to make an atonement for Israel, and for all the work of the house of our God.

Nehemiah 10:34 And we cast the lots among the priests, the Levites, and the people, for the wood offering, to bring it into the house of our God, after the houses of our fathers, at times appointed year by year, to burn upon the altar of the LORD our God, as it is written in the law:

Nehemiah 10:35 And to bring the firstfruits of our ground, and the firstfruits of all fruit of all trees, year by year, unto the house of the LORD:

Nehemiah 10:36 Also the firstborn of our sons, and of our cattle, as it is written in the law, and the firstlings of our herds and of our flocks, to bring to the house of our God, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God:

Nehemiah 10:37 And that we should bring the firstfruits of our dough, and our offerings, and the fruit of all manner of trees, of wine and of oil, unto the priests, to the chambers of the house of our God; and the tithes of our ground unto the Levites, that the same Levites might have the tithes in all the cities of our tillage.

Nehemiah 10:38 And the priest the son of Aaron shall be with the Levites, when the Levites take tithes: and the Levites shall bring up the tithe of the tithes unto the house of our God, to the chambers, into the treasure house.

D. They sought for ordinances to obey.

Nehemiah 13:1 On that day they read in the book of Moses in the audience of the people; and therein was found written, that the Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever;

Nehemiah 13:2 Because they met not the children of Israel with bread and with water, but hired Balaam against them, that he should curse them: howbeit our God turned the curse into a blessing.

Nehemiah 13:3 Now it came to pass, when they had heard the law, that they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude.

They read and they obeyed. This is what it takes to have revival. We need to not only be hearers of the law but doers.

E. It is a constant Battle to maintain the work of the Lord:

Nehemiah 13:15 In those days saw I in Judah some treading wine presses on the sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and lading asses; as also wine, grapes, and figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the sabbath day: and I testified against them in the day wherein they sold victuals.

Nehemiah 13:16 There dwelt men of Tyre also therein, which brought fish, and all manner of ware, and sold on the sabbath unto the children of Judah, and in Jerusalem.

Nehemiah 13:17 Then I contended with the nobles of Judah, and said unto them, What evil thing is this that ye do, and profane the sabbath day?

Nehemiah 13:18 Did not your fathers thus, and did not our God bring all this evil upon us, and upon this city? yet ye bring more wrath upon Israel by profaning the sabbath.

Nehemiah 13:19 And it came to pass, that when the gates of Jerusalem began to be dark before the sabbath, I commanded that the gates should be shut, and charged that they should not be opened till after the sabbath: and some of my servants set I at the gates, that there should no burden be brought in on the sabbath day.

Nehemiah 13:21 Then I testified against them, and said unto them, Why lodge ye about the wall? if ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the sabbath.

Nehemiah 13:23 In those days also saw I Jews that had married wives of Ashdod, of Ammon, and of Moab:

Nehemiah 13:24 And their children spake half in the speech of Ashdod, and could not speak in the Jews' language, but according to the language of each people.

Nehemiah 13:25 And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and **plucked off their hair**, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

Nehemiah 13:26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

Nehemiah 13:29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

Nehemiah 13:30 Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

What a constant battle it was to keep God's people in line.

Nehemiah did not give up. He could have gotten discouraged, but he strengthened himself in the Lord notice what he prayed and said,

Nehemiah 13:25 And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

Nehemiah 13:29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

Nehemiah 13:30 Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

Galatians 6:9 And let us not be weary in well doing: for in due season we shall reap, if we faint not.

This life is a constant struggle to serve God and do right. A constant battle to get God's people to do right. A constant struggle.

Because of evil, there will be a constant struggle. We are in a battle, and that battle will not stop until the Lord comes back in His kingdom. Just like there is constant maintenance involved in taking care of everything in this life. If you just let it all go, it will fall apart. What we are doing in our country is stepping back morally and letting the immoral crowd run rampant. The concept is that the loudest voices are being catered to. Now our governor is attacking a fire company who had a man dress up like Marilyn Monroe and were paying to dunk him.. The people called the man Rachel Levine, and the fire company joked about it on facebook and now everyone has to apologize.

Ever since our nation has been manipulated into giving the LGBT people preferential treatment our moral compass has gone into metastasis stages. When people are wrong and evil, and you try to appease them, they will never be appeased. It is like feeding cancer in your body, it will just take over until it kills the whole body. That's exactly what this liberal crowd is doing in every area of our nation morally.

This is what is happening in our country. It is a constant struggle to restrain evil and when we do not fight it, before you know it, we have a mess on our hands.

It is a constant battle, and I am afraid that many people do not want to fight that battle. That battle will not stop until the Lord himself returns, and even after He returns He will have to rile the nations with a rod of iron. Why the rod of iron? The reason is that the carnal nature of man must be restrained even when Satan himself is locked up.

Let us read how the book of Nehemiah closes.

NEH 13:25 And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves.

NEH 13:26 Did not Solomon king of Israel sin by these things? yet among many nations was there no king like him, who was beloved of his God, and God made him king over all Israel: nevertheless even him did outlandish women cause to sin.

NEH 13:27 Shall we then hearken unto you to do all this great evil, to transgress against our God in marrying strange wives?

NEH 13:28 And one of the sons of Joiada, the son of Eliashib the high priest, was son in law to Sanballat the Horonite: therefore I chased him from me.

NEH 13:29 Remember them, O my God, because they have defiled the priesthood, and the covenant of the priesthood, and of the Levites.

NEH 13:30 Thus cleansed I them from all strangers, and appointed the wards of the priests and the Levites, every one in his business;

Notice the fight, the battle, the constant struggle that Nehemiah had to restrain men from doing what they wanted to do. Nothing has changed. Don't think for a minute that we too will not have to fight and struggle in this endeavor. Let us keep the faith, fight the fight, and not get weary in well doing. This is the lesson we learn from the example of Nehemiah in this book. Nothing has changed in this regard. Let us learn from his example.