

“Restoration In Our Day”

Nehemiah 1:1-11

SOME THEMES OF NEHEMIAH...

- Rebuilding the wall. Yes!—but so much more. (The wall was finished at the end of chapter 6.)
- Nehemiah is about God’s on-going work of restoration in the lives of His people.
- Nehemiah is about God stirring the hearts of individuals to take part in restoring God’s fallen world.
- Nehemiah is about how God “turns things around” for His people.
-13:2: *...yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.*

NEHEMIAH’S BROTHER BRINGS A REPORT. v.1-3

1. Nehemiah lived in Susa, the capital city of Persia. v.1

- 1500 miles from Jerusalem, the capital city of Israel
- 445 BC. “the twentieth year” of Artaxerxes I, king of Persia

2. Hanani came to Susa from Jerusalem. v.2

- Hanani (Nehemiah’s brother) brought a report.

3. The report is about God’s people: they are in great trouble and shame. v.3a

- Shame = reproach. Ref. Ezek 5:13-15

4. The report is about God’s city, Jerusalem: the wall is broken down and its gates are destroyed. v.3b

- Jerusalem = the place of worship; where God’s people met with the LORD

NEHEMIAH’S RESPONSE. v.4-10

1. Nehemiah’s lament. v.4

- He heard the report and grieved over the brokenness of God’s people.
- He sat down and wept for days; he fasted and prayed continually.
→ A holy discontent. What grieves you? Unemployment? Education? Broken families? Orphaned children?
Widows? Dying work ethic?

2. Nehemiah’s prayer. v.5

- He prayed to the covenant keeping God of Israel. Ref. Deut 7:6-11
- His heart orientation was vertical (aligned with God and God’s promises).

3. Nehemiah’s confession. v.6-7

- He confessed the sins of Israel.
-the problem is “us” – not Babylon, not Persia, but us... and the problem is “me”
→ Nehemiah was confessing the sins of previous generations—as *his own!*
→ “Listen, Lament, and Repent”

4. Nehemiah’s appeal. v.8-9

- He appealed to God’s own Word—the covenant God made with His people.
- “Remember the word you commanded your servant Moses...
v.8: “...if you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples...”
v.9: “...but if you return to me... I will gather”

→ Sin scatters (v.8)... God gathers (v.9)!

5. Nehemiah’s plea. v.10-11

- He asked for God to work in his day and in his workplace. v.11
“...give success to your servant today... in the sight of this man” (He was cupbearer to the king.)
- His heart orientation was for the people. v.10
- This is “covenantal language” referencing the Exodus—recalling the work of God on behalf of His people.
- There were others praying as well. v.11a

Contextual Applications... us, our fallen world, the church, our city

→ **ASK HIM**

“I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go. My own wisdom and that of those about me seemed insufficient for the day.”

-Abraham Lincoln, 16th President of the USA

“If you cannot preach, or give largely, or become a church-officer, you can, at least, pray without ceasing.”

-C.H. Spurgeon

“The whole development of modern society has tended mightily toward the limitation of the realm of freedom for the individual man. The tendency is most clearly seen in socialism; a socialistic state would mean the reduction to a minimum of the sphere of individual choice. Labor and recreation, under a socialistic government, would both be prescribed, and individual liberty would be gone.”

-J. Gresham Machen, *Christianity and Liberalism*

“Freedom is never more than one generation away from extinction. We didn't pass it to our children in the bloodstream. It must be fought for, protected, and handed on for them to do the same, or one day we will spend our sunset years telling our children and our children's children what it was once like in the United States when men were free.”

-Ronald W. Reagan, 40th President of the USA

“While democratic capitalism is certainly not without shortcomings, communism and Marxism were generally seen to have been flawed experiments: inefficient economically, fraught with corruption, harmful environmentally, stifling of human creativity, abusive of individual human rights, and void of spiritual guidance and moral authority.”

-David Miller, *God at Work*

2 Chronicles 7:14: if my people who are called by my name humble themselves, and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land.