

“Send Me!”
Nehemiah 2:1-10

NEHEMIAH’S POSITION: CUPBEARER TO THE KING. 1.11

1. The cupbearer held a position as a trusted confidant of the king.
2. The cupbearer held a position of great honor and lived among wealth and comfort.
3. The cupbearer looked forward to a great future in the king’s court.

“There had to be an implicit trust between the two, for the cupbearer could be bribed to slip poison into the king’s goblet or do him other harm. Yet, in spite of his intense loyalty to his king, Nehemiah had a higher loyalty—that to his God. Though he had never been to Jerusalem, his heart was there...”
Eugene H. Merrill, *Kingdom of Priests*

NEHEMIAH’S GRIEF. v.1-3

1. Nehemiah grieved over the people and the place. 1:4-11

2. Nehemiah’s grief prompted him to pray.

- With perseverance. 2:1: ‘month Nisan’ (March-April); 1:1: ‘month Chislew’ (Nov.-Dec.)
- Wholeheartedly. 2:2: It showed on his face; it affected his whole demeanor.

3. Nehemiah’s grief prompted him to action.

- Note: Nehemiah’s *position* was cupbearer to the king; but his *posture* was one of humility & prayer.

NEHEMIAH’S REQUEST. v.4-6

1. His request was (again) precipitated by prayer. v.4

- His request could have been seen as foolish, or interpreted as disloyalty, or perhaps even a threat.

2. His request was to be sent away on a mission. v.5

- Away from his ‘home’ and away from his position of honor, comfort, wealth, his great retirement.
- He had a mission: to rebuild “the city of my father’s graves.” → “Send me to Judah!”

→ Application: How can I be part of the solution?

3. His request was for enough time to finish the job. v.6 (It ended up being 12 years. 5:14; 13:6)

NEHEMIAH’S PLAN. v.7-10

1. He planned for letters of permission to pass through foreign lands. v.7

2. He planned for a letter to the keeper of the king’s forest to get timber for the project. v.8

- Timber for the fortress of the temple, the walls of the city, and a house for himself.
- The king granted his requests...because the “good hand of my God was upon me.”

3. The king even gave him officers of the army and horsemen! v.9 Ref. Ephesians 3:20

- Now to him who is able to do far more abundantly than all that we ask or think, according to the power at work within us, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus throughout all generations, forever and ever. Amen.

4. Nehemiah’s plan stirred opposition... v.10

-foreshadowing... more to come

TAKE-AWAYS

→ **Where is the Gospel (good news) in this text?**

- God is working His story of redemption for His people in these difficult circumstances.
- God has provided the Savior Jesus Christ and asked us to follow His way of life. Philippians 2:3-11

→ **God used Nehemiah’s grief to prompt him to prayer and action.**

→ **God used pagan king Artaxerxes for his purposes.**

- Proverbs 21:1: The king’s heart is a stream of water in the hand of the LORD; he turns it wherever he will.
- Note the ‘bookends’ of the text. v.1: Neh gave wine to the king & v.8: the king gave everything to Neh

Thoughts from Fellow Pilgrims...

I simply argue that the cross be raised again at the center of the marketplace as well as on the steeple of the church. I am recovering the claim that Jesus was not crucified in a cathedral between two candles, but on a cross between two thieves; on the town garbage heap; at a crossroads so cosmopolitan that they had to write his title in Hebrew and in Latin and in Greek...at the kind of place where cynics talk smut, and thieves curse, and soldiers gamble. Because that is where he died. And that is what he died about. And that is where churchmen ought to be, and what churchmen should be about.

-George MacLeod

Sadly, while postmodernists imagine they are freely constructing their own identities, in reality their lives (and everyone else's) are increasingly dominated by the power of big business and big government. The more we refuse the disciplines (and freedoms) of the moral law, the more we will find ourselves vulnerable to the manipulation of commercial interests and political power.

-Paul S. Williams, *Exiles on Mission*

If meat goes bad and become inedible, there is no sense in blaming the meat; that is what happens when bacteria are left alone to breed. The question to ask is 'Where is the salt?' Just so, if society deteriorates and its standards decline, till it becomes like a dark night or stinking fish, there is no sense in blaming society; that is what happens when fallen man and women are left to themselves, and human selfishness is unchecked. The question to ask is 'Where is the church? Why are the salt and light of Jesus Christ not permeating and changing our society?' It is sheer hypocrisy on our part to raise our eyebrows, shrug our shoulders or wring our hands. The Lord Jesus told us to be the world's salt and light.

-John Stott, *New Issues Facing Christians Today*

By the blessing of the upright a city is exalted, but by the mouth of the wicked it is overthrown. Proverbs 11:11

Whoever belittles his neighbor lacks sense, but a man of understanding remains silent. Proverbs 11:12

When the righteous increase, the people rejoice, but when the wicked rule, the people groan. Proverbs 29:2

Every way of a man is right in his own eyes, but the LORD weighs the heart. Proverbs 21:2