Sermon Notes – Nehemiah 5 **"An Evil Enemy"**

Why Are We Afraid to Face the Reality of Evil?

Have you noticed…

What do all of these famous stories have in common?

The Lion King
Sleeping Beauty
101 Dalmatians
Infinity War

Having a biblical view of people

People are inherently sinful and rebellious by nature, and can be redeemed through Christ alone.

Versus

People are good by nature, and are made evil by circumstances outside their control.

Why we need these stories

"Since it is so likely that they will meet cruel enemies, let them at least have heard of brave knights and heroic courage. Otherwise, you are making their destiny not brighter, but darker." – C.S. Lewis

BIG IDEA: *Evil is evil because it is opposite God's character. When we are in the presence of evil, we are also in the absence of God's character.*

Good and Evil

God is a giver of joy, while evil is a stealer of joy

The wall's completion, which should be a moment of celebration, is turned into a season of lies.

Galatians 4:15 (NIV, 1984): What has happened to all your joy?
Jack Miller's paraphrase reads, "Who stole your joy?"

God is a life giver, while evil is a life taker

"But they intended to do me harm." – Nehemiah 6:2
How did Nehemiah know their intention?

John 10:10 "The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life and have it abundantly."

God is true, while evil is a liar

Nehemiah's enemies invent a false story to attack and entrap him.

Numbers 23:19 "God is not a man, that he should lie, nor a son of man, that he should change his mind. Does he speak and then not act? Does he promise and not fulfill?"

God is faithful, while evil is a tempter

Nehemiah's enemies try to make Nehemiah break God's commandments, either discrediting his integrity or enticing God to strike him down for entering the holy place.

James 1:13-14 "When tempted, no one should say, "God is tempting me." For God cannot be tempted by evil, nor does he tempt anyone; but each one is tempted when, by his own evil desire, he is dragged away and enticed."

A Look at Ourselves, A Look at The World

There is evil in all of us

Sometimes, we are selfish. Sometimes we lash out and do harm. Sometimes we lie. Sometimes we give in to temptation.

There is evil in the world

Sometimes there are true villains, not just broken people with an understandable backstory. We cannot let a postmodern, relativistic worldview replace the clarity of righteousness.

Here's what the Bible asks us in the face of good and evil

Will we admit our own evil deeds, or will we deny and justify them? Will we turn to Christ for forgiveness? Will we courageously stand against evil when given the opportunity?

Questions for Further Study and Application

1. Why do you think our culture enjoys the rewriting of famous villains' backstories to make them understandable?
2. Which of God's good characteristics do you need to focus on this week? Why?
3. Are you willing to admit to the evil inside of you, confess it, and ask for God's forgiveness?
4. Why does our world need courage for moral clarity today? How can you be courageous like Nehemiah?