



## Pastor Kelli Wommack “Nehemiah: Celebrate! How To Live As A Nominal and Casual Christian God's Faithfulness Does Not Depend On Our Faithfulness” 2/6/2022

### Key Verses:

- Nehemiah 12-13

### Key Thoughts:

- In Chapter 12, there's a huge celebration on the wall because of its completion and it seems like everything is good with the people and God. However, Chapter 13 shows us that everything isn't good at all. But there's a richness for us in this terrible ending.

### How To Live As A Nominal And Casual Christian:

#### 1. **ALLOW THE ENEMY TO WELL IN YOUR HOUSE**

- Nehemiah 13:1-3 reminds us that the people had agreed to the law that people of foreign descent would not be allowed in the house of God. But in verses 4-5, we find Eliashib the priest in charge of the storeroom and we find that he's closely associated with Tobiah. Not only was he close to him, but he'd also allowed him to move into a room in the temple that was meant to store the things needed for worship. Tobiah was one of the outspoken opposers to the building of the wall. Eliashib had allowed the enemy to move in.
  - The enemy moves in subtly; it happens one small decision at a time. This is what happens to our hearts. If we're not careful, little by little, he makes a home.
  - John 15:5 – Jesus tells us to make our home in him and for us to allow him to make his home in us.

#### 2. **DON'T TITHE OR GIVE TO THE CHURCH**

- Nehemiah 13:6 tells us that Nehemiah was not in Jerusalem while all of this was going on. Remember, Nehemiah was a cupbearer when the story begins, so after he finishes the wall, he goes back to his service to the king. It's believed that Nehemiah was gone between 7 and 12 years. In verse 10, he learns that the money had not been given to the Levites to work in the temple. So, the Levites had left their jobs in the temple to work in the fields again. Although they'd cried out that they'd never neglect the house of God (Nehemiah 10:39). Nehemiah says, “Why is the house of God neglected?” (Nehemiah 13:11).
  - If there's no one working in the temple, the enemy can move in. The only way for us to have a church that can give to our community is generosity from the people in the church.

#### 3. **DON'T HONOR THE SABBATH OR FOLLOW GOD'S BEST**

- Nehemiah 13:15 tells us that the people are treading winepresses and trying to sell and trade goods on the Sabbath. However, they say in Nehemiah 10:33 that they will keep the sabbath holy.



- The Sabbath is to remind us who God is and who we are not. When we say we are going to rest in God, we're saying that we trust God that if we don't work today, God will provide with us.

#### **4. PUT ANYONE OR ANYTHING ABOVE GOD**

- Nehemiah 13:23 tells us that the men have begun to marry women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. Women were primarily the ones raising children and if the women aren't Israelites, the children will not be raised to learn Hebrew, they would not be raised to observe the Sabbath, they would be raised to worship idols, they'd grow up not knowing the ways of being set apart and called as God's people.
  - In the hearts of these Israelites, God was not number 1. So, it was easy to follow their desires to marry women they were told not to.
  - A life devoted to Christ requires holiness, sacrifice, obedience, putting God first.
- Three times in this chapter, Nehemiah says to God: "Remember me." He's crying out in pain because of his love of God.
- **What was said in Chapter 10** – No Gentiles in congregation, no neglect of temple and Levites (10:35-39), no Sabbath-breaking (10:33), no intermarriage with Gentiles (10:30)
- **What was done in Chapter 13** – Gentile in the temple (13:4-5), neglect of temple and Levites (13:6), Sabbath-breaking (13:15), intermarriage with Gentiles (13:23)
- What this story tells us is how much a messiah was needed. They longed and longed and longed for him. And he eventually came. What the people needed was not a new temple or new wall, what they needed was a new heart. They tried, but they could not change the human heart (Romans 8:3). Only God can do that.

#### **Discussion Questions:**

- What can Nehemiah 12 and 13 teach us about the faithfulness of God?
- What can you learn from the ways that the people promised to do certain things in Nehemiah 10 but failed to do in Nehemiah 13?
- Which of these ways of living as a nominal Christian is most true of you in this season? What can you begin to do to change this?
- Nehemiah 12 ends with a dedication and celebration of the wall. In Chapter 13, we realize that the celebratory moment did not end in heart change. What can we learn from the mistakes of these people?