

Nehemiah 5

Swim upstream

I. Brotherly Love: Especially the Household of Faith

1 And there was a **great outcry** of the people and their wives against their **Jewish brethren.**

- Wall is in progress...

Great Outcry of the people against their Jewish Brethren

- **Context:** Believer dealing with believers

Galatians 6:9 ...let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, **especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

2 For there were those who said, "We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live." 3 There were also some who said, "We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine." 4 There were also those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our lands and vineyards. 5 Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards."

- **3 Accusations:**

1. We are hungry and don't have food
2. We don't have food because we have no money to buy food
3. We have no money to buy food because we sold our homes and rented our children to fellow Jewish believers and they are gouging us for interest

We have lost our homes and our children and have no means of getting them back

What most people need to learn in life is how to love people and use things instead of using people and loving things. [Zelda Fitzgerald; F. Scott Fitzgerald's wife...kind of]

- **We are all such a mess...**

After arriving in Paris Zelda Fitzgerald and husband F. Scott Fitzgerald] relocated to the French Riviera. While Scott was absorbed writing The Great Gatsby, Zelda became infatuated with a dashing young French pilot...She spent afternoons swimming at the beach and evenings dancing at the casinos with [him] and After six weeks, Zelda asked for a divorce. [Really?]

Great Outcry of the people against their Jewish Brethren

- **It WAS NOT LAWFUL** ...to charge interest to fellow believers:

- **Serious offence against God...**

Exodus 22:25 "If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; **you shall not charge him interest.** 26 If you ever take your neighbor's garment as a pledge, you shall return it to him before the sun goes down. 27 For that is his only covering, it is his garment for his skin. What will he sleep in? And it will be that when he cries to Me, I will hear, for I am gracious.

- **Rational?** God was good to us...be good to one another...

Leviticus 25:36 Take no usury or interest from him; **but fear your God**, that your brother may live with you. 37 You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit. 38 I am the Lord your God, who **brought you out of the land of Egypt**, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

- **IT WAS LAWFUL** ...to charge interest to foreigners

Deuteronomy 23:19 "You shall not charge interest to your brother—interest on money or food or anything that is lent out at interest. 20 To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you shall not charge interest, that the Lord your God may bless you in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess.

- **Different standard for treating the household of faith**

Galatians 6:9 And let us not grow weary while doing good, for in due season we shall reap if we do not lose heart. 10 Therefore, as we have opportunity, let us do good to all, **especially to those who are of the household of faith.**

Do good "especially" to those in the Household of Faith

- Don't grow weary of doing good to all
- Do good at any/every opportunity to fellow believers

Biblical Concept of "Brotherly Kindness" and "Brotherly Love"

2 Peter 1:5 [Read][Be diligent to...] add to your faith virtue, to virtue knowledge, 6 to knowledge self-control, to self-control perseverance, to perseverance godliness, 7 to godliness **brotherly kindness**, and to brotherly kindness love. 8 For if these things are yours and abound, you will be neither barren nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ. 9 For he who lacks these things is shortsighted, even to blindness, **and has forgotten that he was cleansed from his old sins. [Theme]**

- **NOTE:** Add to godliness brotherly kindness. Top it off with **love**
- **Be who we are:** Lovers

Romans 12:9 [Read] Let love be without hypocrisy. Abhor what is evil. Cling to what is good. 10 Be kindly affectionate to one another with **brotherly love**, in honor giving preference to one another; 11 not lagging in diligence, fervent in spirit, serving the Lord; 12 rejoicing in hope, patient in tribulation, continuing steadfastly in prayer; 13 distributing to the needs of the saints, given to hospitality.

- **Brotherly Love**
 1. Without Hypocrisy
 2. Preferring one another above ourselves [and the world]

- **Shown by:**
 1. Diligently helping those in need
 2. Fervently seeking to walk in the Spirit
 3. Meeting needs and opening our home
- Believers in Nehemiah's day were losing their own homes

Matthew 24:12 ...because lawlessness will abound, the love of many will grow cold.

Hebrews 13:1 Let **brotherly love** continue.

- Jesus demonstrated brotherly love...

Luke 22:15 Then He said to them, "With **fervent desire** I have desired to eat this Passover with you before I suffer..."

- Fervent desire to be with his friends before He died
- **Fervent love** for His friends: No greater Love

1 Peter 4:8 And above all things have **fervent love** for one another, for "love will cover a multitude of sins."

Fervent: ek-te-nō's intensely. Lit. to stretch out

- **People notice our love for one another:** Brotherly Love

John 13:34 A new commandment I give to you, that you love one another; as I have loved you, that you also love one another. 35 By this all will know that you are My disciples, if you have love for **one another.**"

SUMMARY Brotherly Love Especially the Household of Faith

II. Righteous Anger

We are hungry and our brothers are taking advantage of us!

6 And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words.

- **Righteous Anger:** Anger under direction/control of God's Holy Spirit

"Very angry" that God's people were being taken advantage of by fellow believers

Ephesians 4:26 [Read] "**Be angry, and do not sin**": do not let the sun go down on your wrath, 27 nor give place to the devil. ...**30** And do not grieve the Holy Spirit of God, by whom you were sealed for the day of redemption. 31 **Let all bitterness, wrath, anger, clamor, and evil speaking be put away from you, with all malice.** 32 And be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, even as God in Christ forgave you.

Be angry but always directed and controlled by the Spirit of God

- **Things that grieve the Spirit of God:** Things done in the Flesh
 1. Bitterness
 2. Wrath

3. Anger
4. Clamor
5. Evil Speaking
6. Malice

- **Things that please the Holy Spirit:** Things done in the Spirit
 1. Being kind to one another
 2. Having a tender heart toward one another
 3. Forgiving one another
 4. Remembering how much we are forgiven of...
- Righteous anger must please God if it is truly initiated by God
 1. Jesus indignant to religious leaders taking advantage of people
 2. Nehemiah is "righteously angry" at God's people using one another

**Truly righteous anger will provoke a choice
God is angry at what you are doing...are you going to repent?**

E.g. "Your father is the devil" If this is true what is your response?

You hypocrite...You go over land/sea to make a convert that is twice a son of hell as you????

- **Nehemiah is Angry:** God's people are taking advantage of one another
- **Good thing that never happens today...**

1 Corinthians 6:1 [Read] Dare any of you, having a matter against another, go to law before the unrighteous, and not before the saints?

- **Can't you work it out...**forgiving by remembering how much you are forgiven of?

2 Do you not know that the saints will judge the world? And if the world will be judged by you, are you unworthy to judge the smallest matters? 3 Do you not know that we shall judge angels? How much more, things that pertain to this life? 4 If then you have judgments concerning things pertaining to this life, do you appoint those who are least esteemed by the church to judge?

- God will one day give us charge of judging the world [Regeneration]
- God will one day give us charge of judging angels

Why are you getting the worlds attorneys/judges to work thing out between believers?

Be who you are

5 I say this to your shame. Is it so, that there is not a wise man among you, not even one, who will be able to judge between his brethren? 6 But brother goes to law against brother, and that before unbelievers! 7 Now therefore, it is already an utter failure for you that you go to law against one another.

- Paul is angry!
- **Utter failure** whether you win/lose the case...you lose!

7b...Why do you not rather accept wrong? Why do you not rather let yourselves be cheated? 8 No, you yourselves do wrong and cheat, and you **do these things to your**

brethren! 9 Do you not know that the unrighteous will not inherit the kingdom of God?

- **Are you righteous or unrighteous:** Be who you are!
- **Are you like the world...?**

Do not be deceived. Neither fornicators, nor idolaters, nor adulterers, nor homosexuals, nor sodomites, 10 nor thieves, nor covetous, nor drunkards, nor revilers, nor extortioners will inherit the kingdom of God. 11 And such were some of you. But you were washed, but you were sanctified, but you were justified in the name of the Lord Jesus and by the Spirit of our God.

- **That's who you were...right?**
 1. Washed
 2. Sanctified
 3. Justified and this all by the grace/mercy of the Living God. Is it worth it?
- Paul was angry
- **Nehemiah is angry:** What to do next?

7 After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, "Each of you is exacting usury from his brother." So **I called a great assembly against them.** 8 And I said to them, "According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?"

- **Serious Thought:** Prayer as per Nehemiah before Artaxerxes
- **Immediate Action:** Public Rebuke/Swift Justice unlike today

I called a great assembly against them: Public sin public rebuke

1 Timothy 5:19 Do not receive an accusation against an elder except from two or three witnesses. 20 **Those who are sinning rebuke in the presence** of all, that the rest also may fear. 21 I charge you before God and the Lord Jesus Christ and the elect angels that you observe these things without prejudice, doing nothing with partiality.

- Those who refuse to repent and sin openly: **Rebuke openly**

Peter rebuked openly by the Apostle Paul

- **Peter in Antioch:** Base of mission operations for Paul. Many Gentiles saved
- Peter eating bacon w/ believing Gentiles before Jewish BGG's Jerusalem showed up
- Peter sheepishly got up and began eating kosher food with the Jews

Pope Peter was rebuked openly by the Apostle Paul

Galatians 2:14 But when I saw that they were not straightforward about the truth of the gospel, **I said to Peter before them all,** "If you, being a Jew, live in the manner of Gentiles and not as the Jews, why do you compel Gentiles to live as Jews?"

- Nehemiah rebukes the offenders in front of great assembly

8b...Then they were silenced and found nothing to say. 9 Then I said, "What

you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the **fear of our God** because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?

- **Should you not walk in the fear of God?**

A sin against God's people is a sin against God

- **Saul persecuted God's people:** Putting in prison, stoning

Acts 9:3 As [Saul] journeyed he came near Damascus, and suddenly a light shone around him from heaven. 4 Then he fell to the ground, and heard a voice saying to him, "Saul, Saul, **why are you persecuting Me?**"

A sin against God's people is a sin against God Himself

10 I also, with my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this usury!

- **Nehemiah was lending but without interest: Fear of God**

Psalm 15:5 ... he honors those who fear the Lord; He who swears to his own hurt and does not change; 5 **He who does not put out his money at usury**, Nor does he take a bribe against the innocent. **He who does these things shall never be moved.**

- He who does God's will in general will not be moved
- Ultimatum?

11 Restore now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine and the oil, that you have charged them."

**Truly righteous anger demands a response...a choice
God is angry at what you are doing...are you going to repent?**

12 So they said, "We will restore it, and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say." Then I called the priests, and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise.

- Nehemiah doubles down by getting the priests as witnesses

13 Then [Nehemiah] shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out each man from his house, and from his property, who does not perform this promise. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied."

- If you don't keep your promise may God take your stuff

13b...And all the assembly said, "Amen!" and praised the Lord. **Then the people did according to this promise.**

SUMMARY: Righteous Anger

III. Not Ruling Over: Example of Nehemiah

14 Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions. 15 But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people

- **Nehemiah's good example:**
- 1. Former Governors took advantage of you
 2. Even their servants were allowed to rule over you

Proverbs 1:19 So are the ways of everyone who is greedy for gain; It takes away the life of its owners.

- **We can be given over to greed...**

Ephesians 4:19 ...being past feeling, [they have] given themselves over to lewdness, to work all uncleanness with **greediness**.

- **OT: Greed in the name of God**

Isaiah 56:11 ... they are greedy dogs Which never have enough. And they are shepherds Who cannot understand; They all look to their own way, Every one for his own gain, From his own territory.

Jeremiah 6:13 "Because from the least of them even to the greatest of them, Everyone is given to covetousness; And from the prophet even to the priest, Everyone deals falsely.

- **NT: Greed in the name of God**

Luke 11:39 [Jesus to Spiritual Leaders] "Now you Pharisees make the outside of the cup and dish clean, but your inward part is full of greed and wickedness.

1 Timothy 3:3 [Elder qualification] ...not given to wine, not violent, not greedy for money, but gentle, not quarrelsome, not covetous

- **Today as always...**Corrupt men stealing from God's people...

1 Timothy 6:5 [Read] [Greedy BGG's]....men of corrupt minds and destitute of the truth, who suppose that godliness is a means of gain. From such withdraw yourself.6 Now godliness with contentment is great gain. 7 For we brought nothing into this world, and it is certain we can carry nothing out. 8 And having food and clothing, with these we shall be content. 9 But those who desire to be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and harmful lusts which drown men in destruction and perdition. 10 For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil, for which some have strayed from the faith in their greediness, and pierced themselves through with many sorrows.

- Former govenerns took advantage of you...

15b... but I did not do so, because of the fear of God.

Nehemiah had a fervent love for God
Exemplified in a fervent love for His people

1 Peter 1:22 Since you have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit in sincere love of the brethren, **love one another fervently** with a pure heart, 23 having been born again, not of corruptible seed but incorruptible, through the word of God which lives and abides forever...

- **Fervent love for God's people**
- The reason he risked his life leaving Persia: To build the wall!

16 Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall, and we did not buy any land. All my servants were gathered there for the work.

- Paul the Tentmaker

17 And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us.

- Hospitality trumps greed/manipulation

18 Now that which was prepared daily was one ox and six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine.

- I was offered all kinds of stuff because I'm governor...

18b...Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor's provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people.

- I did not take advantage of anyone: As Paul the Tentmaker

19 **Remember me, my God, for good**, according to all that I have done for this people.

- **Nehemiah a Shepherd of God's People**
- **His reward would come later:** Storing Treasure in Heaven...

1 Peter 5:22 Shepherd the flock of God which is among you, serving as overseers, not by compulsion but willingly, not for dishonest gain but eagerly; 3 nor as being lords over those entrusted to you, but being examples to the flock; 4 and when the Chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the crown of glory that does not fade away.

- **For all of us who love God:** When Jesus appears...our sacrifice will seem small
 1. Loving when its hard...real hard
 2. Forgiving when its impossible
 3. Enduring when we can't take another step...and doing it anyway

Romans 8:18 For I consider that the sufferings of this present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. [What we do here matters...]

[We, as Abraham did...] wait for the city which has foundations and whose builder and maker is God...we desire a better heavenly country. And God is not ashamed to be called our God...**for He has prepared a city for us.** [Paraphrase Hebrews 11]