

“Built to Last” (Part 3/3)

Nehemiah 13:23-31

We want a Church that will be built to last.

- Week 1: CONTINUE IN GOD’S WORD // CHOOSE GODLY LEADERS // CONTRIBUTE TO GOD’S WORK (13:1-14)
- Week 2: PUTTING GOD FIRST: FOUR TEMPTATIONS & STRATEGIES (13:15-22)
- Week 3: PURIFY OUR MARRIAGE// PURIFY OUR MINISTRY // PURIFY OUR MOTIVATION (13:23-31)

1. PURIFY OUR MARRIAGES (NEHEMIAH 13:23-27)

A. The problem was pagan women (men?). Their gods were different than our God. (Verse 26)

- i. Ashdod – Ancient philistines, “Dagon”, harvest/fish, PROSPERITY
- ii. Ammon – “Moloch”, perverted cruelty, child sacrifice, PLEASURE
- iii. Moab – “Chemoth”, Destroyer/subduer, POWER

B. The Bible teaches that we must not be in a serious relationship with someone who is not of our faith. (Verses 23-27)

- i. “God created marriage. No government committee envisioned it. No social organization developed it. Marriage was conceived and born in the mind of God.” - Max Lucado
- ii. “There are three types of rings in a marriage. The engagement ring, the wedding ring, and the suffering.”
- iii. Nehemiah 10:30 *We would not give our daughters as wives to the peoples of the land, nor take their daughters for our sons;*
- iv. READ? 2 Corinthians 6:14–17 ¹⁴ *Do not be unequally yoked together with unbelievers. For what fellowship has righteousness with lawlessness? And what communion has light with darkness? ¹⁵ And what accord has Christ with Belial? Or what part has a believer with an unbeliever? ¹⁶ And what agreement has the temple of God with idols? For you are the temple of the living God. As God has said: “I will dwell in them And walk among them. I will be their God, And they shall be My people.” ¹⁷ Therefore “Come out from among them And be separate, says the Lord. Do not touch what is unclean, And I will receive you.”*

- v. It's harder to pull someone up than to pull them down. If Solomon couldn't do it neither can you! (see vs.26)

C. Do we need to completely separate from people who aren't like us?

- i. Syncretism: "the amalgamation or attempted amalgamation of different religions, cultures, or schools of thought."
- ii. Contextualization: "In Christian evangelism, to contextualize is to tailor the presentation of the gospel to the wider sociological context in order to achieve greater understanding and, therefore, greater acceptance of the message." Some very early missionaries made no attempt to contextualize, but rather required their converts to become "Westernized," or at least required a drastic break from their native culture. This tended to build walls rather than build relationships. Later, missionaries of the 19th and early 20th centuries, such as William Carey, Hudson Taylor, Amy Carmichael and others, leaned more toward immersing themselves in the culture and partnering with natives in reaching the lost. They contextualized the message to the culture without diluting the truth.

D. The problem in our marriage will spread into a problem with our children. (Verse 24)

- i. "Each day of our lives we make deposits in the memory banks of our children." - Chuck Swindoll
- ii. Proverbs 22:6⁶ *Train up a child in the way he should go, And when he is old he will not depart from it.*
- iii. Amos 3:3 *Can two walk together, unless they are agreed?*
- iv. THERE IS HOPE! 1 Corinthians 7:12-14¹² *But to the rest I, not the Lord, say: If any brother has a wife who does not believe, and she is willing to live with him, let him not divorce her.*¹³ *And a woman who has a husband who does not believe, if he is willing to live with her, let her not divorce him.*¹⁴ *For the unbelieving husband is sanctified by the wife, and the unbelieving wife is sanctified by the husband; otherwise your children would be unclean, but now they are holy.*

2. PURIFY OUR MINISTRY (NEHEMIAH 13:28-31)

A. Say no to compromised leaders (Verses 28-29)

- i. Jude 12 (NLT) *"When these people eat with you in your fellowship meals commemorating the Lord's love, they are like dangerous reefs that can shipwreck you. They are like shameless shepherds who care only for themselves. They are like clouds blowing over the land without giving any rain. They are like trees in autumn that are doubly dead, for they bear no fruit and have been pulled up by the roots.*

B. A healthy ministry is marked by: HOLINESS “cleansed”, ORDER “assigned duties”, SERVANT-LEADERSHIP “his service”, and GENEROSITY “offering and firstfruits” (Verse 30-31)

3. PURIFY OUR MOTIVATION (NEHEMIAH 13:31)

A. We need to check our hearts because true transformation starts with you.

- i. 1 Corinthians 10:31³¹ Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God.*
- ii. Galatians 6:14¹⁴ But God forbid that I should boast except in the cross of our Lord Jesus Christ, by whom the world has been crucified to me, and I to the world.*
- iii. Luke 6:45⁴⁵ A good man out of the good treasure of his heart brings forth good; and an evil man out of the evil treasure of his heart brings forth evil. For out of the abundance of the heart his mouth speaks.*