

0082 – Nehemiah 13 “A flame that never dies”

For am I now seeking the approval of people, or of God? Or am I trying to please people? If I were still trying to please people, I would not be a servant of Christ. Galatians 1:10

Jesus already prayed for this sermon. (John 17:20)

Invite them to turn to Nehemiah 13 (page 236)

September 11th 2001, the world as we know it changed! ---- PRAY

Recap: Our study through Nehemiah has been a blessing! "A time to build" We have seen the LORD building His church through this season, not only Spiritually but numerically.

We have seen more families get plugged into the church in this last season than we have since we started! We have an abundance of people serving in the different roles of the ministry than ever before. 18 workers in kids ministry alone! **CELEBRATE!!**

We have seen more victories won in the past few months than in past 2 years! **GOD IS ON THE MOVE!** Quickly retell the story of Nehemiah. Call of God, people burnt out, attacks of the enemy, completion

of the walls, celebration and revival, “we will not neglect the house of God.” Dedicated the walls to God! And now this week we see the Jews back to their old ways. Disobedience.

Partial obedience is disobedience. Nehemiah leaves Jerusalem and then the people backslide. They slowly drift and fade back to their old ways. **Why?** They were not reading and were not following God's word!

It is that **simple**. We will never be able to live a life of purpose and victory that affects our world with the God news about Jesus Christ, apart from His word!

WORD OF GOD SPEAK 😊 - **“A flame that never dies”**

Nehemiah 13:1 On that day (not dedication day) the Book of Moses was read aloud in the hearing of the people and there it was found written (busted) that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever be admitted into the assembly of God, **2** because they had not met the Israelites with food and water but had hired Balaam to call a curse down on them. (Our God, however, turned the curse into a blessing.) – **Only God**
3 When the people heard this law, they excluded from Israel all who were of foreign descent.

In the text this morning we will see three failures of the Jews. 1. Failure to separate 2. Failure in service 3.

Failure in sanctification. **Our failures, are God's fertilizer!**

- Have you ever made a statement like this?
- God if you get me out of this situation, I will_____.
- God "I promise," I will start reading your word, praying, going to church, if you help me with _____.
- This is really what the Jews said in chapter 10 "We will not neglect the house of God." Have you ever neglected your yard? Pool? Car? House?
- If we neglect the spiritual needs in our life for God's word, The Holy Spirit, prayer, & community things will begin to be overgrown, polluted, and look unattractive.
 - o We need to read and apply God's word to our lives! How was that going for the Jews?
- "The road to hell is paved with good intentions"

Nehemiah 13:4 Before this, Eliashib the priest had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was **closely associated** with Tobiah, **5** and he had provided him with a large room

formerly used to store the grain offerings and incense and temple articles, and also the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil prescribed for the Levites, musicians and gatekeepers, as well as the contributions for the priests.

- Eliashib the priest was closely associated with Tobiah. **Say What??** **Do you remember who Tobiah was?**
- Tobiah was an Ammonite enemy! He was part of the mixed multitude that had been put out of the assembly 10 years earlier. He's back! Kind of like that secret sin can be in our lives...
- Tobiah was the guy that was slandering Nehemiah and the work of God! Build a wall? That is a joke!
- Then I came to the governors of the provinces beyond the River and gave them the king's letters. Now the king had sent with me officers of the army and horsemen. **10** When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about it, it was very displeasing to them that someone had come to seek the welfare of the sons of Israel. (Nehemiah 2:9-10)

Nehemiah 13:6 But while all this was going on, I was

not in Jerusalem, for in the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes king of Babylon I had returned to the king. Some time later I asked his permission **7** and came back to Jerusalem. Here I learned about the evil thing Eliashib had done in providing Tobiah a room in the courts of the house of God. **8** I was greatly displeased and threw all Tobiah's household goods out of the room. **9** I gave orders to purify the rooms, and then I put back into them the equipment of the house of God, with the grain offerings and the incense.

- When we are centered on the things of God, we will know what is truth and what is trash!
- Nehemiah shocks the pool! He cleans it up! When God is working in the heart of a man, it is always an inside job. Remember we are called temples of the Holy Spirit. When God works inside, He removes things that would bring us harm and cause us great pain. He does a remodel, and He is the best craftsman in the world!
- Nehemiah had been the governor of Jerusalem for about 12 years. He left to go back to Persia because that was always the plan. The King had agreed to send him, with the intention that he would come back.

- Nehemiah would leave shortly after the revival that happened and be gone for perhaps a year.
- The real test for an authentic revival in the believer is longevity. Long haul, long term, ALL IN faithfulness to God.
- It is interesting that without strong Godly leadership, the nation drifts back to their pagan ways. It is really no different in a church. There needs to be someone leading the charge! Nehemiah led that charge. He was a man of humility, passion, and vision!
- Something else to note is that during this time there was a prophet ministering in Jerusalem, his name...Malachi. Malachi means "my messenger." The Lord always has a voice in a generation!
- "And now this commandment is for you, O priests. **2**"If you do not listen, and if you do not take it to heart to give honor to My name," says the LORD of hosts, "then I will send the curse upon you and I will curse your blessings; and indeed, I have cursed them *already*, because you are not taking *it* to heart. (Malachi 2:1-2)

Nehemiah 13:10 also learned that the portions

assigned to the Levites had not been given to them, and that all the Levites and musicians responsible for the service had gone back to their own fields. **11** So I rebuked the officials and asked them, "Why is the house of God neglected?" Then I called them together and stationed them at their posts.

- The house of God was being ripped off! Notice Nehemiah rebuked the leaders! They had misplaced priorities! Their fire had gone out!
- **William Booth**, the founder of the salvation army once said to a young group of officers, "*I want you young men to bear in mind that the nature of fire is to go out; you must keep it stirred and fed and the ashes removed.*"

Nehemiah 13:**12** All Judah brought the tithes of grain, new wine and olive oil into the storerooms. **13** I put Shelemiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, and a Levite named Pedaiah in charge of the storerooms and made Hanan son of Zakkur, the son of Mattaniah, their assistant, because they were considered trustworthy (faithful). They were made responsible for distributing the supplies to their fellow Levites.

- Again now, Nehemiah appoints faithful men for the

work of the ministry. He is used to move people back into a system of worship and communion with God.

Nehemiah 13:14 Remember me for this, my God, and do not blot out what I have so faithfully done for the house of my God and its services.

- Nehemiah's 9th prayer. I love this man's heart! He has a flame that never died!

Nehemiah 13:15 In those days I saw people in Judah treading the winepresses on the Sabbath and bringing in grain and loading it on donkeys, together with wine, grapes, figs and all other kinds of loads. And they were bringing all this into Jerusalem on the Sabbath. Therefore I warned them against selling food on that day. **16** People from Tyre who lived in Jerusalem were bringing in fish and all kinds of merchandise and selling them in Jerusalem on the Sabbath to the people of Judah. **17** I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, "What is this wicked thing you are doing—desecrating the Sabbath day? **18** Didn't your ancestors do the same things, so that our God brought all this calamity on us and on this city? Now you are stirring up more wrath against Israel by desecrating the Sabbath."

➤ **STOP IT!** In Israel's History they had not kept the

Sabbath day Holy! And as a result the nation was put into captivity. God would make sure he got their attention somehow, someway!

- They needed priority reform. Their priorities were off! Remember the name Israel means “governed by God.” They were to be a reflection of who the ONE and only true God was on earth! Unfortunately, this was not the case, many times.
- Here we see them more focused on making money than on obeying Gods law. Idolatry. **Story of my life and surfing**. God will get our attention, one way or another. **BE OPEN!!**
- **Profit (money) had become more important than their purpose and God’s promises!**
- Their priorities were off and they were drifting.
- Hebrews 2:1 says- For this reason we must pay much closer attention to what we have heard, so that we do not drift away from it. (Hebrews 2:1)

Nehemiah 13:19 When evening shadows fell on the gates of Jerusalem before the Sabbath, I ordered the doors to be shut and not opened until the Sabbath was over. I stationed some of my own men at the gates so that no load could be brought in on the

Sabbath day. **20**Once or twice the merchants and sellers of all kinds of goods spent the night outside Jerusalem. **21**But I warned them and said, “Why do you spend the night by the wall? If you do this again, I will arrest you.” From that time on they no longer came on the Sabbath. **22**Then I commanded the Levites to purify themselves and go and guard the gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy. **Remember me** for this also, my God, and show mercy to me according to your great love.

- This is Nehemiah’s 10th prayer.
- When we serve the Lord, we should use this as a model. “according to your great love, I _____” Serve my neighbors, my co workers, my unbelieving spouse. “According to your great love!” I can see past those who have offended me!
- Nehemiah was compelled and driven to make God look good! **Why?** He encountered the heart of God! “according to your great love”

Nehemiah 13:23Moreover, in those days I saw men of Judah who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab. **24**Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the

language of Judah. **25**I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God's name and said: "You are not to give your daughters in marriage to their sons, nor are you to take their daughters in marriage for your sons or for yourselves. **26**Was it not because of marriages like these that Solomon king of Israel sinned? Among the many nations there was no king like him. He was loved by his God, and God made him king over all Israel, but even he was led into sin by foreign women. **27**Must we hear now that you too are doing all this terrible wickedness and are being unfaithful to **our God** by marrying foreign women?"

- Here we see that their **liberty**, has become more important than their legacy. "I do what I want."
- The Jewish people were commanded not to marry woman from pagan nations. The reason is that they had more influence on the Jews that they Jews had on them.
- Look again at **verse 24**Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples, and did not know how to speak the language of Judah.
 - This is something that I want us to see. Their

language was influenced by other nations. They didn't even know their own language! Language of Zion. Kings kids.

- Our speech should be different than that of our world. This is an easy way for people to know that we belong to God. **Do we speak defiantly than the world?**
- Just like these pagan nations, the world has more influence on the church than the church has on the world!
- **We should be the thermostat, not the thermometer.** **My life of compromise and drifting.**
- Don't love the world's ways. Don't love the world's goods. Love of the world squeezes out love for the Father. Practically everything that goes on in the world—wanting your own way, wanting everything for yourself, wanting to appear important—has nothing to do with the Father. It just isolates you from him. The world and all its wanting, wanting, wanting is on the way out—but whoever does what God wants is set for eternity. (1 John 2:15-17 Message version)

- **So what does Nehemiah do in this situation?** I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair.

Nehemiah 13:28 One of the sons of Joiada son of Eliashib the high priest was son-in-law to Sanballat the Horonite. And I drove him away from me.
29 Remember (11th prayer) them, my God, because they defiled the priestly office and the covenant of the priesthood and of the Levites. **30** So I purified the priests and the Levites of everything foreign, and assigned them duties, each to his own task. **31** I also made provision for contributions of wood at designated times, and for the first fruits. **Remember me** with favor, my God. (12th prayer)

- **Lech Walesa**, the courageous Polish labor leader who became president of his country, said this about leadership, *"To be a leader means to have determination. It means to be resolute inside and outside, with ourselves and with others."*
- If anyone lived up to that description, it was Nehemiah. He was determined to make God look good, and fulfill the calling of God on his life.

- The President of Whetton college, **Dr. Raymond Edman**,

used to remind his students, *"It's always too soon to quit!"*

- Nehemiah's determination was a result of his relationship to God. He was doing a great work, because he served a great God!
- He didn't give up, because God doesn't give up! Maybe today you feel like giving up. **DON'T!** Keep pressing on and keep pressing in! Draw near to God and he will draw near to you!
- The enemy tries to distract and defeat to put out the out the flame of God in our lives. Don't give the enemy an opportunity to strike! Stay focused on God and His word, His will and His ways!
- **AMEN?** – Response. 1. Stand for salvation 2. Stand for a renewed passion – SET A FIRE IN MY SOUL! **SING**
- If you **need prayer** please take the time to do that before you leave!

Let's pray...

-Next Friday the 16th! Grab some flyers!

-Next book? The gospel of Mark. RANSOM! The King who paid it ALL!

What does God want us to know, to feel, and to do?

ALTER CALL

Realize, Recognize, Repent, Receive, Remain

“Spirit lead me where my trust is without borders, let me walk upon the waters, wherever you may call me...”