

Smoldering Hearts

I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Don Brewster this Sun.

I. Slide2 Intro: Smoldering Hearts

A. Last Chapter – *Worship on the wall*. They dedicated the wall, but more importantly they had dedicated themselves.

1. And now, the walls stood strong, but their *spiritual walls* had quickly crumbled.

a) Slide3 Like **Humpty Dumpty**, they didn't have a wall issue, but a falling issue.

b) They quickly fell into sin, and “none of the kings horses & none of the kings men...could put the Israelites back together again...but *God uses Nehemiah.*”

2. What's harder to build than a wall?...A man.

B. Slide4 General William Booth, founder of the Salvation Army, once said to a group of new officers, “*I want you young men always to bear in mind that it is the nature of a fire to go out; you must keep it stirred and fed and the ashes removed.*”

1. Nehemiah is just returning to Jerusalem after about a year of being on a trip back to Persia. Only to find the fires of devotion had gone out in Jerusalem.

2. So, he seeks to remove the ashes, & to start, stir, & feed the flame once again.

C. Trivia: What biblical man of the OT hits people & pulls out their hair? *stand by*

II. Slide5 MOSES' 2-EDGED SWORD (1-3)

A. (1) What did they discover when they read the book of Moses? No, Ammonite & Moabite in Assembly

B. (3) How did they respond? (they *Read-Heard-Responded*)

C. (2) Our God turned the curse into a blessing.

1. God still does this. *What man meant for evil God meant for Good.*

All things work together for good.

D. Well this was *the good news*, Now we need to step back (see 4a before this i.e. vs.1-3) & let's hear what was happening while Nehemiah was away on a business trip.

1. Here now are 3 vigorous corrections for 3 foolish abuses...

III. Slide6 GOD'S HOUSE (4-14)

A. Slide7 HOUSE CLEANING (4-9) [Problem]

1. (5) Tobiah turned Gods house into a *Storage Unit* for his *stuff*.
 - a) What **sinful attitudes** or **actions** have you allowed in your life? What **sin** have you brought into the church? (7) Have you given up *a chamber in your heart* to any Tobiah?...Are all good questions to ask yourself.
 2. (6) *When the cats away the mice play*.
 3. *It was during this time that Malachi wrote his prophetic book*.
 - a) He indicted the priests & people for their sinful defection.
 - (1) **Book Overview**: Polluted offerings (ch.1); Corrupt priests (2); Fidelity to marriage & God's heart on divorce (2); Prophecy of John the Baptist coming (3); Tithes (3); The day of the Lord & the coming of Elijah before the end (4).
 4. (8) Nehemiah's response was very similar to Jesus' *some 400 years later, When Jesus did what? The Cleansing of the Temple*
 5. The work of a spiritual leader is never finished...*for* the enemy never quits.
- B. **Slide8 HOUSE FORSAKEN (10-14) [Solution]**
1. (10) *What turn of events forced the Levites to become field laborers again?*
 - a) In many churches the pastor often has to take a 2nd job in order to feed his family. *What are the advantages & disadvantages of such an arrangement?*
 - (1) I think the key is having them doing what they've been **gifted** to do & **asked by God** to do.
 2. (13) Nehemiah's leadership style was, if it's working, *have the hands off approach*; *but* if it *isn't* working, you need to give more oversight.
 3. (14) **Remember me** – A **refrain** after each section of rebuke. (vs.22,31; also 29)
 - a) *When one appeals to God to remember there is no implication He can forget. Instead the phrase is a request that God might respond in an appropriate fashion. (i.e. reward him)*

IV. **Slide9 GOD'S SABBATH (15-22)**

- A. **Slide10 WORK 7 DAYS (15-18) [Problem]**
 1. The **Sabbath day** was transformed into a **market day**.
- B. **Slide11 ONE DAY OFF (19-22) [Solution]**
 1. Maybe having a **Sabbath rest** means to take a day off & **not** be a workaholic, don't work 1 day a week.

2. *And to make special time for the Lord on a day of worship.*

V. Slide12 **GOD'S MARRIAGES (23-31)**

A. Slide13 **UNEQUALLY YOKED (23,24) [Problem]**

1. (23) **Ammon & Moab** came from an *incestuous relationship* between **Lot** & his daughters. Gen.19
2. **Ezra** dealt with this 20 yrs ago. *How sad when children expose the inconsistencies of their parents...& follow hard after them.*

B. Slide14 **CLEANSED (25-31) [Solution]**

1. (25) Nehemiah adds **strong acts** to **strong words**. *Here we see a fiery nature to Nehemiah.*
 - a) He threw the household goods of Tobiah out of the Temple (8). He rebukes officials (11). He confronts violators (17,18). **And** even assaults the most guilty (25).
 - b) **Why so strong?** (See 10:29,30, 39b)...*They had **covenanted!** ch.12*
 - c) *Sometimes radical holiness requires radical measures.*
2. **So, is this how we should handle situations like this?** *go all Ninja on them*
 - a) **Ezra** gave us another way by being appalled (showing his expression of grief) & then watching God change their hearts. **Read Ezra 9:3,4.**
 - b) **We aren't to overlook sins of others for sure. But** we need to seek God's guidance in every situation on how best to respond. [Then if it takes a little hair removal...go for it...*but* maybe it's *your hair?* start there!]
3. (26) **How should the example of Solomon** have discouraged them from marrying foreign wives?
 - a) **Note:** Solomon had wealth, peace & prosperity. And was **beloved of God**. But even he could fall to this.
4. (28,29) **Does God hold ministers to a higher standard?**
 - a) **See** also **Malachi 2:7-9.**
 - b) **Slide15** Its interesting **Josephus** said, *this expelled priest's name was **Manasseh**. That he went to his father-in-law Sanballat, & he built for him a temple on **Mount Gerazim** like that at Jerusalem. And this was the origin & rivalry between the Jews & the Samaritans.*
 - c) Jn.4:20 *women at well* **Our fathers worshiped on this mountain** (Gerazim), **and you Jews say that in Jerusalem** (Moriah) **is the place where one ought to worship.**

- C. (31) This was very similar to what **the faithful sinner & the dying thief** said, **Lord, remember me when You come into Your kingdom. & God, be merciful to me a sinner.**
1. To be **remembered** by Jesus Christ is enough reward for any of us.
- D. **Slide16** Booth said, I want you young men always to bear in mind that it is the nature of a fire **to go out**; you must keep it **stirred & fed & the ashes removed**.
1. **“1”** being a *dying ember*, **“10”** being *white-hot*...What is your *spiritual temperature* right now?
 2. It is our nature to spiritually **go out**. [not salvation wise, **but** sanctification wise]
 3. **Ask:** How can we prepare ourselves for a lifetime of glowing with a **Perpetual Hot flame?**
- E. **Slide17 Wrap Up: Nehemiah** was a layman who *loved his God, Gods people & the Temple*
1. He is a good example to follow in his devotion to: *his duty, his leadership, his discipline, his planning and doing his work, his dedication to the Word, his maintaining high standards, his ability to take a stand for what was right, & his dependence on prayer.*
- F. The end of the OT Historical books ends on a note of **uncertainty**. [then 400 yrs, a **Prophetic laryngitis** now sets in, known as the **Intertestamental period**]
1. If the people could so easily slip back into sin with Nehemiah’s short trip, what will happen centuries down the line???
 2. Will they be ready to receive the Messiah when He comes?
 3. **Read** Malachi 4:5,6. **Seems odd that the OT ends with a curse.** It would ring in their ears...**until** the **Peace Child** comes. [no wonder Zacharias & Anna were so glad to meet the baby]
- G. **End:**
1. Let’s be like Nehemiah: *plan, think, manage, create, motivate, but above all PRAY! For w/o our conscious dependence on God’s power & wisdom, we may build our own little kingdom...but we’ll miss the joy of building His.*¹
- H. **A Quick Survey of OT History** (see pic)

¹ Swindoll; pg.21