

Nehemiah 1

The Kind of Person God Works Through

NEHEMIAH has for many years been one of my favorite books of the Scriptures.

A) It has many different facets that minister to us.

B) It is an **EXCELLENT study in REVIVAL.**

- **How God takes a broken down people and brings them together Restores them**

C) The name NEHEMIAH actually means *The Lord has comforted*

1) He is an excellent type of how the Holy Spirit comes

- **REBUILDING and RESTORING** the broken walls of the human life

It is an EXCELLENT study in LEADERSHIP.

A) **IF you are involved or interested in leadership, there is no finer study than the life of Nehemiah.**

B) **In the book of Nehemiah we see a great picture of how to begin and complete any work that God has called us to on HIS BEHALF.**

C) **Our tagline for this study is Everyone is building something - THAT IS TRUE. Our walks constantly**

D) Building a family - a ministry - a legacy

1) **Business? - all of us are building a Reputation**

In the book of Nehemiah we learn some great insights concerning Spiritual Warfare.

A) **It is a book about Building and Battling**

B) **Now for the purpose of this study we are not going to study the whole book.**

C) **8 week study - So our Focus will be mostly on the building and battling that takes place in the book**

D) Not as much on what happened after the wall was finished.

The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, 2 that Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived

the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire."

4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

5 And I said: "I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your

commandments, 6 please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against

You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. 7 We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. 8 Remember, I

pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; 9 but if you return to Me, and keep My

commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.'

10 Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand.

11 O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

For I was the king's cupbearer.

Note that last line: For I was the king's cupbearer.

A) **To understand what is happening here - a little bit of History is in Order**

B) **In 605 B.C. Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invaded Israel and Ransacked Jerusalem the capital city**

C) **God allowed that and actually warned about it - because of years of rebellion in Israel**

1) **The nation had turned their back on God and had given themselves to Idolatry and immorality. Corruption**

To wake his people up and to get their attention - God would allow them to be invaded.

A) **So in 605 BC - Nebuchadnezzar and the Babylonians invaded**

B)The Temple was destroyed and the Walls of the city were torn down and burned with Fire –

C)Many of the Israelites were taken captive and hauled off to Babylon where they would spend 70 yrs in Captivity

After the nation of Israel was taken captive by Babylon the Babylonians were overthrown by Persia

A)The Persians were much nicer to the Jews –

B)They went from Babylonian Captivity to Persian

1)In Persia they had jobs, they had houses, they lived a fairly normal life.

C)It was during this captivity in Persia that Nehemiah was born to Jewish parents

D)Nehemiah got a Govt Job - he rose in ranks to end up serving as the kings Cup bearer.

Being the king's cupbearer was a tremendous honor in that time of history.

A)Originally, the kings cupbearer was the one who sat next to the king to sample the kings drink and food **before the king ate it. - not poisoned**

B)A King was always in danger of having one of his subjects turning on him – *A little Poison in the Kings food would do the trick*

C)So when the Kings feasting – a little Wine – before King takes a drink – **Nehemiah take a sip** - wait

1)and the king would watch to see if he fell over dead-

So initially that was what the position was about – but as time progressed, so did the prestige and dignity of the position

A)Because this was the man sitting next to the king.

B)He was the man who was closest to the king. – **Became the kings Closet confidant**

C)He had the ear of the king, he became the kings adviser.

1)He became the kings right hand man. He was “chief of staff” so to speak.

D)So this is the role that Nehemiah was in to the mighty King Art Xerxes in Persia

But the whole time that the Jewish people were living in exile in Babylon and Persia

A)There was a remnant living back home in Israel

B)Capital city was in bad Shape. - Temple destroyed and the walls of the city were torn down

A little more History - King Cyrus was in Power in Persia when they overthrew Babylon

A)Cyrus had compassion on the Jews and allowed 50,000 Jewish people to return to Israel.

B)They were going back to rebuild the temple- but a problem occurred.

C)Instead of dedicating their focus and attention to rebuilding the temple

1)The people focused all of their time energy and resources on building their own houses.

D)It was during that time that God raised up the Prophet Haggai to get the people back on track

E)His message: Why are you focusing all your attention on your own houses

1)When God's house is lying in ruins?

Well the Lord raised up a leader by the name of Zerubbabel - who led the rebuilding of the temple

A)Now 57 years later a 2nd group -much smaller group was allowed to go back - Ezra 1700 people

B)Ezra was a priest - he was going to help re-establish temple worship

C)Problem was because the walls of the city were torn down - left the People Vulnerable

1)Like no doors or windows on your house - Sleep?

Nehemiah is a contemporary of Ezra - Here in Chapter 1 he gets a message that rocks his world.

A)In this first chapter we see 6 things about the kind of person that God often works through.

B)The Kind of person that God uses is someone who gets a burden.

It came to pass in the month of Chislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the citadel, 2 that

Hanani one of my brethren came with men from Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said to me, "The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire." 4 So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days;

C)Note that He wept and mourned for many days.

When Nehemiah heard about what was going on in Jerusalem - his people - his heart was broken.

A)He didn't say - Wow that is a bummer - glad I am here and not there -

B)Want to go for a ride in my new Chariot.

C)It broke his heart - Wept and mourned for many days.

Nehemiah as we shall see is one tough dude. He is not easily intimidated

A)But when he gets the news his heart is broken. – Why?

B)**His heart breaks for God's people.**

1)This is really a **key sign in a godly leader** – the type of person that God can use.

C)They are more concerned for God's people than his **own personal needs, goals, or ambitions.**

We will see over and over that Nehemiah is that kind of man!

A)Puts aside the best for himself and choses instead what is best for God's people.

B)We will see this played out over and over again as we study this book.

1)Nehemiah hears of the condition of the pp in Jerusalem and his heart is broken.

C)Question when you see people around you going through difficulty - in distress

1)Does your heart break?

D)Ministry often starts right there - it is seeing the needs around you - heart breaking

You know how you can tell a burden is from the Lord? It doesn't go away.

A)Set it down and it keeps coming back

B)See next week - Nehemiah's heart is burdened for 3 whole months - finally the King notices

C)It starts with a burden - starts with compassion

The 2nd mark of the kind of person that God uses is they are prone to fast and pray - see a need. I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

A)Don't ignore - but they don't go into fix it mode

B)My tendency early on. Fixer - Good practical wisdom - Bull dozer

1)Pray - God's eyes - His heart

C)Fast - Aligning your heart with his heart - fasting helps your spiritual antenna to get in tune.

Notice his prayer:

5 And I said: "I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, 6 please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel

The 3rd mark of the Kind of person God uses is someone who has a right view of God.

A)The Lord God of heaven - He is the Sovereign one

B)He calls him the great and awesome God -

C)Big and powerful!

How big is your God? Is there any problem that is too big for him?

A)Is there anything that he can't do?

B)Barnhouse - Princeton - Big Godder or little godder

C)People who believe in a big God - pray big prayers

My problem is never can God do it - often will he do it for me.

A)Nehemiah also sees His God as one who keeps his promises You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments,

B)He is a covenant keeping God - Promise Keeper

C)His heart is toward his people.

One day Jesus was encouraging - his disciples not to worry about their provision -

A)God takes care of the birds and flowers - take care of you.

³²“Do not fear, little flock, for it is your Father’s good pleasure to give you the kingdom. Luke 12:32

B)Your fathers good pleasure to give you the Kingdom.

C)Dads who love their kids - Grandpa’s their grand kids - love blessing them

D)Josiah - bday Hotwheels Monster truck jam - sick

E)I am on the internet - when is the next one? - Plane

1)Denise brought me back down to reality- 6yrs old

The Kind of person God works through is someone who:

- Is burdened by the pain and distress around them.
- Responds with fasting and prayer
- Has a right view of God.

4th Has a right view of the problem.

6 please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father’s house and I have sinned. 7 We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses.

Nehemiah knew what the Problem was - it was Sin

A)The nation went into exile and captivity because of sin - and rebellion

B)The walls were torn down because of the sin and rebellion of the nation

C)The temple was destroyed because of the sin and rebellion of Israel

But don’t miss this: Nehemiah doesn’t say - the children of Israel has sinned.

A)V.6b - My father’s house and I have sinned

B)Nehemiah wasn’t even alive - when the nation fell into idolatry and immorality - that led to captivity.

C)He hadn’t even been born yet.

But here he takes ownership for the sins of the generations who came before him.

A)Why would he do that ? -

B)Nehemiah realized that as good of a guy as he was - he was still a sinner -

1)He knew he had sinned too - maybe not in that same way.

C)He knew He was a sinner - owned it

1)Paul except for the grace of God there go I.

I was talking to a Pastor I have been mentoring a few weeks ago. What are safe guards?

A)One I never travel alone - Not tempted to stray - never had a problem with porn

B)But I don’t trust my flesh! - My flesh is capable of the worst things.

C)If I don’t do it - been tempted to think about it

1)Not giving my flesh any opportunity - WISE

Nehemiah owns the sin of the nation.

A)We need to do that church - can’t point the finger at those liberal politicians -

B)Have we been the salt and Light God has called us to be

C)Are some of the problems in our culture - because we as the church - dropped our guard

1)We failed to stand for righteousness - TOO LATE

D)There are almost 1 million babies that are aborted every year in the USA -

1)Could we the church have done more to prevent that?

E)We love to point the finger at others - 3 pointing back at us.

Own the problem: Sin - compromise - Does it break our hearts - are we will to own it?

A)Our stuff -

B)Once you own your sin - then and only then are you are ready for the solution to the problem

C)5th thing about the kind of person God uses - they not only know what the problem is

1)They know what the solution is

8 Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; 9 but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I have chosen as a dwelling for My name.' 10 Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand.

What is the solution? Repentance V.9 Return to me

A)Repentance is a change of mind - own sin

⁸ If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. ⁹ If we **confess our sins**, He is faithful and just to forgive us *our* sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness. 1 John 1:8-9

B)Repent - change of mind - leads to a change of heart - leads to a change of direction

The Key is REPENTENCE – RETURNING

A)Turn from our sin turn to the Lord

B)Answer for America – Not who gets in the white house

1)They can make changes

C)Our only hope is turning from our sin and turning to the Lord

1)AMERICA doesn't need a President – we need a King – JESUS

D)A missed opportunity at 911

E)Application for us – like Nehemiah –we need to not cast the blame – but to acknowledge –my Sinned

2 Chronicles 7:14 **“If My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.”**

The Kind of person God works through is someone who:

- **Is burdened by the pain and distress around them.**
- **Responds with fasting and prayer.**
- **Has a right view of God.**
- **Has a right view of the problem.**
- **Has a right view of the solution.**

6th A person who makes themselves available.

11 O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him **mercy in the sight of this man.”**

Nehemiah discerned that somehow the King was going to be used in meeting this need –

A)Nehemiah made himself Available

B)It has well been said that prayer is not getting man's will done in heaven but getting God's will done on earth.

C)However, for God's will to be done on earth, He needs people to be available for Him to use.

Nehemiah had it made in Shushan.

A)But he is willing to lay aside all of his position and possessions and prizes to get involved in the work of God

B)The king's cupbearer would have to sacrifice the comfort and security of the palace for the rigors and dangers of life in a ruined city.

1)Luxury would be replaced by ruins, and prestige by ridicule and slander. – AVAILABLE

C)How available are you?