

Let's Worship God

15th-20th July 2019
Nehemiah





Monday - Deuteronomy 23:21-25 - A Right Spirit

The words of Nehemiah had an immediate effect on the nobles and the rulers of the people. They agreed that they would do everything that Nehemiah had said. Such a response demonstrated two very clear and necessary attitudes for every child of God:

1. A teachable spirit. It may be that the nobles did not think they were doing anything wrong: after all, charging interest was not against the law. They clearly had not considered how what they were doing was affecting the work of rebuilding or how it would cause the name of the Lord to suffer reproach. So it is often with us! We do not think sufficiently about how our own selfish actions affect the cause of Christ. When they were taught by Nehemiah the effects of their behaviour, the nobles listened and accepted the teaching, demonstrating a correct hearing of the word of God.

2. A humble spirit. The amazing thing is that the nobles and the rulers were willing to accept rebuke and to admit that they had been wrong! It is one thing to listen to and to approve of the teaching of God's Word and quite another to change our behaviour in line with it, especially when it concerns our personal finances! These men were going to suffer considerable financial loss, but when they were convinced by the teaching of Nehemiah, they were willing to submit.

Nevertheless Nehemiah also knew that words were easy to say, and so he insisted that their promise to comply should be supported by an oath sworn in the presence of the priests. He also solemnly warned them of the consequences of not fulfilling their oath, as Ecclesiastes 5:5 reminds us 'It is better that you should not vow than that you should vow and not pay'. It is no small thing to make a solemn promise before the Lord!

Questions

1. What attitude did the nobles demonstrate?
2. What did Nehemiah make them do?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would have a teachable and humble spirit.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“But now, O God, strengthen my hands.” Nehemiah 6:9b

Praise: Psalm 144 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Tuesday - Nehemiah 5:14-19 - Self-Sacrifice

It is common practice for people in positions of authority to insist that they have remuneration commensurate with the responsibilities they have - we often hear justification of the inordinately large salaries paid to chief executives with the phrase 'it is necessary to get the best man for the job!'. Nehemiah however, gives a very different perspective, for he put the work and the glory of God above his own personal interests.

1. As governor he was certainly entitled to be provided for out of the public purse, but he knew that to do as others had done before him would not advance the work he had been called to do. He realised that he was in the position he was because God had placed him in it. He was undoubtedly the best man for the job, but this did not lead to pride but to an understanding that he was God's man doing God's work (v.15).

2. As the leader of the people he could well have sat back and had others do the work - Nehemiah however, was a leader who led from the front (v. 16). It is always a great encouragement and stimulus for the people when they see their leaders setting an example of diligent labour.

3. Unlike those leaders who had gone before him, Nehemiah did not seek to enrich himself but rather used his own personal resources to ensure that those who were in difficulties were provided with sufficient to enable them to continue the rebuilding.

Here is a man with a vision for the work of God, a desire for the honour and glory of God, a willingness to sacrifice to advance the cause of God, and a man with a love and compassion for the people of God.

It should be our prayer that God would make us people like that, and that he would raise up such people in our congregations.

Questions

1. What did Nehemiah not do?
2. What was Nehemiah's main goal?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks for your minister and elders.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"But now, O God, strengthen my hands." Nehemiah 6:9b

Praise: Psalm 145 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Wednesday - Matthew 6:1-4 - Seeking God's Approval

It is clear that the outstanding characteristic of Nehemiah was that he sought to live his life in the presence of the living God, which is brought out plainly in verse 19 of chapter 5. When he asks that God should remember him and all that he was doing for the cause of God, he was doing precisely what the Lord Jesus Christ urged in Matthew 6:1-4. He did not stand before the nobles or even the people who supported him to boast of all that he had done - there was nothing of the pride of the Pharisee of Luke 18:9-17 - he was opening his heart before the Lord in the place of prayer. He did not seek the praise of men but only the approval of his heavenly Father.

It is entirely right and proper that the child of God should, in his private times with God, seek to know that he has divine approval for the work that he is doing for the Lord. It is so easy to work hard on a project or undertaking thinking that we are going in the right direction without ever committing it to God to seek his blessing and direction. Nehemiah knew that the project of rebuilding the walls was God's will, but he needed to be sure that the details of his plan and work were also in accordance with the plan and purpose of God.

Whilst Nehemiah was not doing the work because he expected to be rewarded for it, he did nonetheless realise that faithfulness in the tasks assigned by the Lord are rewarded. The Scripture teaches that God's servants are given tasks to perform for the master and talents to use in His service and will have to answer for the way these tasks are performed and how the talents are used.

Questions

1. Whose approval was Nehemiah seeking?
2. What kind of attitude should we have about the work God has given us?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that you would seek God's approval.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"But now, O God, strengthen my hands." Nehemiah 6:9b

Praise: Psalm 146 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Thursday - Nehemiah 6:1-4 - More Opposition

Not only did Nehemiah have to cope with discouragement from within due to the greed of some of the wealthier citizens of Jerusalem, he now had to deal with the continuing and intensifying opposition from Sanballat and friends. News of the progress of the rebuilding had reached the ears of the enemies of the work, and they were alarmed that the work was almost completed. If they did not take action before the doors were fixed in place, their opportunity to halt the work would be gone. Ridicule and threats had not worked, and so now they try to adopt a more subtle approach.

A message was sent to Nehemiah inviting him to a meeting in one of the villages in the plain of Ono, some twenty or thirty miles north-west of Jerusalem. The purpose of the proposed meeting was not stated, but the impression given was that it was to try to reach some kind of accommodation with Nehemiah.

Nehemiah was not deceived however, and immediately saw what lay behind the invitation. He realised that, although couched in friendly terms, their intention was to do him harm, and although the invitation was repeated four times he steadfastly refused to accede.

This is a situation that is not unknown to the child of God and especially for those in any position of leadership. Alan Redpath put it well when he wrote, "Whether you be a pastor or a teacher or evangelist or Sunday school leader, or whatever your position may be in Christian leadership, let me say that there will always be those who are friendly to your face, but who plan your downfall behind your back. Beware of the fawning, flattering Christian who is always fluttering around you, and who behind your back will be the first to rejoice when you go down."

Questions

1. What do the enemies of the Jews want to do?
2. How does Nehemiah respond?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for wisdom for our church leaders.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"But now, O God, strengthen my hands." Nehemiah 6:9b

Praise: Psalm 147 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

NEHEMIAH

pray | plan | build

Friday - Colossians 1:9-12 - Discernment

One of the great characteristics seen in the life of Nehemiah is spiritual discernment. He could quite easily have accepted at face value the invitation made to him by Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem. It would have been easy to think that they were sincerely seeking to mend relations with Nehemiah, especially when they issued the fourth invitation. After all, they must have been serious when they came back a fourth time!

The discernment that God gave Nehemiah enabled him to see things as God saw them. The enemies were out to stop the re-building of the walls, a task that had been given to Nehemiah by God, so what was there to talk about? Sanballat and his friends had been trying everything they knew to stop God's work, and the only way to mend relations with Nehemiah was for them to repent of their sin of opposition to the work of God and to fully support him in the enterprise.

Discernment is the ability to judge matters according to God's view of them, and not according to their outward appearance. We are often deceived by outward appearances: "For the Lord does not see as man sees; for man looks at the outward appearance, but the Lord looks at the heart." (1 Samuel 16:7). Many Christians fall into sin or error because of a lack of discernment, a failure to seek to look at things from a Biblical perspective. Discernment can be developed by:

a. A thorough understanding of the Word of God. The Bereans were commended because they even tested the teaching of the apostle Paul by the Scriptures Acts 17:11.

b. Growth in grace and knowledge of the Lord - spiritual babes believe anything, but the spiritually mature test all things Hebrews 5:12-14.

c. Asking God - wisdom is to be asked of God James 1:5, and discernment is given as a gift of the spirit 1 Cor. 12:10.

Questions

1. How did Nehemiah show discernment?
2. How can we develop discernment?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would grow in discernment
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"But now, O God, strengthen my hands." Nehemiah 6:9b

Praise: Psalm 148 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Saturday - Nehemiah 6:1-4 - Focus

Not only did Nehemiah have great discernment, he had a great commitment and focus on the task he been called upon to undertake. "I am doing a great work and I cannot come down. Why should the work stop while I leave it and come down to you?" Even if the invitation from Sanballat had been benign, which it wasn't, it would still have been a distraction. Nehemiah understood that for the time that he would be away from Jerusalem the work would effectively cease.

Distraction is a great weapon in the hands of the devil to interrupt the work of God. Commenting on this passage James Philip says, "he saw, as many today in the Church do not seem to, that certain things, however plausible or well-meaning, however laudable in themselves, simply get in the way of the work being done, and he refused to have anything to do with them".

The task that Nehemiah was doing may have seemed somewhat mundane; a job that many other people would have been able to do, and yet for him, it was a great work because it was the work that God had called him to do. This is how it is for Christians - you are where you are because that is where God has placed you, and you have a great work to do. Every Christian is given the task of living for the Lord Jesus Christ and demonstrating that no matter what the trials or the inducements that may cause him to waver or to change direction, he knows that he is doing a great job and will not be diverted from it.

The story is told of a missionary in China, a very talented linguist, who was offered a job by a company in China at a vastly expanded salary. He rejected the offer with the words, 'It's not your salary that is too little. It's the job that's too small!'

Questions

1. What did Nehemiah think about distraction?
2. What has God called us to do?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"But now, O God, strengthen my hands." Nehemiah 6:9b

Praise: Psalm 149 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

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