

**All Citizens Christian Church Calgary**

**Bible Study:** Tuesday, August13th, 2024. **Topic: THE NEHEMIAH CHRISTIAN Part 3**

**DEALING WITH ECONOMIC DISTRESSS DURING THE BUILDING OF THE WALL**

**Text: Nehemiah 5**

A leader must pay attention to those he or she is leading. He or she must lead with empathy and concern otherwise he will be seen as a slave driver. He should be able to relate with those he is leading to get the work done. He must not look away otherwise the work will collapse. Nehemiah was not only focused on building the wall, but he was also concerned about those who were building the wall. That is contrary to the capitalistic approach we see in today’s world where the investor is most concerned about his profit while pretending that he cares about the employees.

When we talk about the Nehemiah Christian, we are talking about the Christian that confronts life’s challenges. Not the ones that runs away or the ones that pretend that the challenges do not exist. Chapter 5 of Nehemiah shows Nehemiah confronting another major challenge in Israel that might have derailed the building of the wall if left to continue. This is an internal problem which could be more dangerous than the external ones.

In life, we will always have those that have and those that are struggling or have not. It is how we deal with those who do not have that creates the brotherhood. The fact that some do not have may not be because they are lazy. It may be a case of time and chance. How do we deal with our brethren when things are not going well with them? Do we take advantage of them or do we simply ignore them?

How can a leader take care of this challenge if we must work together. If the issue is not dealt with, it will breed disunity and in the face of disunity, the work will collapse. Nehemiah sorted out the problem and blamed the nobles and the rulers.

In this session we are going to examine the problems which Nehemiah identified and how he dealt with it.

**OUTLINE**

**How many problems did the Jews bring up and what were they**?

1. General food Shortage.
2. There was famine in the land and so some had to mortgage their fields, vineyards and homes to get grains from those that had. The famine may have been caused by their focus on building the wall.
3. Borrowing money from their brothers and using their fields and vineyards as collateral to get money to pay taxes.
4. Selling their children into slavery and not able to redeem them since they have already mortgaged their fields and vineyards.

**What was the problem? V 7** The nobles are rulers were charging interest from their kinsmen contrary to God’s law Exodus 22:25

What was the cause of this problem? Lack of food and money.

**How did Nehemiah find out these problems?** V 6. He heard what was spoken to others. A leader must be sensitive to what people are saying around him. Acts 6:1, James 1:19

**How should we find out one another’s challenge in church**? **Heb 10:24-25**. I will not know your challenge by watching you on You Tube. So, physical attendance and communication is necessary.

Why was it so urgent for Nehemiah to solve this problem? Acts 6:1. What high handed approach might Nehemiah have used to confront this problem

**Do we have challenges in church today?.** Due to social cultural, and economic evolution, the challenges of the church will continue to change. The church must be ready to tackle these changes to ensure its relevance to the time without destroying its fundamental standard. You will find out that the problems that Moses faced was different from the problems that Nehemiah faced and the problem the early church in Jerusalem faced was not the same that Apostle Paul faced. The fact remains that the Church will continue to ride through the waves of problems which I choose to call challenges.

**Give examples of the problems and how you think we could fix them**

1. Class
2. Racism
3. Sexism
4. Spiritual Abuse
5. Spiritual Manipulations
6. Depressions,
7. Ministerial Burnout
8. Financial Strangulation of the church
9. Excessive display of wealth by the clergy

**What could happen if these problems are not addressed in today’s church?**

**What was Nehemiah’s approach to solving them:**

* Called a general meeting
* Rebuke the nobles and rulers publicly. What is the import of this? It will please those who are displeased. I Tim 5:20
* How should we take the situation when we are blamed for a wrong? **Rev 3:19, Prov 1:23, 12:1**
* Told them to stop demanding interest from their brethren. **V 10, Exodus 22:25** “If you lend money to any of My people who are poor among you, you shall not be like a moneylender to him; you shall not charge him interest.

Like in the time of Nehemiah, the solutions to today’s problem will have to be garnered from the system of the day supported by prayers as God will have to give us the best approach to them all.

**Nehemiah blamed the nobles and the rulers for charging interest from their brethren**.

* Is it wrong to charge interest?
* What is wrong in charging interest from your kinsmen?

**Why did Nehemiah not demand that food and money be given to those who had not for free?** God wants us to work and not be lazy.

**Examine the leadership approach of Nehemiah in verses 14 - 16** Leadership by example. This is one major reason why people, especially younger generation are upset with the church today. They see too much wealth with the clergy and their family while the laity are suffering

**Verse 17-18** underscores the importance of wealth among the brethren and what we should use our wealth for. **Prov 11:24-26**

**Why did Nehemiah make the statement in verse 19**. It was to show that he was not doing all these for nothing. He was looking to God for a reward. There is no work that we do for God that will go unrewarded. Luke 6:38, Matt 6:19-20.

**Conclusion**: As we round up Chapter 5 of Nehemiah which focused on internal challenges and how to tackle them, let us know that challenges are not limited to Christians or to non-Christians. We cannot run away from them because they will come. We must ask God for the wisdom to find solutions to all the challenges that comes our way. We must do all within our means to see that the challenges do not crumble us. One thing that gives us victory through challenges is focus. When we are thoroughly focused on our objective, we will see problems as distractions. When we place matters the other way round, we will be heading for failure. Never focus on the challenges but find how you could dispose of them and move on.