

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of March 15, 2015

This Week's Focus: Nehemiah addresses the internal strife among God's people.

This Week's Text: Nehemiah 5

*Some persons are deaf to the voice of justice until it is repeated loudly by thousands of their fellow men. The silent voice of principle and right they will not hear and the gentle rebuke of some faithful friend they will despise—but when righteousness enlists public opinion on its side—when many are seen to be its advocates, then these very persons will show that they have relics of conscience left and they yield to right demands because they see them not only to be just but to be popular. This is the main point with those of the feebler sort and we turn the scale, if, like Nehemiah, we, "set a great assembly against them." **Charles Spurgeon***

But when the Pharisees heard that he had silenced the Sadducees, they gathered together. And one of them, a lawyer, asked him a question to test him. "Teacher, which is the great commandment in the Law?" And he said to him, "You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul and with all your mind. This is the great and first commandment. And a second is like it: You shall love your neighbor as yourself. On these two commandments depend all the Law and the Prophets." **Matthew 22:34-40**

Related Texts: Nehemiah 4:22; Exodus 22:25; Deuteronomy 23:19-20; Leviticus 23:35-40; Psalm 23; Ephesians 4:26-27; Acts 13:47; Proverbs 9-10; John 17:3

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- What in the text/sermon was most illuminating or helpful? Why?
- In chapter 5, the focus shifts from conflict outside the walls of Jerusalem to the conflict within the walls. What was the crisis Nehemiah was facing? What were the internal and external factors leading to the crisis?

- God provided specific instructions for how His people should care for one another in times of need. How had they broken God's commands regarding money lending? Reference Leviticus 25:35-37, Exodus 22:25 and Deuteronomy 23:19-20.
 - Discuss the difference between indentured servitude of biblical times and modern day slavery. Why is it important to distinguish between the two?
- Nehemiah heard the outcry and was justifiably angry. What did he do first? What can we reasonably conclude about his self-council? (Reference Nehemiah 1:4, 2:4, 4:4, and 9)?
 - What does it mean to "be angry and do not sin"? Reference Ephesians 4:26.
- After wrestling in prayer, what did Nehemiah do next? Have there been times that you failed to appropriately confront sin (either someone else's or your own)?
 - It's easy to either ignore sin or become quickly and easily enraged. How can we know the right way to handle sin without falling into either extreme?
- In verse 9, Nehemiah mentions the "taunts of other nations". What was he trying to convey to his people? Why was it important that Israel have a good reputation among the nations?
- According to Nehemiah's words, what was the oppressors' chief sin? What does it mean to fear God?
- Discuss repentance in the context of chapter 5. How is the Gospel incomplete - and can hardly be considered good news - without the call to repentance?
- According to verse 12, how did the nobles and officials respond to Nehemiah's accusations? What practical steps did they take?
- After taking the oath, the people praised the Lord. Discuss how and why true repentance always results in God's praise and glory.
- What sacrifices did Nehemiah make for the people as governor? Why did he make these sacrifices?
- What do you think of Nehemiah's prayer in verse 19? In light of the scripture's revelation of Nehemiah's heart, how could it be misinterpreted?
- How does Nehemiah point to Christ? Reference Luke 22:24-27 and Matthew 11:28-30.

Next Week's Text: Nehemiah 6