



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

Volume 6 - Number 4
The week of November 29, 2020

Sermon Series: *Return and Rebuild*
Reforming Always
Nehemiah 13:4-31

After twelve years of serving as Governor in Jerusalem Nehemiah returned to Persia. Some time later (he doesn't tell us how long he'd been away) he returned only to discover many of the reforms enacted under his leadership had been deliberately defied or ignored. There was the need for further reform.

In Chapter 13, Nehemiah confronted four fatal errors: Compromise, Neglect, Commercialism, and Autonomy. In this study, we discover that those same errors test the integrity of our own faith and Christian distinctives today.

I. Compromise: Testing Our Fidelity to God's Word

The first issue Nehemiah had to confront was how Eliashib the priest permitted Tobiah, an arch-enemy of God's people, to live in one of the chambers of the Temple. Earlier in Nehemiah, Tobiah had tried to stop the rebuilding effort (cf. 2:10, 19; 6:10-12).

- Read verses 4-9.
- What had Eliashib done for Tobiah? Why was this such a bad thing?
- What decisive action did Nehemiah take? What was your initial reaction to what he did?
- What decisive act in Jesus' ministry does this bring to mind? (see John 2:13-25)
- What is the major lesson we can learn from the actions of Nehemiah and Jesus?

- How do we know when to be restrained and gentle and when to be bold and even emotional when confronting sin or error?

II. Neglect: Testing the Importance of Supporting the Work of God

One reason why Eliashib may have allocated a chamber or storeroom to Tobiah was that the tithes of grain, wine and oil were not being given in the expected quantity. The people's neglect caused the Levites to flee the Temple to work in their own fields.

- Read verses 10-14.
- How did Nehemiah address their indifference? What was the central question he asked the officials?

Although we do not have a Temple like the people of God in Nehemiah's day, God has also called us to support the work of the gospel.

- What should be the basis of our giving and the spirit in which we practice it? (see 2 Corinthians 8:1-5)

III. Commercialism: Testing the Value of the Eternal Over the Temporal

A third challenge Nehemiah faced concerned the observance of the Sabbath. People (locals and foreigners) were buying and selling produce in Jerusalem on Friday nights and all-day Saturday.

Read verses 15-22.

- What did you make of Nehemiah's response?

Although we do not regard the Sabbath regulations in exactly the same way as they did in Nehemiah's day, we do celebrate the Lord's Day.

- In what way is the celebration of the Lord's Day a test for us today?

IV. Autonomy: Testing the Sacredness of Marriage and Family

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem he found the men of Judah had married women from the surrounding pagan cultures. As a result, he also found the language spoken in the home was the native tongue of the mother, making it difficult, if not impossible, to participate in Israel's worship at the Temple.

- Read verses 23-31.
- In this context, what was the danger of Israelite men taking foreign wives?
- What great king had committed this same sin? What was the consequence?
- How is the hallowedness of marriage and family life being tested today?
- How can we seek reformation in the home today?

Conclusion (verses 14, 22, 29).

- Why does Nehemiah ask God to remember him three times?
- How does that both inform and encourage you to pray?

Read the Bible: Reading Plan for 2020

Sunday, November 29 thru Saturday, December 5, 2020

1 Chronicles 26-27, 2 Peter 1, Micah 4, Luke 13; 1 Chron. 28, 2 Peter 2, Micah 5, Luke 14; 1 Chron. 29, 2 Peter 3, Micah 6, Luke 15; 2 Chron. 1, 1 John 1, Micah 7, Luke 16; 2 Chron. 2, 1 John 2, Nahum 1, Luke 17; 2 Chron. 3-4, 1 John 3, Nahum 2, Luke 18; 2 Chron. 5:1-6:11, 1 John 4, Nahum 3, Luke 19