

“Resolving Conflicts Within”
Nehemiah 5:1-19
4/13/24
Message 5

Introduction

- Title Of The Message: “Resolving Conflicts Within”

- **Conflicts Within The Body Of Christ**

- **Personal Conflicts**

- The Struggles are REAL
 - Spoken Harshly / Mean to you
 - Gossiped about you
 - Left you out of a group
 - Hurt you in a business dealing
 - Etc...
- Sadly –
 - Some Christian have even stop attending Church because of such struggles

- **Church Conflicts**

- Building Issues
- Money Issues - Why are we spending money on this...
- Power Struggles
- Consumer Mentality

- **NOW At the CORE of ALL CONFLICTS**

- We CAN BE a selfish bunch!!!
 - PRIDE
 - SIN
 - At the center of both the words sin and pride... "I"
- What we need is a Correct focus on what God has called us to
 - LOVE GOD = LOVE OTHERS
 - Die to Self = Live for Others

- **This chapter deals with Conflicts the Enemy Attacking from within**

- Wiersbe; "When the enemy fails in his attacks from the outside, he then begins to attack from within; and one of his favorite weapons is selfishness. If he can get us thinking only about ourselves and what we want, then he will win the victory before we realize that he is even at work."
- How a godly Nehemiah lead the nation through that conflict!

- **Review – A Running Start**

- **God Judged Israel for the Years of Rebellion**

- **The Northern Kingdom FELL**
 - Fell first and the people were taken into captivity by the Assyrians in 722 B.C.
 - The Northern Kingdom were absorbed into Assyria and eventually into other cultures.
- **The Southern Kingdom FELL**

- To the Babylonians brought in 586 B.C.
 - The Southern Kingdom remained intact in Babylon
- After Babylon FELL by the Medes and Persians in 539 B.C.
 - Many Jews returned to their homeland.
- **The Return**
 - 3 Main Parts to the return
- **Chapter 1 - Nehemiah - A Burden & Prayer**
 - Nehemiah Kings Cupbearer
 - ALL CHANGED in one day
 - The Commitment To Prayer
- **Chapter 2 - The Good Hand of My God Upon Me"**
 - Respond To Opportunities vv. 1-4
 - Fasted & Prayed for 4 months
 - You Will Always Have Opposition vv. 9-10
 - The Obstacles To Be Overcome vv. 11-18
 - How To Deal With Opposition vv. 19-20
- **Chapter 3**
 - A very technical section of the Book
 - The Main Purpose
 - Reasons For Walls

- Teamwork
 - 1st We Need a Common Vision
 - 2nd Dedicated Leaders
 - 3rd Willing Workers
- **Chapter 4 – Last Week**
 - Recognize God's Work Will Be Criticized vv. 1-3
 - Rely On God vv. 4-5
 - Ramped Up The Work v. 6
 - Realize How Much We Need The Lord vv. 7-9
 - Refuse To Get Discouraged vv. 10-14
 - Ready For The Battle vv. 15-18
 - Remember God Fights For US vv. 19-23
- **Passion Week - Palm Sunday Today**
 - Passion Week Starts today
 - Palm Sunday Marks the Day that Jesus rode into Jerusalem
 - Did you Know The Book of Nehemiah is Key to when Jesus rode into Jerusalem
 - **WHEN He would come**

Daniel 9:24–25 (NKJV)

24 "Seventy weeks are determined For your people and for your holy city, To finish the transgression, To make an end of sins, To make reconciliation for

*iniquity, To bring in everlasting righteousness, To seal up vision and prophecy,
And to anoint the Most Holy.*

25 *"Know therefore and understand, That from the going forth of the command
To restore and build Jerusalem Until Messiah the Prince, There shall be seven
weeks and sixty-two weeks; The street shall be built again, and the wall, Even
in troublesome times.*

- **The Prophecy they should have known**

- 70 weeks are determined for Your People & for Your Holy City...
- **1st Notice Who is this addressed to**
 - Jews / Israel (your people)
 - Jerusalem (your holy city)
- **2nd Note that 70 weeks are DETERMINED**
 - What is a week?
 - Now a week can be...
 - 7 Days
 - Or a period of 7 years. ("Heptad" a group up of seven)
 - Remember...
 - Genesis 29:27 Laban to Jacob / Leah, Rachel / fulfill her "Week" it was 7 years
 - Here in Daniel a week refers to a 7-year period
 - 70 weeks =

- 70 – 7 year periods or a total of 490 years are determined for Israel

- **3rd This is not to be a MYSTERY**

- Verse 25 Know Therefore & Understand
 - This was not to be a MYSTERY
- So what are we to know & UNDERSTAND
 - From the going forth of the command to go & restore and rebuild Jerusalem until Messiah comes....
 - Nehemiah 2
 - Shall be 7 weeks and 62 weeks = 69 Weeks
 - The Messiah would arrive at that time – Palm Sunday
 - They should have never missed it.
 - We know the date of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem

- **4th The Calculation**

- We know the date of the decree to rebuild Jerusalem
- British scholar, Sir Robert Anderson, showed that Jesus' triumphal entry was fulfilled on that very day
- Did you bring a calculator today?
- **King Artaxerxes gave the decree on March 14, 445 BC (Neh. 2)**

- The Biblical Calendar uses a 360 day year
 - $69 \times 7 \times 360 = 173,880$ days
 - But, in 701 BC, Numa Pompilius, the 2nd king of Rome, changed all calendars to 365 days
 - So March 14th 445 BC to March 14th, 32 AD is 476 years
 - (1 BC to 1 AD is one year. There is no year zero)
 - $476 \text{ years} \times 365 \text{ days per year} = 173,740$ days
 - Add leap years = 116 days
 - March 14th to April 6th = 24 days
 - Total = 173,880 days!

- That brings us to April 6th, 32 AD

- That is the very day we are reading about here
 - The day Jesus road into Jerusalem
 - Thus fulfilling the Prophecies of Zech. & Daniel
 - THEY SHOULD HAVE KNOW

- **5th Note We STILL have One Week left for Israel (Tribulation Period)**

- Known as Jacob's Trial

- **Now This Morning 4 Powerful Way Nehemiah Resolves The Conflicts**

- The Conflict vv. 1-5
- The Courage Of Nehemiah vv. 6-11
- The Commitment Of The People vv. 12-13
- The Character Of Nehemiah vv. 14-19

The Conflict vv. 1-5

- **First: Multitudes Needed Food v. 1-2**

- **1st And there was v. 1a**

Nehemiah 5:1 (NKJV)

1 And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brethren.

- **Chapter 4 ended on a note of great victory.**

- The people of God were doing the work of God
 - Despite all obstacles.
 - They would not let their enemies stop them.

- **But in Chapter 5**

- There is no mention of working on the wall,
- Indicating that the work had stopped
- Because of the Conflict that had happened

- **2nd Against their Jewish brethren v. 1b-2**

Nehemiah 5:1–2 (NKJV)

1 And there was a great outcry of the people and their wives against their Jewish brethren.

2 For there were those who said, “We, our sons, and our daughters are many; therefore let us get grain, that we may eat and live.”

○ **The work stopped because of strife among God’s people.**

▪ **What is this Conflict**

- Famine
- Taxes
- Jews Nobles Abusing their Brothers
 - Loaning money charging Interest

▪ **NOTE**

- The enemy could not stop the work of God by direct attack
- But the work stopped
 - When God’s people weren’t unified and working together

• **Second: Mortgages & Borrowed Money vv. 3-4**

○ **1st Because of the famine – The Problem vv. 3-4**

▪ **1st Famine v. 3b**

Nehemiah 5:3 (NKJV)

3 There were also some who said, “We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses, that we might buy grain because of the famine.”

- Economically times were hard

▪ **2nd Mortgage & Barrow - For the KINGS TAX vv. 3-4**

Nehemiah 5:3–4 (NKJV)

*3 There were also some who said, “**We have mortgaged our lands and vineyards and houses,** that we might buy grain because of the famine.”*

*4 There were also those who said, “**We have borrowed money for the king’s tax on our lands and vineyards.**”*

- **Remember**

- The Persians were ruling at this time
 - The people were dealing with HEAVY taxation that was coming down from the King
- NOTE
 - When Alexander the Great took over Susa
 - Where Nehemiah had served Artaxerxes,
 - He found some 270 tons of gold, & 1,200 tons of silver.

- **So The PROBLEM**

- Taxes from the King made worse by the Famine
 - So in order to get food and to pay their taxes –
 - The people were borrowing against their farms and their homes
 - So they were borrowing from the Wealthy Jews –
 - The rulers & the nobles
 - (Nehemiah 5:11)
 - The hundredth part

- The rich were taking advantage of the crisis to make money off the poor, charging 12% interest a year.

- **3rd We are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves v. 5**

Nehemiah 5:5 (NKJV)

5 Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and indeed we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have been brought into slavery. It is not in our power to redeem them, for other men have our lands and vineyards.”

- People had financial problems because the loans they had taken out to live cost interest, and some were in default.
- Therefore, some people had to give their children as servants to their lenders to pay off the debt.

- **4th Recap**

- **1st The rulers and the nobles were charging interest**
 - Now God had clearly outlined rules for lending & borrowing in his word
 - They were allowed to lend –
 - But they were not to charge interest

Deuteronomy 23:19–20 (NKJV)

19 *“You shall not charge interest to your brother—interest on money or food or anything that is lent out at interest.*

20 *To a foreigner you may charge interest, but to your brother you shall not charge interest, that the LORD your God may bless you in all to which you set your hand in the land which you are entering to possess.*

Leviticus 25:35–38 (NKJV)

35 *'If one of your brethren becomes poor, and falls into poverty among you, then you shall help him, like a stranger or a sojourner, that he may live with you.*

36 *Take no usury or interest from him; but fear your God, that your brother may live with you.*

37 *You shall not lend him your money for usury, nor lend him your food at a profit.*

38 *I am the LORD your God, who brought you out of the land of Egypt, to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.*

- So - the first problem was that the rulers and nobles were Charging interest –

- Which went against God's word

- **2nd Taking their land and children**

- The problem was that when someone couldn't pay back their loan
 - The lenders were taking their homes their land & in some cases their children for slaves
- This practice was also forbidden by the Lord

Leviticus 25:39–41 (NKJV)

39 *'And if one of your brethren who dwells by you becomes poor, and sells himself to you, you shall not compel him to serve as a slave.*

40 *As a hired servant and a sojourner he shall be with you, and shall serve you until the Year of Jubilee.*

41 *And then he shall depart from you—he and his children with him—and shall return to his own family. He shall return to the possession of his fathers.*

- SO - God forbade his people to treat one another as slaves
- He provided a way to balance the economic system
 - In the 50th year which was called the year of Jubilee

- All debts had to be forgiven and all land restored to its original owners, and all servants set free.
- So - these rulers and nobles were clearly acting in a way that was contrary to God's word in their EXPLOITATION OF their brethren
- **2nd Application**
 - **1st Fun History Fact about Taxes in American History**
 - IRS - <https://www.irs.gov/>
 - Under - Historical Highlights of the IRS
 - **1862 - President Lincoln signed into law a revenue-raising measure to help pay for Civil War expenses.** The measure created a Commissioner of Internal Revenue and the nation's first income tax. It levied a 3 percent tax on incomes between \$600 and \$10,000 and a 5 percent tax on incomes of more than \$10,000.
 - 1867 - Heeding public opposition to the income tax, Congress cut the tax rate.
 - From 1868 until 1913, 90 percent of all revenue came from taxes on liquor, beer, wine and tobacco.
 - 1872 - Income tax repealed.
 - 1894 - The Wilson Tariff Act revived the income tax and an income tax division within the Bureau of Internal Revenue was created.
 - 1895 - Supreme Court ruled the new income tax unconstitutional on the grounds that it was a direct tax and not apportioned among the states on the basis of population. The income tax division was disbanded.

- 1909 - President Taft recommended Congress propose a constitutional amendment that would give the government the power to tax incomes without apportioning the burden among the states in line with population. Congress also levied a 1 percent tax on net corporate incomes of more than \$5,000.
- 1913 - As the threat of war loomed, Wyoming became the 36th and last state needed to ratify the 16th Amendment. The amendment stated, "Congress shall have the power to lay and collect taxes on incomes, from whatever source derived, without apportionment among the several states, and without regard to any census or enumeration." Later, Congress adopted a 1 percent tax on net personal income of more than \$3,000 with a surtax of 6 percent on incomes of more than \$500,000. It also repealed the 1909 corporate income tax. The first Form 1040 was introduced.
- Also Note
 - Before the Sixteenth Amendment in 1913 established the federal income tax, the United States primarily funded itself through tariffs on imported goods and excise taxes on specific items like alcohol and tobacco. Additional sources included the sale of public lands and temporary excise taxes during wartime, says the IRS.

▪ **IF America Does Not get its debt Under Control**

- We will NO LONGER BE A NATION
- As of April 10, 2025, the U.S. national debt is approximately \$36.22 trillion.
 - Here's a more detailed breakdown:
 - Total Gross Debt: \$36.22 trillion
 - Debt Held by the Public: \$28.96 trillion

- Intergovernmental Debt: \$7.26 trillion
- Debt per person: \$108,136
- Debt per household: \$273,919
- Increase in Debt: The gross national debt is \$1.61 trillion higher than one year ago.
- Debt to GDP ratio: 122.63%

- If we don't deal with this Debt –

- We will be SELLING OUR KIDS AND GRANDKIDS into Slavery

- BE GOOD STEWARDS Of God's Money

- As of the end of 2024, Americans hold a record \$1.21 trillion in credit card debt, a significant increase from \$770 billion in the first quarter of 2021, with delinquency rates also rising.
 - Increased Interest Rates:
 - Credit card APRs are averaging around 22% to 23%, which is higher than normal.
- We need to SEE ALL the Money we have as God's
 - Sometimes want to separate what we do with our money from our walk with God.
 - This is a huge deception from Satan.
 - The Spend of Money
 - We MUST see ALL our money as God's Money

- We Must ask Him how He want us to spend it
- Guzik; *“If we don’t handle our money with the right heart, and make financial decisions with an eye to eternity, we can make mistakes that will affect the work of God in our lives for years and years.”*

The Courage Of Nehemiah vv. 6-11

• First: Nehemiah’s Reaction v. 6

○ 1st What His Response Was NOT v. 6

Nehemiah 5:6 (NKJV)

6 *And I became very angry when I heard their outcry and these words.*

▪ **He DOESN’T**

- Turn A blind eye
- Ignore the problem – hoping it will just go away

▪ **The first mark of a good leader:**

- He becomes angry at injustice
- When Nehemiah hears about the abuse that was taking place – he gets upset
- *Nehemiah was not a politician who asked, “What is popular?” or a diplomat who asked, “What is safe?” but a true leader who asked, “What is right?”*

○ 2nd The Righteous Anger

▪ **Yes - there is RIGHTEOUS ANGER**

Ephesians 4:26 (NKJV)

26 *“Be angry, and do not sin”: do not let the sun go down on your wrath,*

- Example
 - Moses
 - Over the golden-calf - Ex.32:19
 - Jesus

Matthew 21:12–13 (NKJV)

12 Then Jesus went into the temple of God and drove out all those who bought and sold in the temple, and overturned the tables of the money changers and the seats of those who sold doves.

13 And He said to them, *“It is written, ‘My house shall be called a house of prayer,’ but you have made it a ‘den of thieves.’ ”*

- **Nehemiah’s RIGHTEOUS Anger**

- Against SIN and
 - The Nobles violated the Law of God
 - By Charging Interest
 - By Being Greedy
 - By NOT SHOWING Compassion
 - Their actions were affecting the unity of the people & stopping the work.

- **2nd Application**

- **Do We have RIGHTEOUS ANGER**

- We should get angry at
 - Water down Teaching
 - At False Teaching

- At anything thing, the weakens the Bible and the church
- At Sin – In our own lives and in the lives of people and the nation

- **Second: Nehemiah's Rebuke v. 7-9**

- **1st He Consulted Before He Confronted v. 7a**

Nehemiah 5:7 (NKJV)

7 After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, "Each of you is exacting usury from his brother." So I called a great assembly against them.

- ***1st V. 7a After serious thought***

Nehemiah 5:7 (NASB95)

7 I consulted with myself and contended with the nobles and the rulers and said to them, "You are exacting usury, each from his brother!" Therefore, I held a great assembly against them.

- David wrote in

Psalms 4:4 (NKJV)

4 Be angry, and do not sin. Meditate within your heart on your bed, and be still. Selah

- We see that Nehemiah followed David's advice
- Nehemiah was a man passionate enough to get angry
- But wise enough to not act until he had considered the matter carefully.
- Nehemiah is a wise leader –
 - He Consults before he Confronts!!!

- **2nd His Actions vv. 7b-9**

▪ **1st He Rebuked v. 7b**

Nehemiah 5:7 (NKJV)

7 After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, “Each of you is exacting usury from his brother.” So I called a great assembly against them.

- Nehemiah starts by rebuking these guys
 - The word rebuke means to reprimand sharply
 - He calls them on the carpet and points out where they were wrong.
- **In his rebuke he reminds the rulers of four very important things**
- **1st He reminds them that these were their BROTHERS**

Nehemiah 5:7 (NKJV)

7 After serious thought, I rebuked the nobles and rulers, and said to them, “Each of you is exacting usury from his brother.” So I called a great assembly against them.

- He uses the term brother or brethren 4 times in these verses
- Application
 - We are FAMILY – services – not to be cute – true
 - Brothers and sisters in Christ
 - Linked by Blood – the blood of Jesus Christ
 - Critical we never forget that

Psalm 133:1 (NKJV)

1 Behold, how good and how pleasant it is For brethren to dwell together in unity!

▪ Illustration

- *Lee Iacocca once asked legendary football coach Vince Lombardi what it took to make a winning team.*
- *He noted...*
- *Some teams are sound fundamentally, but they don't win*
- *Some teams are well disciplined – But they don't win*
- *If you're going to play together as a team, you've got to care for one another. You've got to love each other. Each player has to be thinking about the next guy and saying to himself: 'If I don't block that man, Paul is going to get his legs broken. I have to do my job well in order that he can do his.' "The difference between mediocrity and greatness," Lombardi said that night, "is the feeling these guys have for each other."*

○ A healthy Church is one that realizes –

- We are Forever Family

▪ **2nd They Have Been Redeemed v. 8**

Nehemiah 5:8 (NKJV)

8 And I said to them, "According to our ability we have redeemed our Jewish brethren who were sold to the nations. Now indeed, will you even sell your brethren? Or should they be sold to us?" Then they were silenced and found nothing to say.

- **Wealthy Jews made an effort to buy back many of the**
 - Jewish descendants of those originally taken into slavery by the Assyrians and Babylonians.
 - Such efforts made the return of these slaves to Jerusalem possible.
- **But in the even bigger picture**
 - As a nation they had been set free from the captivity of Egypt
 - They were a redeemed people –
 - Rescued by God –
 - Redeemed by the blood of the Passover lamb –
 - Nehemiah's question is simple –
 - How can you put your brothers & sisters back into bondage?
- **3rd Nehemiah reminds them of the Word of God - FEAR OF God v. 9a**

Nehemiah 5:9 (NKJV)

9 Then I said, "What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?"

- Walking in the FEAR OF GOD
 - Their need to walk in the fear of God
 - God is watching How they are treating EACH other
 - He will Hold them responsible

- Application
 - He is watching US
 - Don't Mis-treat a brother or sister in the Lord
 - Gossip (Tear Down)

▪ **4th Nehemiah tells them they needed to remember their witness v. 9b**

Nehemiah 5:9 (NKJV)

9 *Then I said, "What you are doing is not good. Should you not walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the nations, our enemies?"*

- Their behavior would be a reproach to the nations
 - They were to be an example to the other nations of how to treat each other.
 - Problem was there were acting just like the nations around them –
 - There was no difference
- Application
 - Do we look different from the world?
 - Our witness – People will know... By our LOVE for one another

▪ **5th Nehemiah Told What Was Required vv. 10-11**

- 1st Make it RIGHT vv. 10-11

Nehemiah 5:10–11 (NKJV)

10 *I also, with my brethren and my servants, am lending them money and grain. Please, let us stop this usury!*

11 Restore now to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their olive groves, and their houses, also a hundredth of the money and the grain, the new wine and the oil, that you have charged them.”

- Nehemiah exhorts them to make the situation RIGHT
 - By restoring what they had taken – their lands their houses

The Commitment Of The People vv. 12-13

- **First: They Agreed v. 12**

- **1st We will restore it v. 12**

Nehemiah 5:12 (NKJV)

12 So they said, “We will restore it, and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say.” Then I called the priests, and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise.

- They Said
 - We Will LISTEN and DO
- Application
 - They had a teachable heart
 - DO WE? When the HS speaks to us, Do we Listen and Do?

- **2nd He hold them accountable – OATH v. 12b**

Nehemiah 5:12 (NKJV)

12 So they said, “We will restore it, and will require nothing from them; we will do as you say.” Then I called the priests, and required an oath from them that they would do according to this promise.

- Not just words... BUT an OATH
 - Make a promise before God to do right

- **Second: very serious visual illustration v. 13**

- **1st So may God shake out each man...who does not perform this promise:**

Nehemiah 5:13 (NKJV)

13 Then I shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out each man from his house, and from his property, who does not perform this promise. Even thus may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said, "Amen!" and praised the LORD. Then the people did according to this promise.

- Nehemiah wants these people to realize the serious nature of their promise to God.
 - Nehemiah shook out the folds of his robe, which symbolized what God would do if they broke their vow.

The Character Of Nehemiah vv. 14-19

- **First: Nehemiah Refused To Be Like Other Governors vv. 15-16**

- **1st Neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions v. 14-15a**

Nehemiah 5:14–15 (NKJV)

14 Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor's provisions.

15 But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God.

- **Nehemiah was a great example of putting the work of God**
 - Ahead of his own personal interest.

- He certainly had the right to tax the people for his support (others had done it before him)

- But he didn't claim that right because it wouldn't help the work of God.

- **2nd Because of the fear of God v. 15b-16**

Nehemiah 5:15–16 (NKJV)

15 But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, ***but I did not do so, because of the fear of God.***

16 Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall, and we did not buy any land. All my servants were gathered there for the work.

- I did not do so, because of the fear of God:

- Nehemiah did what was right before God

- Not what was “right” for his own cares and concerns –

- Because he knew he would have to answer to God.

- **Second: Nehemiah Relieved The Burden vv. 17-18**

Nehemiah 5:17–18 (NKJV)

17 And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us.

18 Now that which was prepared daily was one ox and six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor's provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people.

- **1st And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers:**

- Nehemiah not only did not take when he could have;

- He also gave when he didn't have to.

- He received a lot of food from the king's provisions, which he could have sold for his own profit.
- Instead, he gave them away to be the example of generosity – feeding as many as 150 people regularly.

- **Third: Nehemiah Relied Upon God v. 19**

- **1st Remember me, my God v. 19**

Nehemiah 5:19 (NKJV)

19 Remember me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.

- **Remember me, my God, for good:**

- Nehemiah did not look for praise from man – BUT from God
- It all about WHAT we DO for Jesus

Closing

- The Conflict vv. 1-5
- The Courage Of Nehemiah vv. 6-11
- The Commitment Of The People vv. 12-13
- The Character Of Nehemiah vv. 14-19