

Establishing His Kingdom (Nehemiah Chapter 5)

Sunday, October 13, 2024

10:30 AM

As we work our way through the book of Nehemiah, each chapter has taught us a different principle of Establishing The Kingdom of God both within our hearts and in this world.

Chapter 1 - Igniting/reigniting The Fire to Establish His Kingdom

Chapter 2 - Protecting The Fire

Chapter 3 - Teamwork - The Power of Unity in The Body of Christ

Chapter 4 - Overcoming The Opposition of The Enemy

Even though we have already applied the principles of Establishing His Kingdom to both the Outward Work of building His Church and the Inward Work of building His Kingdom in our hearts; in chapter 5 Nehemiah turns his attention, for the first time, solely to the INTERNAL WORK that needs to happen in our lives.

Chapter 5 - INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION

Nehemiah 5

5 Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their fellow Jews. 2 Some were saying, “We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain.”

3 Others were saying, “We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine.”

4 Still others were saying, “We have had to borrow money to pay the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards. 5 Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our fellow Jews and though our children are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others.”

6 When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. 7 I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, “You are charging your own people interest!” So I called together a large meeting to deal with them 8 and said: “As far as possible, we have bought back our fellow Jews who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your own people, only for them to be sold back to us!” They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.

9 So I continued, “What you are doing is not right. Shouldn’t you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies? 10 I and my brothers and my men are also lending

the people money and grain. But let us stop charging interest! 11 Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses, and also the interest you are charging them—one percent of the money, grain, new wine and olive oil.”

12 “We will give it back,” they said. “And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say.”

Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. 13 I also shook out the folds of my robe and said, “In this way may God shake out of their house and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may such a person be shaken out and emptied!”

At this the whole assembly said, “Amen,” and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

14 Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. 15 But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. 16 Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land.

17 Furthermore, a hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations. 18 Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some poultry were prepared for me, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine of all kinds. In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because the demands were heavy on these people.

19 Remember me with favor, my God, for all I have done for these people.

First of all notice that the outward work of rebuilding the walls is not mentioned in this chapter at all, with the exception of a minor reference to it in verse 16... *"I devoted myself to the work on this wall."*

In order for me to set the stage for what I feel The Holy Spirit is speaking to us through this chapter, I want to first highlight a view of the statements made within these verses that illustrate the concept of INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION (Establishing His Kingdom in our hearts) as opposed to the OUTWARD WORK of Establishing His Kingdom in this world.

5 ..yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless..”

9 ..“What you are doing is not right. Shouldn’t you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?

12 “We will give it back,” they said. “And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say.”

Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. 13 I also shook out the folds of my robe and said, “In this way may God shake out of their house and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may such a person be shaken out and emptied!”

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15 ..But out of reverence for God I did not act like that.

19 Remember me with favor, my God, for all I have done for these people.

Why Chapter 5

It can be easy for us to focus on the outward establishment of Gods Kingdom and neglect the inward work that He wants to do

Matthew 23:23-28

23 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You give a tenth of your spices—mint, dill and cumin. But you have neglected the more important matters of the law—justice, mercy and faithfulness. You should have practiced the latter, without neglecting the former. 24 You blind guides! You strain out a gnat but swallow a camel.

25 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You clean the outside of the cup and dish, but inside they are full of greed and self-indulgence. 26 Blind Pharisee! First clean the inside of the cup and dish, and then the outside also will be clean.

27 “Woe to you, teachers of the law and Pharisees, you hypocrites! You are like whitewashed tombs, which look beautiful on the outside but on the inside are full of the bones of the dead and everything unclean. 28 In the same way, on the outside you appear to people as righteous but on the inside you are full of hypocrisy and wickedness.

Maybe because it's a more difficult work. It's one thing to pick up a stone, or many stones, and put them back in place. I can do that... But allowing the Holy Spirit to convict me and then change me and doing the work of conforming to that change - That is way more difficult.

We want to substitute the quantity of outside work for our lack of INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION, somehow hoping that it makes up for it. But no amount of giving or kingdom work will ever make up for our lack of being transformed into His image on the inside. You won't obtain a better place in heaven or justify your belonging there because of what you have done, especially if the inside of the cup is still unclean.

Mark 8:34-36

34 Then he called the crowd to him along with his disciples and said: “Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. 35 For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me and for the gospel will save it. 36 What good is it for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul?

INTERNAL TRANSFORMATION

Let's go back to our New Testament Passage in Matthew 16 that we have been using to help us understand how Nehemiah teaches us to Establish The Kingdom of God

Matthew 16:13-19

13 When Jesus came to the region of Caesarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, “Who do people say the Son of Man is?”

14 They replied, “Some say John the Baptist; others say Elijah; and still others, Jeremiah or one of the prophets.”

15 “But what about you?” he asked. “Who do you say I am?”

16 Simon Peter answered, “You are the Messiah, the Son of the living God.”

17 Jesus replied, “Blessed are you, Simon son of Jonah, for this was not revealed to you by flesh and blood, but by my Father in heaven. 18 And I tell you that you are Peter, and on this rock I will build my church, and the gates of Hades will not overcome it. 19 I will give you the keys of the kingdom of heaven; whatever you bind on earth will be bound in heaven, and whatever you loose on earth will be loosed in heaven.”

I told you that this passage deals with more than the outward building of God's Kingdom. That it first applies to our recognition of who Jesus is and our willingness to allow His teachings and His power to transform us and establish His kingdom on the Inside

John 1:40-42

40 Andrew, Simon Peter's brother, was one of the two who heard what John had said and who had followed Jesus. 41 The first thing Andrew did was to find his brother Simon and tell him, "We have found the Messiah" (that is, the Christ). 42 And he brought him to Jesus. Jesus looked at him and said, "You are Simon son of John. You will be called Cephas" (which, when translated, is Peter[\[a\]](#)).

Here are some of the INTERNAL TRANSFORMATIONS that need to take place...

DOING the things (THINKING and ACTING like) the world does

RELYING on our OWN STRENGTH

TRUSTING God for PROVISION

Not LORDING our POSITION over others

INTEGRITY

HONESTY

HUMILITY

COMPASSION

A great list would be **THE FRUIT of the Holy Spirit** and what we have been talking about for several weeks on Wednesday Nights.

Love

Joy

Peace

Patience

Kindness

Goodness

Gentleness

Faithfulness

Self-Control