

The story of Nehemiah

Who Nehemiah was:

Nehemiah was a cupbearer "an officer of high rank at ancient courts, whose duty it was to serve the wine at the king's table. On account of the constant fear of plots and intrigues, a person must be regarded as thoroughly trustworthy to hold this position. He must guard against poison in the king's cup, and was sometimes required to swallow some of the wine before serving it. His confidential relations with the king often endeared him to his sovereign and also gave him a position of great influence

Nehemiah 1:1-4

The words of Nehemiah son of Hacaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Why was Nehemiah so upset?

What was the need that Nehemiah wanted to meet for his people?

Nehemiah's interaction with the king

Nehemiah 2:2 so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart."

Nehemiah 2:4 The king said to me, "What is it you want?"

Then I prayed to the God of heaven, 5 and I answered the king, "If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."

How did Nehemiah use the position that God put him in to restore Judah?

What are your current areas of influence?

What opportunities have you been given this year to serve God in your areas of influence?

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6 Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, "How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?" It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.

Restoration of Judah

1. Rebuilding the walls and temple

Nehemiah 4:1–3 When Sanballat heard that we were rebuilding the wall, he became angry and was greatly incensed. He ridiculed the Jews, 2 and in the presence of his associates and the army of Samaria, he said, "What are those feeble Jews doing? Will they restore their wall? Will they offer sacrifices? Will they finish in a day? Can they bring the stones back to life from those heaps of rubble—burned as they are?"

3 Tobiah the Ammonite, who was at his side, said, "What they are building—if even a fox climbed up on it, he would break down their wall of stones!"

When Nehemiah is being faced with opposition what are his choices?

How can God use this opposition to teach Nehemiah and the Israelites?

Have you ever face opposition in your life when you were trying to live for God? What did it look like?

How did you respond to the opposition?

Looking back what did you learn from the opposition?

2. Refining the people

Ezra 10:10-12

Then Ezra the priest stood and said to them: “You have committed a terrible sin. By marrying pagan women, you have increased Israel’s guilt. 11 So now confess your sin to the Lord, the God of your ancestors, and do what he demands. Separate yourselves from the people of the land and from these pagan women.”

12 Then the whole assembly raised their voices and answered, “Yes, you are right; we must do as you say!”

_Why was Ezra so upset that they had married foreign wives?

1 Kings 11:8

He did the same for all his foreign wives, who burned incense and offered sacrifices to their gods.

Has there ever been a time in your life that you knew what the right choice was but you choose not to do it?

How did you get that point? How do you prevent it?

Pharisee’s

Nehemiah 10:29

all these now join their brothers the nobles, and bind themselves with a curse and an oath to follow the Law of God given through Moses the servant of God and to obey carefully all the commands, regulations and decrees of the LORD our Lord.

In order to guard their laws the Jewish people established an order of scribes to make sure the Jewish people were following the laws. Over time they became so occupied with knowing and following the laws that they lost sight of what they were meant

to do, which was ensure community obedience. They put the law before God and by doing that it became a harmful thing.

How could obeying God's laws be a bad thing?

What things in your life that are done for God have been put before God?