

Study Guide

Nehemiah Chapters 5

Big Idea: A healing community is a forgiving community

1. Read Nehemiah 5:1-5. Do you ever feel like it's never enough? Can you think of examples in your life, when you have felt overwhelmed with needs?

2. Discuss how we can react wrongly when we have overwhelming needs:

Isaiah 50:11

"Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches! Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled! This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment."

What are some of the ways we self-sabotage? What hidden attitudes lie behind these actions?

3. Read Nehemiah 5:6-13. Describe what had happened in the community? How do we tend to exploit people to our own advantage? How can a generous attitude help people towards renewal?

4. According to v. 8, *"We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!"* we have been set free in Christ. How can we slip into holding a grudge against someone even though we've been forgiven? Share a time when you struggled to forgive someone his or her debt?

5. Read Nehemiah 5:14-19. Describe what a generous and forgiving community looks like. How did Nehemiah live as an example? How can we apply this to our lives?

Message Slides

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I. Grasping for Control (v.1-5)

Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. ²For there were those who said, "With our sons and our daughters, we are many. So let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive."³There were also those who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine." ⁴And there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards."⁵Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards."

Isaiah 50:11

"Behold, all you who kindle a fire, who equip yourselves with burning torches!
Walk by the light of your fire, and by the torches that you have kindled!
This you have from my hand: you shall lie down in torment."

II. Holding Debts (v. 6-13)

⁶I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words. ⁷I took counsel with myself, and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "You are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them ⁸and said to them, "We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!" They were silent and could not find a word to say. ⁹So I said, "The thing that you are doing is not good. Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?"¹⁰Moreover, I and my brothers and my servants are lending them money and grain. Let us abandon this exacting of interest. ¹¹Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them." ¹²Then they said, "We will restore these and require nothing from them. We will do as you say." And I called the priests and made them swear to do as they had promised. ¹³I also shook out the fold of my garment and said, "So may God shake out every man from his house and from his labor who does not keep this promise. So may he be shaken out and emptied." And all the assembly said "Amen" and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

III. Forgiving Debt (v. 6-13)

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Image- Forgive

A. Recount the Gospel

Nehemiah said (v.8-9)

"We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us! Ought you not to walk in the fear of our God to prevent the taunts of the nations our enemies?"

>each on mouse click<

Eph. 4:32

"Be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you."

2 Cor. 8:9

"For you know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, so that you by his poverty might become rich."

B. Choose to Forgive (v.11)

"Return to them this very day their fields, their vineyards, their olive orchards, and their houses, and the percentage of money, grain, wine, and oil that you have been exacting from them."

C. Seal the Deal (v. 12b)

"And I called the priests and made them swear..."

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Heb. 4:14 & 16

"Since then we have a great high priest who has passed through the heavens, Jesus, the Son of God, let us hold fast our confession... Let us then with confidence draw near to the throne of grace, that we may receive mercy and find grace to help in time of need."

III. Healing Communities are Generous (v.14-19)

¹⁴Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor.¹⁵The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.¹⁶I also persevered in the work on this wall, and we acquired no land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work. ¹⁷Moreover, there were at my table 150 men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. ¹⁸Now what was prepared at my expense for each day was one ox and six choice sheep and birds, and every ten days all kinds of wine in abundance. Yet for all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the service was too heavy on this people. ¹⁹Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

A. They don't insist on their rights. (v. 14)

"neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor."

B. They don't lay heavy burdens on people. (v.15)

"...laid heavy burdens on the people."

C. They become part of the solution (v. 16)

"I also persevered in the work on this wall."

D. They invite "others" to their table (v.17)

"Moreover, there were at my table 150 men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us."

E. They know that God sees all! (v.19)

"Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people."

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