

# LIFE GROUP LESSON

Prayer on the Run • Week of October 13

We have learned from this sermon series *Prayer-on-the Run* (a study on the book of Nehemiah) that Nehemiah was a great leader because he was a man of prayer! Nehemiah had his work cut out for him when he left Susa to rebuild the fallen walls of Jerusalem, but before he did anything, Nehemiah 'mourned, fasted, and prayed to the God of heaven' (Nehemiah 1:4). Now, twelve years later, in chapter thirteen, Nehemiah still prays to God as he wants to finish well.

Nehemiah is outraged to return to Jerusalem after a brief absence, and find that many of the people have gone back to living in disobedience. They were not honoring the Sabbath. Their commitment to God was being compromised as enemies were allowed to desecrate the Temple. The Levites, singers, and gatekeepers were being neglected. And worst of all, worship of God was being replaced with deception and idolatry.

Read Nehemiah 13:4-14, 15-31

After twelve years of service in Jerusalem, Nehemiah travels back to Persia in the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes reign (v6). Bible scholars say he was in Persia probably no more than a year or two. But upon his return to Jerusalem, he finds evil infiltrating the identity they have worked so hard to rebuild. Much like Moses was angry when he returns from the mountain of God to find the people worshiping gold calves, Nehemiah is outraged to find Tobiah (enemy of the Jews, see Nehemiah 2:19) 'with a room in the courtyards of the Temple of God' (v7).

1. Mountain-top experiences are often followed by spiritual pits and valleys (Exodus 32:15-20, see also Mark 9:1-29). When have you encountered deep discouragement similar to Nehemiah's – after attempting to do good and rebuild walls of faith – people you have invested in return to their old ways (even allow the enemy in the house)?

Earlier the people had vowed: 'We promise together not to neglect the Temple of our God' (Nehemiah 10:39b). What happens when we forget God and begin to neglect the regular worship of the LORD?

In chapter thirteen, notice the subtle work of the enemy—

- vv1-3 -- Ammonites and Moabites were being allowed in the assembly (Strictly forbidden in Deuteronomy 23:3-6).
- vv4-5 – Eliashib the priest had given Tobiah a large storeroom in the Temple. Replaced the sacred offerings that were for the true servants of the Temple with Tobiah's personal things.

- vv10-12 – Tithes were being withheld. The Levites, singers, and gatekeepers had to go back to working in their fields to support themselves (v10).
- vv15-17 – Dishonoring the Sabbath. Some tried to make a profit on the Sabbath.
- vv23-27 – Intermarriage with children. Refused to teach their children Hebrew language.

When the Enemy tries to undermine God's good, there are proactive things we can do. Our six-fold covenant at Christ Church includes disciplines that will keep us on path. Choose to walk with the Lord in these practical ways—

Worship  
Tithing  
Learning  
Praying  
Serving  
Inviting

2. How have you personally experienced the benefits of faithfulness?

The Joshua Menu has many 'serving opportunities' for you in 2020. Where will you serve? Have you prayed over your menu? Be prepared to complete your menu and offer it to the Lord on Joshua Weekend, October 19-20.

Choosing to remain faithful, especially during difficult times, brings honor and glory to the Lord. He takes notice and is keeping the record. If you are in a challenging season, do not give up. You can leave a lasting legacy if you continue to trust God. Ask Him to help you take notice of His Hand at work around you. You may be focused on the negative. Stop for a moment – 'Be Still and Know that He is God!' (Psalm 46:10a) – God will help you re-focus on truth, on Him.

3. Your life matters. All the hard work Nehemiah had invested has not gone to waste. Even as evil was bumping against the good, God was still in control. Re-read Nehemiah's prayers in v14, v22b, v29, v31b.

Nehemiah wanted to be remembered. Be faithful first, then ask the LORD for your request. How does the Plain Truth speak to your heart today? How does the Plain Truth challenge you today?

One of the final things we read about in chapter thirteen, is Nehemiah making sure the supply of wood for the altar is brought at the proper times. The fire on the altar reminded the people that somebody is there maintaining the fire. They saw the smoke and knew that God was present among them, that there were consecrated priests there to pray for them – to intercede and lead them in the worship of God.

4. How are you maintaining fire on the altar in your home?

Your name can be written in the Lamb's Book of Life (Revelation 21:27b). Invite Jesus into every room of your heart. Your life does matter. You can leave a lasting legacy. What does Malachi 3:16-17 say about those who choose to fear and honor the Lord?



**Text: Nehemiah 13: 10-14, 19-22, 25-31**

**PLAIN TRUTH:**

Faithful \_\_\_\_\_ precedes God's \_\_\_\_\_.

**Three Principles of Faithful Action....which Invokes God's "Favor"**

1. Nehemiah teaches \_\_\_\_\_ - \_\_\_\_\_ for Levites and God's House of Worship.
2. Selling on the Sabbath was filled with \_\_\_\_\_ not \_\_\_\_\_.
3. \_\_\_\_\_ - Don't let the fire go out in \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_.

**One Year Bible Reading**  
Oct. 13: Jeremiah 22:1-23:20, 2 Thessalonians 1:1-12, Ps. 83:1-18, Prov. 25:11-14  
Oct. 14: Jeremiah 23:21-25:38, 2 Thessalonians 2:1-17, Psalm 84:1-12, Prov. 25:15  
Oct. 15: Jeremiah 26:1-27:22, 2 Thessalonians 3:1-18, Psalm 85:1-13, Prov. 25:16  
Oct. 16: Jeremiah 28:1-29:32, 1 Timothy 1:1-20, Psalm 86:1-17, Proverbs 25:17  
Oct. 17: Jeremiah 30:1-31:26, 1 Timothy 2:1-15, Psalm 87:1-7, Proverbs 25:18-19  
Oct. 18: Jeremiah 31:27-32:44, 1 Timothy 3:1-16, Psalm 88:1-18, Prov. 25:20-22  
Oct. 19: Jeremiah 33:1-34:22, 1 Timothy 4:1-16, Psalm 89:1-13, Proverbs 25:23-24