0:00:00  
Amen, amen, amen. If you could, while you're still standing, turn your Bibles with me to the book of Nehemiah, chapter number 13. The book of Nehemiah, chapter number 13. The book of Nehemiah, chapter number 13, and we're going to begin our reading in verse number 1. The book of Nehemiah, chapter 13, and we're going to begin our reading in verse number 1. We have it as a body. Can you say amen? On that day they read from the book of Moses and the hearing of the people and in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should ever enter the assembly of God for they did not meet the people

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of Israel with bread and water but hired Balaam against them to curse them. Yet our God turned the curse into a blessing as soon as the people heard the separated from Israel, all those of foreign descent. Father, this morning, we come before you, and we just want to praise you. You are forever Yahweh.

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And we know, Lord, that one day we will be standing with you, not just in a moment, but for all eternity. And so today, as we come to your word, as we come to this precious book that has guided and led us. As we come to the fountain, we seek the rest

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that only Your Word can give. We seek the strength that Your Word provides. We seek the sustenance that strengthens us every moment of every day. We seek You, only because You first sought us. Guide us in this time that we may give You glory in all things.

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This is the prayer of Your church. In Jesus' mighty name, we love you and pray. And let's all say, amen. Amen. Today, we say goodbye to a dear friend, the cupbearer, Nehemiah. This was a weekend of goodbyes, as we laid to rest the sadness and grief that

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comes with missing Tatiana, replacing it with the joy of knowing that she is now and forever with the Lord. We will miss her in a way that I can't even begin to describe. Someone gave myself, my son Patrick, a book. And in that book was a poem, A Little Way.

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Said, dear Savior, take the burden off, I pray, and show me heaven is but a little way. A little way, the sentence I repeat, hoping and longing to find something sweet. To mingle with the bitter from thy hand, I take the cup, I cannot understand.

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And in my weakness give myself to thee, although it seems so very, very far, to that dear home where my beloved are. I know, I know, it is not so. Oh, give me faith to believe it when I say that they are gone, gone, but just a little way.

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The scriptures record for us that in a moment in a twinkling of an eye, the dead in Christ will rise. It doesn't matter how far heaven is. With the spoken word from our Lord, he proves that we're there in just a minute. It's just a little way away. So until then we walk forward in Christ Jesus,

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remembering the life we shared with precious Tatiana. And sometimes in the midst of everything that's going on, you kind of get lost, almost as if you're a ghost in the process. But But my son has stood strong every step of the way. And I've been encouraged by watching his faith, his obedience, his trust in God, even when nothing made sense. A humility that can only come if you know him.

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a ghost to others, but a beloved dad and father to Tatiana. So we will remember, we will laugh, and we will love, because no two heads could ever be shaped like that. we will remember. And I just want to thank each and every one of you and ask for your continued prayer.

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We may have laid some things to rest, but needing your prayer continuously is what I desire. What he desires is what we all need as we continue to pray for you. So thank you all. We love you.

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With that being said, we're at another place. This is the final sermon in our study of Nehemiah. As I said, this was a weekend of putting some things to an end and moving in a different direction. This book, chosen quite some time ago, I pray by the Holy Spirit, has paralleled

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the journey of this local church body and its leadership over the last year. I've stood in awe of the comfort, confirmation, and boldness it's given as we've matured as the body of Christ. It makes me think about the words

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that Paul pens in Romans 15, 4. For whatever was written in former days was written for instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of scriptures, we might have hope. It's hope, which is our confidence in Jesus

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that enables us to stand. However, standing isn't always easy. And this is what we see as we come to this last chapter of Nehemiah. Now I'm going to recap for a little bit. And then we're going to get into our text,

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because we're going to walk through this chapter. You remember, the Lord shared his plan of revival with a cupbearer by the name of Nehemiah, a man whose heart was fully devoted to the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, a man of faith and prayer, Nehemiah was. And as the Lord spoke to him, revealing his plan

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to rebuild the wall around the holy city, Jerusalem, Nehemiah sought the face of the Lord and went before the king seeking permission to return to his homeland to restore a ruined condition, to rebuild a wall that this very king that he was serving had halted its construction years earlier,

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because he was being told that the people would be a threat to him if they were secure. However, King Artaxerxes not only let Nehemiah go, he provided everything he needed to rebuild the wall. At this point, the power and influence of the Lord working through Nehemiah

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galvanized the people as Nehemiah arrived, as he surveyed the situation. And then as he went to the people, he galvanized them to restore the wall. But it wasn't without opposition. Nehemiah was opposed by the governors

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and the surrounding cities, and also from his Jewish brothers. However, through it all, Nehemiah remained steadfast and faithful. And he trusted in the Lord as God every step of the way. And in 52 days, the wall was completed. So Nehemiah knew rebuilding the wall was the end goal.

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He knew before leaving Susa, the citadel, that man's chief end was the glory of God. He understood that the restoration of the wall represented the restoration of Israel and its return to the worship of the Lord. Enter Ezra, the scribe.

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If you remember, after the wall was complete, the people called for the book of the law to be read. Remember, these were exiles, men and women who grew up in captivity in Babylon. So while they heard about the temple in Jerusalem, many of them had not seen it.

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And as time passed on, they would hear things about the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But their knowledge was incomplete. They were exposed to the gods of Babylon and their types of worship. But the Lord remembered his people.

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He brought about their release from Babylonian captivity. But not everyone returned. Some stayed where they were rooted. Others returned and lived outside of fallen Jerusalem. And it was this group that became united with the desire to not only love the Lord,

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but to give him glory as they rebuilt the wall. Now, as Ezra began to speak, he began to talk about the various reforms given by God in the book of the law. The people began to hear it. As they began to hear, as they began to grow in their understanding of the Lord and of the book of the law, as Ezra and the Levites began to teach, Scripture says, so as the people had sense. In other words, so that they could understand. This led to their

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conviction over their lack of reverence for the worship of God. This brought about true repentance as they stood in sackcloth and ashes. That's simply to say they became broken and contrite in heart, the very thing the Lord accepts. Their repentance was genuine. And the more they learned from the book of the law, the more they sought to worship the Lord in spirit and in truth. It's at this point revival is breaking out the people the Levites the people they are all coming together and they're worshiping the Lord and they are

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having fellowship and at this point they sit down and they pen an agreement they want to be faithful to the Lord and never ever neglect his house again. It was by reading the Word of God they saw his kindness as he not only allowed for Israel to go into captivity to get their attention as a loving father would but to bring them out of captivity they saw his kindness in his goodness all the way through and as we know it's the goodness is the kindness of God that

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leads us to repentance and so they had this picture they saw the father's love for Israel it was evident so they drew out this covenant and beginning with Nehemiah everyone signed it they were vowing we will never never ever again Will we neglect the house of the Lord so now they're ready to dedicate the wall But really this was all about them dedicating their hearts to the Lord It's why the priest and the Levites said that they purified themselves and also purified the hearts of the people You can't go before the Lord in pure worship if your hearts are far from him remember this isn't about being sinless

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but rather about a desire to serve and worship the Lord his way and not our way if you recall last week the people under the leadership of Nehemiah and Ezra under the direction of the Levites they assembled two choirs one followed Nehemiah the other followed Ezra and this was a beautiful sight as they went up the wall and began to stand on it. Quite the scene. The musicians are playing, the choirs are singing. It was a witness to everybody around who had been opposing them this whole time. Their praise and

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their worship was testifying to the one true God, the maker of heaven and earth and everything in between, including man. How could anyone not fall down in the worship of the Lord after all he had just done? Not just simply in rebuilding a wall, but in reviving his people. It's a beautiful picture. And we get to this place to where now the people were willing not just to sacrifice in the rebuilding of the wall, they were now willing to leave their old lives behind. They were willing to come back to live in Jerusalem,

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not just outside of Jerusalem. They made the sacrifice to help build, but now it was time to make the sacrifice with everything there all, to come back to live in Jerusalem, to worship in spirit and truth at all costs.

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Beloved, it's a beautiful picture. Everyone's signing, everyone's on board. This is just great. Everyone is worshiping and they come back why not just end right there we could have ended at chapter 12 and called it a day but we get to chapter 13 and you begin to read through it and you begin to see something beginning to take place with the people our lord

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desire isn't for us to just worship him for a season just to worship him for a time our worship is to be a lifestyle I want you to ask yourself that question as you're going through is your worship of God a lifestyle is It your lifestyle Not just something you do here and there do you worship him all the time? And when I say all the time, I mean no matter what you're going through Because we have a tendency to worship him when everything is good. We got some pretty

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bad attitudes when it's not. And so can you worship Him in on the mountaintop and in the valley? That's the question. And so we see the people, we see everything being restored, we see everything looking beautiful, we see them ready to worship the Lord. It is a privilege that we will have for all of eternity. Bringing me back to Romans 15, 4 again. For whatever was written in former days

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was written for our instruction, that through endurance and through the encouragement of scripture, we might have hope. Israel had repented, but they were still learning from the sins of their father. Remember what we said concerning the agreement Israel signed. Said this last week, the vows we make

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mean nothing if they're not the vows we keep. The vows we make mean nothing if they're not the vows we keep. People make vows all the time. They make them in the church all the time. They make them with me all the time. But they mean nothing if you don't keep them they're just words

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Listen, we all fall prey to it. We can all look in the mirror and ask myself the question. Do I hold true? to my word Let's see what Israel did Let's go back to the beginning 131 I'm gonna read all the way through verse number eight. On that day, they read from the book of Moses

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in the hearing of the people. And in it was found written that no Ammonite or Moabite should enter the assembly of God. For they did not meet the people of Israel with bread and water, but hired Balaam against them to curse them. Yet our God turned the curse into a blessing.

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As soon as the people heard the law, they separated from Israel all those of foreign descent. Now before this, Elishab, the priest who was appointed over the chambers of the house of God and who was related to Tobiah, prepare for Tobiah a large chamber where they had

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previously put the grain offering, the frankincense, the vessels, and the tithes of grain, wine, and oil, which were given by commandment to the Levites, singers, gatekeepers, and the contributions for the priest. While this was taking place, I was not in Jerusalem for the 32nd year of Artaxerxes, king of Babylon.

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I went to the city. And after some time, I asked leave of the king and came to Jerusalem. And I then discovered the evil that Elishab had done for Tobiah, preparing for him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And I was very angry and I threw all the household furniture of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I gave orders and they cleansed the chamber and I brought back there the vessels of the

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house of God with the grain offering and the frankincense. Now it's not clear if verses one through three are referring to the day of dedication as Israel separated themselves from everyone or if this took place after Here's what I want us looking at We're looking at the vows they had taken Because it's very clear as we read through this section. They were no longer keeping them Let me paint the picture as the Holy Spirit. I pray is leading me time has passed

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Nehemiah had returned to King Artaxerxes if you remember when he asked the king to take leave back in Nehemiah chapter Number one verse number six the king said to me the Queen sitting beside him. How long will you be gone? And when will you return? He wanted to know when was he coming back? So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time so Nehemiah was always coming back He had always planned to return.

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And so we have now, he is back where he's supposed to be. And if you recall in Nehemiah 7, he stepped aside and he gave charge to his brother. Nehemiah 7, 2, I gave my brother Hananiah and Hananiah the governor of the castle charge over Jerusalem.

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So when we get to the events here in chapter 13, they're a result of Nehemiah's absence, as we will soon see Nehemiah had gone and the people began to grow complacent in their worship of the Lord and not just complacent They turned from the vows they had made Can I tell you something?

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Leadership cannot be ever understated Leadership can never be understated. Listen, I get it. We're not called to follow the men God commissions and sends. I'm going to say it again. No, you're not called to follow men, but you are called to follow the men that God commissions and sends. It's not the man we are following. It's the God in the man of God you will see his footsteps following after the will of God. It should become obvious to you as children of God. You want to know why? Because we serve and

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hear from the same God. I don't have a special chamber in my house. My wife told me, hold on, call my secret chamber so I could hear what the Lord comes down. I said, woman, it doesn't work like that. And so the same God that I hear from is the same God that she hears from. It's the same God that you hear from. And you should be able to see and know if I'm walking in the will of God because you carry the same book I carry. And you read the same word I read. And you have the same spirit

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within you giving you the same discernment that he's giving me. Now that's not to say that God doesn't gifts and equips and calls that's not what I'm saying but we have to make sure that we understand right that you can know if the man of God is following the will of God and so here what takes place is that Nehemiah is gone when the cats away whoo the mice will play and so you got this picture right there's a spiritual decay that's taking place.

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Elishab, the priest who was appointed over the chambers of the house of God, he had a relationship with Tobiah. Think about that for a minute. If you've been following this study up until now, you know Nehemiah had two main nemesis, Samballot and Tobiah. They were road dogs.

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And they dogged his steps every step of the way. They didn't just despise Nehemiah. They opposed him at every turn. And the opposition only intensified. And it kept intensifying up until the point of the wall being completed.

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So help me understand something. How did an enemy get a room in the temple? This was the storage room used for the grain and for the tithe and for the oil and the frankincense, the different things that were to be used by the Levites, the gatekeepers, the singers, the priests, those who served and worshipped the Lord, provision for the servants of the Lord's house. And here we have the high priest, he's setting Tobiah up. He's giving him a place. Now I'd like to say this wasn't a surprise or that it

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was a surprise, but remember when the wall was completed. In Nehemiah chapter 6 verse 15 said this, so the wall was finished on the 25th day of the month of Elu in 52 days and when all our enemies heard of it all the nations around us were afraid and fell greatly in their own esteem for they perceived that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God. Moreover, in those days, the nobles of Judah

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sent many letters to Tobiah, and Tobiah letters to them. For many in Judah were bound by oath to him, because he was a son-in-law of Shekiniah, the son of Arah. And his son Jehoniah had taken the daughter of Meshulam, the son of Berechiah, as his wife. And they spoke of his good deeds in my presence,

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and reported my word to him. And Tobiah sent letters to make me afraid." Now, you remember these nobles were the ones who were charging interest to the people when they needed money, because they were working on the temple. They were working on the wall, rather.

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And so they were loaning them money to get by, because obviously, they weren't going out to work. And then they were charging them interest on top of it. And of course, Nehemiah gets wind of what's going on. He's like, what are you guys doing? He calls them out.

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He commands them not only to stop charging interest, but to repay back everything and they did but these men still stayed connected to the via an ammonite For 12 years Nehemiah stood as governor Now while we don't know how long he was back in Susa

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the spiritual leadership of Israel quickly deteriorated. This takes me back to the content of their covenant, the one they had made and the one they had signed. Remember, there's four things they said that they would do. One, we will keep God's word. Two, we will live separate from those not of Israel.

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Three, we will keep the Sabbath. And four, we will support the work of the Lord. And that was inclusive of providing for the Levites and the priests. Now it's clear they've already broken the first two. Tobiah, being an Ammonite, is living in the temple.

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Remember, Ezra the scribe and the Levites have been helping the people understand the book of the law. So let me read you what I'm sure they had to have read in Deuteronomy chapter number 23, verse 3 and 5. No Ammonite, stop, you don't got to go far, okay? No Ammonite or Moabite may enter the assembly of the Lord even to the tenth generation. He

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said listen, his cousin, his cousin's cousin, his mother's brother's cousin, his cousin's cousin's cousin's cousin, not to the tenth generation, they cannot enter the assembly of the Lord forever because they did not meet you with bread and with water on the way. When you came out of Egypt, and because they hired against you Balaam, the son of Baal, from Plehor of Mesopotamia, to curse you, but the Lord your God would not listen to

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Balaam. Instead, the Lord your God turned the curse into a blessing for you, because the Lord your God loves you." Listen, they're on their way, and yet here you have Balaam trying to curse them, and God was still protecting them every step of the way looking out for him so he says listen they don't mean you any good they are not allowed in the goodness of God

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had already brought them to the place of revival now Tobiah's name means God is good which gives the indication that he may have been half Jewish but it didn't matter if there was just a drop of blood that if you weren't 100% Israel then you were everything else which was a Gentile and so I want you to get this picture, right? The issue is that the high priest Failed to separate himself from the foreigners of the land It was clear the scriptures. Tell us he was an Ammonite

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Let me ask you a question. How many unspiritual friendships have you developed over the years? Yeah, let's go there. We develop them all the time. Question is, do you allow them to hinder your service to the Lord? See, they were called to live separate, but Israel began compromising in the vows they made to God. How about us? There was a breakdown first The people had made a commitment back to Nehemiah 1028 the rest of the people the priest the Levites the gatekeepers the singers the temple service and all

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with separate themselves from the people the lands to the law of God their wives their sons their daughters all who have knowledge and understand everybody's included here everybody joined with their brothers their nobles and entered into a curse and an oath to walk in God's law that was given by Moses the servant of God and to observe and to do all the commandments of the Lord our God and his rules and his statutes no gun to their head every single person said I'm in and they were hearing the Word of God and

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then here they institute this covenant. Where's the pen? I want a sign. I want a sign. I want a sign. And yet here we find, they willingly broke it. Remember James 4.4?

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You adulterous people. Do you not know that friendship with the world is enmity with God? Therefore, whoever wishes to be a friend of the world makes himself an enemy of God. Now remember, they had purified their hearts as they dedicated the wall. But now here we find Eliaship's heart polluted. Instead of cutting off Tobiah as he agreed, because he penned his name too, instead of cutting him off he

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continued and so did some of the others in Israel. They continued their relationship with him. They knew what the Word of God said concerning the Ammonites and the oath they had taken yet he and they violated it listen spiritual decay begins in the heart you cannot place personal relationships over obedience to the Lord sometimes we think what come on man you kind of blown us out of proportion it's serious. Thomas Brooks says this, neutrality is the spiritual adultery of the heart. He

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said it again. Because some people say, well, I'm just right in the middle, bad place to be. It's like being lukewarm. Last time I checked, that gets spit out. Think about it. I love my food hot. That's my wife. I get hot coffee and make it hotter, okay? As soon as it's done brewing, I let it sit and it goes right into the microwave I can't stand anything lukewarm, but I will drink a little warm bottle of water just for the work And so I want you to get this picture

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Here we're being told neutrality is the spiritual adultery of the heart double-minded men are spiritual harlots They have their hearts divided between God and mammon between Christ and other lovers. We like to stay in the middle so we can pick and choose when we want to, you know, I want that right now, okay, now I'm good. Then we're spiritual again. Well, I want that right now, okay, now I'm good. We love to be in the middle. Now, please understand, this doesn't mean we don't live in the world. It means we

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don't love the world system, nor do we place our relationships with our non-believing, here we go, family or friends above obedient to Christ Jesus. Listen, I know what happens. We all at various times get caught up in relationships that challenges us to compromise our worship of the Lord. Think about it, we read passages that instruct us to go left but when our unbelieving friends want to go right, we just follow. I'm not saying that you're not going to have relationships with non-believers. We have to leave the world. The issue isn't the

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relationship. It's when the relationship causes us to compromise our commitment to Jesus. That's the focus, right? It's when it causes you to compromise. Now it's clear that Elishab and his leadership allowed his relationship to Tobiah to compromise his faith and the people soon followed. We can't allow family, long-standing friendships, brother or sisterhoods we forged in our youth to cause us to compromise in our commitment to the Lord. And I know most of us think, you know, I'm right there with you, I'm right there with you, pastor, you sure about that?

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Let's walk around the block for a minute and see. You see, when I say not compromise, I mean not at all. I'm sure you've probably been on the internet or seen this example where someone takes a nice, good glass of water and just drops like a little bit of dirt in it and it says, drink it. You're like, I ain't drinking that.

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It's just like salt. Just drink it, you'll be all right. I'm not drinking that what oh, it's dirty How much does it take for you to get dirty? It's a question we got to ask ourselves right because we take this step back. We think well. I don't compromise my self Interesting I

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Think we find ourselves doing it more often than we actually think When's the last time you shared the gospel with your non-believing friend? When I say shared it, I mean share it. When was the last time you were so different because you chose to live out God's truth that your unbelieving friend said something to you? Like man, why you gotta be like that all the time? Like what, I mean, yeah, we all spiritual, but like you gotta be that way all the time.

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Like can't you just hang out with us just a little bit? When was the last time they thought you to be peculiar? You know, when our friends call us up, hey man, let's go hunting. Let's go camping. Oh man, you know, I'd really like to go,

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but at Miss Church on Sunday morning. Oh come on man, that happens every week. Let me tell you something, you don't know if you have every week. How do you respond? What do you say? You know what, instead of us taking off this weekend, why don't we take off Tuesday, Wednesday, and Thursday? I mean, I gotta go to work. Oh, so you want to keep that commitment, but you don't want me to keep mine. Go holler at a brother, because I know I'm preaching this morning. Because we're real quick, real quick, right, to want to, hey, God's giving me this.

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So why just, I just need a break. Okay, well take one. You got six other days to choose from. Why do you got to pick that one? I mean if we're gonna be real let's just be real okay well because that affects my other commitment hmm so that commitment outweighs this one. You see we have to get to a place where we start challenging the way we see things because when you start talking to unbelieving friends about that they don't want to waste their

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vacation on that. They don't want to waste their sick time on that. They don't want to waste their personal time on that. OK, because it's OK because I don't need to be with the body. That's not what my Bible tells me. It tells me exactly the opposite in Hebrews chapter number 10, it says, forsake not the assembly as a manner of some is. And so I don't think it's okay let's just move past that one you know hey Monday night football Monday night football man let's come over to the house and Sunday you went to church already Monday night football oh man

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there's a men's group meeting on Monday night well you can't go to the group after the game there's a men group meeting at the church on Monday night. But you were just there on Sunday. How many times do you say, you know what? I can just miss Monday. It's not that big of a deal.

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After all, the 49ers are playing. How about, you know what? We need to get together, because it's Tyrone's bachelor party. I was going to say Bobby, but I wanted to get a black dude in here it's Tyrone's bachelor party everybody wants to get up for Tyrone's bachelor party like what we gonna go man

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we all gonna go up somewhere man we go we're gonna hang out for a little bit we're gonna pitch in and give him this gift we're gonna pay for his ticket that's our boy man I really like to do this but there's this family in need at the church and so he gonna be all right if we don't go to the final four. This family over here is struggling just to pay their bills.

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So I'd rather take the money that I would chip in for this. Man, how come every time I turn around, this God thing seems to be all around you? Those are just minor examples that I gave you, things that we don't do. Because if you did, your friend would say something to you.

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They all would. Because you would seem strange, peculiar. I don't understand why you make a big deal about God all the time because I made a commitment to him I Made a vow and I don't plan on breaking it. Are you married? Yeah, so you don't come home for a couple months at a time No, I come home every night why well because I'm married oh, so you made a vow oh So you gonna keep that one? What about the one you made with the Lord?

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Listen, I want you to get this picture because there's one that's here. Are you still committed to following Jesus the same way you were when you first believed? The same way you were. My wife and I have been married now 20, what years, 24? 24 years. 20, 24 years and she still loves me the same way she did when she first fell in love with me. Notice I said her. No, I still love her in the same manner. 24 years it

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remains the same. I want to come home. She sometimes don't want me to come, but I'm coming nonetheless, all right? And so it grows deeper. The passion may look different, but our commitment and our resolve should be ever stronger. If you're wondering, how do you keep that passion? How do you stay tuned to such a commitment like that? The answer is simple, the same way the survival sparked.

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It sparked when they went to the word of God. When you go to the word of God, when you go back to the book, that revival, that fire, it begins to just continue to be stoked on the inside of you. You feel it burning hotter and hotter. Your commitment becomes easier and easier. It's like

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breathing. It's just what I do. And so when people say, I don't know how you're able to do this, doing this, or do this, doing that, or able to do this, it's because it's what I don't know anything else. It's breathing to me. It should be that way to every Christian. It should be breathing to us. Let me ask you a question. Do you go hard after the Word of God the same way God went hard after you? We stand here today. We have to go hard after the Word of God and never stop This is the picture that's being painted Nehemiah said in verse number six. He said listen. I was not in Jerusalem

0:36:15  
It was a 32nd year of King Artaxerxes. I went to the king. I asked for leave I discovered the evil that Elisheth had done. He prepared a place for Tobiah in the house of God. Listen, he got permission to come back and when he got back, he saw what was going on. But this is what was interesting to me.

0:36:32  
When he discovered what was going on, listen to his response in verse number eight. I was very angry. I threw all the household furnitures of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I gave orders and they cleansed the chamber

0:36:42  
and I brought back there the vessels of the house of God with the grain offering and the frankincense. For the first time, you know what you're about to see? Nehemiah ticked off. Nehemiah is angry. I want you to think about it.

0:37:00  
The man who sought to hinder Nehemiah at every turn, Tobiah was a thorn in his side. And he's not just staying in Jerusalem the cat is laid up in a comforter in the temple I want you to get the picture because it sounds so crazy it's like your worst enemy you come home he land in your bed eating grapes you like what the heck happened up in here and so you're thinking how is this even how is this even possible how

0:37:33  
was he here in this place and yet someone would prepare a room for him Nehemiah was a man of God if you recall through many trials he endured He continuously sought the Lord in prayer, and I don't believe this to be any different Nehemiah prayer life was a lifestyle So although it doesn't say he prayed here rest assured he was a praying man So the focus isn't for you to look at his prayer life. That's what it's been up until now. It's because of his pearlite

0:38:04  
he could respond in the manner in which he responds now. He's angry. And I want you to get the picture because this reminds me of Jesus and the money changers in the temple. In John 2.13, the Passover of the Jews was at hand. And Jesus went up to Jerusalem. In the temple he found those who were selling oxen and sheep and pigeons and the money changers sitting there. And making a whip of cords, he drove them all out of the temple with the sheep and the oxen.

0:38:28  
And he poured out the coins of the money changer and overturned their tables. But I love Ephesians 2, 426, rather. It says, be angry and do not sin. Make sure I'm clear about this. The issue isn't getting angry, but rather getting

0:38:44  
angry at the wrong time at the wrong thing. Getting angry at the wrong time at the wrong thing. Mose writes, anger as a mere expression of wounded personality is sinful, for it means that self is in command. However, anger as a pure expression of repugnance

0:39:02  
to wrong and loyalty to God is sinless, where there is true occasion for it. We always talk about Jesus having a righteous anger so Nehemiah's anger was a righteous anger listen he came in and he began to throw to buy a stuff out I need you to get the picture because this is what was taking place he didn't come in and say listen to buy I don't know how this happened can somebody order some boxes from you

0:39:35  
home we have some of the guys from the church come over and we're gonna get that's that's not what he did okay he walked in he looked at what was going on and immediately he started throwing his stuff out there was no dialogue there was no conversation he just started dismissing everything and then said we need to fumigate this room before we bring anything back into it to worship the Lord he didn't tiptoe can't tell you something we're not called to tolerate sin that rears its ugly head against a holy God

0:40:05  
Yes, we're to be gentle But can I tell you something? Sometimes just like people talk about righteous anger and they're really just blowing up and need to make sure that it's really righteous anger Flip side of the coin is that so well, you know what you can't kind of yeah take that position You know, we got to remember we're believers Nehemiah was a believer. I

0:40:22  
Need you to understand that so yes, we're to be gentle But we're called to take a stand Jude 1 3 says beloved although was very eager to write to you about our common salvation I found it necessary to write appealing to you to contend for the faith that was once and for all delivered to the Saints Maybe we need to start standing up and actually standing up Actually standing up Spurgeon said anger is one of the holy feet of the soul when it goes in the right direction when it goes in the right direction to be angry against sin is a high and holy thing again I want

0:41:03  
you to get his mindset right now because he's not done he's looking at what's going on and he's saying to himself I can't believe this is happening right now. And so he says in verse number 10, I also found out that the portions of the Levites had not been given to them, so that the Levites and the singers who did the work had fled each to his field.

0:41:28  
So I confronted the officials and said, why is the house of God forsaken? And I gathered them together and set them in their stations. Then all Judah brought the tithe of the grain, wine, and oil into the storehouse. And I appointed as treasurers over the storehouses

0:41:47  
Shalamiah the priest, Zadok the scribe, Padaiah of the Levites, and as their assistant, Hannah the son of Zechor, son of Methaniah, for they were considered reliable. And their duty was to distribute to their brothers. Remember me, oh my God, concerning this, and do not wipe out my good deeds

0:42:04  
that I have done for the house of my God and for his service. I want you to notice something. Tobiah, he's throwing everything out. When he comes to this group, he shifts. And I want you to get the picture, right? A good leader knows when to shut something down

0:42:23  
and when it's time to sit everyone down in order to give the right instruction and to make the right adjustments. Excuse me. Aristotle was quoted as saying, anybody can become angry. That's easy.

0:42:38  
But to be angry with the right person to the right degree at the right time for the right purpose and in the right way. That is not easy. So while Nehemiah was angry with Tobiah and what was taking place in the temple, as he now turns from this situation,

0:43:01  
his anger is tempered. He addresses their improper care of the tithes for the Levites. I love watching his leadership. I love how he shifts in the manner in which he handles situations. He's surveying everything, because that's what leaders do.

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If you don't just look at one thing, you don't walk into your house. If you're a man, a husband, a father, you don't just walk into your house and you only focus on one thing. You see everything as your house.

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Same way it should be in the church as leaders. You don't just see one thing. It's your house. And so here's this picture that's beginning to take place. He wanted to be sure that everything that he and Ezra had established through the Lord's leading was standing and glorifying God.

0:43:46  
And he realized the Levites and the singers were absent from the temple. Where were they at? They weren't performing the duties of worship. Well, the reason was simple. They were in the fields working because they had to care for their own needs. Remember, the people had agreed to bring their tithes into the storehouse, Nehemiah 1038,

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and the priest, the son of Aaron, shall be with the Levites when the Levites receive the tithes. And the Levites shall bring up the tithe to the tithes of the house of God, to the chambers of the storehouse. For the people of Israel, the sons of Levites, shall bring the contribution of grain, wine, and oil to the chamber, where the vessels of the sanctuary are, as well as the priests who minister, and the gatekeepers and the singers and we will not neglect the house of our God remember this was the agreement yeah we find them breaking their vow again the significance here is huge you see if

0:44:39  
the priests were working in the field you know what they weren't doing worshiping the Lord they weren't serving the Lord remember the tribe of Levi was called by God to be in service to him. So we already got the high priest going rogue. Now we got those who are in the temple doing the work of God out in the field. Who's mining the house? Can I tell you something? Back to the leadership in the church. This is why it's important, the leadership in the

0:45:08  
church, because someone needs to be mining the house. Back to why I said it's your house. And so you go on vacation. What do you do? You make sure everything's squared away, right? You know, if back in the day when they delivered papers, you had somebody pick paper up.

0:45:23  
You know, want to make sure your mail is OK, somebody leaves something on your door. You know, you tell your neighbor's hand, I'll be gone for a little bit. You know, kind of keep an eye on my house. You should make sure everything's good, right?

0:45:33  
Because you're going to be gone for a little bit. Pack stuff, make the necessary arrangements, right? And so it's interesting because it's your house. Do you do the same thing here? And now I'm speaking to leaders here. Because that's the way it should be if you're leading in the house of the Lord. No different than your own house. So it's a picture, right? It's a picture that we

0:45:57  
have to make sure we're taking in. Sometimes it's hard to speak in this manner because it seems as though you're calling people out and let me make sure I assure you Guys, I'm not We have some amazing leaders here in this church, but that doesn't mean we can't grow And that doesn't mean we shouldn't learn from what we're hearing see

0:46:14  
Here's this picture They're breaking their agreement And it's having an effect That's the picture we start talking about spiritual decay when the spiritual leadership of the church is distracted there is a rippling effect last it placed his personal relationship with to buy above everything else next

0:46:43  
thing you know he's in the place of no story nothing's coming to the storehouse and people are neglecting to give to the to the gatekeepers and to the Levites and to the singers and so they go out and they start working the priests are now gone. You got everything completely falling apart. So where were they going to put it anyway? I mean after all Tobias water bed was in the storehouse. So what it wasn't like it had a place for them to go.

0:47:06  
Right? And so I want you to get the picture back to leadership in the body of Christ is important Leaders cannot grow complacent in their worship of the Lord Now let me say this this does not mean that the people have no responsibility To do what they know to be right before God. Remember everyone signed that agreement. Not just the leaders all the people signed Yes

0:47:30  
God is giving gifts to his body through the power of the Holy Spirit to equip the saints for the work of the ministry for the building up of the body of Christ Ephesians 4 12 so while spiritual leaders have a responsibility to God so do we you remember this quote I said it multiple times several months back the best of men are men at best I say this because as Nehemiah turns to them it's not in anger and but he does confront them gathers them instructs them and positions them he confronted them that

0:48:05  
is to say he rebuked them should get the picture to rebuke let me define it it's to speak strong expression of disapproval in other words he got a bit loud and rightly so but nothing got thrown get the picture the men over the storehouse knew the tithe wasn't being collected, and they did nothing about it. Nehemiah could have said, you want to know what? It's people's responsibility to bring the tithe.

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They weren't bringing it in. So I mean, nothing to give. So how does that fall back on? How does that fall back on? I'm just going to go ahead and let this go. Leaders understand their responsibility to correct.

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It's important. Their lack of action contributed to the spiritual decay of the people. Again, remember, the best of men are men at best. So I want you to get the picture. He confronts them, and he lovingly gathers them together. I love the picture, because he wants to instruct them so he can reposition them.

0:49:16  
I can't tell you how much this letter has helped and is helping me as a servant in the Lord's Church, especially over the last six months, and more importantly, over the last two months. We live in a day and age where no one likes to be corrected. And when you do correct someone everyone has a thought on how it should be done

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Everybody so sometimes you just don't want to do it. You just begin to pull back But Nehemiah he repositions the men He appoints some of them to be treasurers over the storehouse. He appoints others to be assistants, and then said, hey, I placed these men in these positions because their reputation is trustworthy.

0:50:09  
Can you imagine? So you're gonna walk into a room, you're gonna say, okay guys, yeah. Y'all are lying, so I'm gonna check you. But now that we know we gotta get things in order, I'm gonna move some things around.

0:50:19  
So listen, I need you three now to go over here because moving forward, you guys are in charge. And you guys who used to be in charge, I want you to be the assistants. And the reason why I'm putting these guys in charge is because these guys are considered trustworthy. So what the heck you saying about me? Because we know that's exactly what we would be thinking. Look, what are you doing? How would that go over in the church in 2024?

0:50:45  
walking in and just moving things around. Can I tell you that happened here? I haven't talked about it openly, because there was no occasion for me to. And if you guys know me, you know the only speaker the book opens for me to speak,

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so I'll speak now. That happened here. I confronted a brother whom I love. It wasn't in anger, contrary to what everybody may have been told. Although, what I've just demonstrated to you from Nehemiah, rightly so, I could have. I just didn't, and would have had zero problem with telling you if I had, because I would have stood just like Nehemiah stood, because I'm going to contend for the faith.

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That's not what happened. The person refused correction, period, and simply left. It hurt. But like Nehemiah, I could have just let it go, and I fought to do that. The problem was, over the last year, like those who were in charge of the storehouse,

0:52:04  
I noticed things were not in order. And I addressed them with gentle rebukes. They weren't received. Can I tell you something? Leading isn't easy at all, because everyone wants to play Monday morning quarterback on your decisions and how you handle something. But here we stand in this place, and there's one thing that I know to be certain. I don't answer to you. I answer to Him. And so it's in this place. to keep the relationship. It hurt me then, and it hurts me now.

0:52:53  
I think what hurt me more is that I felt like I needed to explain to people that I thought I was close to what was happening, almost as if I had to explain myself. But again, leadership isn't easy. Leading in the Lord's church isn't easy,

0:53:09  
but it isn't about me. It's about Jesus. I wish I could elaborate and tell you all that took place but was a 15-minute conversation. There was nothing to elaborate on. Let me tell you what the result was. The result was the men you saw standing on this stage a little over a month ago. The result was a group of men who are maturing and seeking to mature as we serve you as the body of Christ, as we serve in this local church. I made a vow when I said yes Lord and I plan on

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keeping it no matter what I go through. And so it's in this place, right, that the That the Lord not only leads I'm committed to following the Lord to following his path No matter what it costs me and no matter what it makes me look like to other people. I Vowed to shepherd when he called I didn't vow to be perfect. I vowed to be committed And when you committed he perfects you even through your mistakes.

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I needed to say this out loud. As I said, this is a weekend of closing doors. That's another door that's now closed. I want to keep going, because Nehemiah did. At this point, the men, they accepted the rebuke, and they were repositioned and they devoted themselves to do God's

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work God's way well if it isn't that a beautiful picture when you can just come to your brother and just say man is what's up and I go bro I really feel that way well I'm sorry you don't feel that way they said it is that way and so when we see you say you know what okay I've been corrected by many and it isn't easy I don't like it but I'm learning to love it because I So this is the picture. So in verse 17, he says, I confronted the nobles of Judah and

0:55:42  
said to them, what is this evil thing that you are doing? Now he's moving. You're profaning the Sabbath day. Now remember, they said, we will not allow any buying or selling on those days. And so now we got people coming in. He said, here they were, treading wine presses, saddling donkeys, buying and selling from foreigners. So at this point, Nehemiah instructs them he said listen this is what I need you to do at dark before the Sabbath I want you to shut the gates shut the doors I want you to station men outside the gates and I

0:56:13  
want you to warn the foreigners who were selling things outside the wall to stop selling their goods and to leave in fact Nehemiah said listen tell him to stop I'm gonna start laying hands on him go back and read it because that's exactly what it says now can you imagine I'm trying to picture this so far right because it seemed like you know he was kind of ticked off all right so he comes back you know he says hey King I need to go back over to see what's going

0:56:41  
on in Jerusalem he rolls back up he said I look like Tobias camel parked out in front of the temple walk inside Tobias just chilling right there like like like what's going on and then he goes into the temple he says well where are the where the Levi's and the scribe though they're out there in the field well who's worshiping Tobias I can I get some more grapes please my grapes over here so this whole picture is unfolding in front of me like what in the world is going on and so he

0:57:08  
immediately says they ain't no time to talk about this it's like we just need just deal with this stuff right now Tobias stuff is in here? Get this man's stuff out of here. I'm just throwing everything out of here. They ain't nothing to talk about. He's just throwing stuff out. He's not boxing it. He's ticked off, right? He ain't trying to figure out how to prep it. Let's just, let's just see if we can put it in a nice little box and stack it. He said, man, I don't care about his stuff. Get it out of here. He's just throwing it. This is where he's at.

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So I need you to get the picture because sometimes what we say is that doesn't look Christianly. Beloved, you need to get a picture of what it means to be the Christian, not what the world tells you to look the picture of a Christian looks like. And so the Bible doesn't tell you nothing. Don't start throwing stuff at people. Be cool now. That's not what I'm saying, all right? And so I don't want to get a phone call. Passed while I came home, my wife was

0:57:55  
throwing my stuff outside. I'm like, you told her to just throw it on out. I said, that is not what I said. But you might want to go get your boxes off the street though. And so I need you to get the picture right? And so understand that there's this picture that's being painted. He is upset. It is a righteous anger.

0:58:13  
It is a holy anger. He's not delaying. And so now he says, listen, we weren't supposed to be, the Sabbath is a day of rest. You agreed that we would rest. You stopped buying from people coming in. You said this is what you wanted.

0:58:28  
We see it in the law and you pinned your name on it. And now these guys are coming and they're only coming because you're buying. But you know what? I'll deal with you, but I'm gonna deal with them. Show up again and I'm gonna lay hands on you.

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Again, read it. It's exactly what it says. So I find it interesting how sometimes we have this picture in our mind because that doesn't sound like the Christians response. Beloved, right is right and wrong is wrong and Nehemiah's desire was to do God's work, God's way from the beginning. After constant prayer for

0:59:09  
direction, the people had received careful instructions in the book of the law. They repented. They vowed. They turned. And then they willingly, not accidentally, intentionally stepped outside of what they said they would do.

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Nehemiah was a strong leader. He confronted when confrontation was needed. If you hear of a pastor or a ministry leader talking about putting hands on somebody we need to get the elders together I heard pastor will say he's gonna lay hands and and I don't think that was in a very biblical sense he didn't mean by

0:59:49  
praying beloved we get that way but I need you to understand the picture he picture. He was calling for the removal of anything that was contrary to the will and holiness of God. That's a spiritual leader. We need a perspective. Every situation is different, but they all agreed we would not neglect the house of the Lord. And here they are profaning the Sabbath. The other nations, the other towns, they had their gods. They could care less about any rest.

1:00:30  
They could care less about a day set aside to the Lord. They had their deities. So they didn't care when the merchants came, just as long as they can conduct their business. Remember when I said those holy friendships? They don't care about your Sabbath.

1:00:45  
They don't care about what you did. But you should. Because you made a vow. And the scripture says, as we said a couple of weeks ago, better to have not vowed than to vow and break it. We get down to the last one.

1:01:00  
In Nehemiah 13, 23, in those days also, I saw the Jews who had married women of Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. And half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod. And they could not speak the language of Judah, but only the language of each people.

1:01:13  
Can I say from worse, from bad to worse? Now Everything they vowed to do back in chapter number 10 They did exactly the opposite in time and now we have these unholy Marriages and get this the reason why I was so hard Tobiah to separate themselves from Tobias because they had these relationships and some of them were because of marriage

1:01:34  
marriage be clear about something the issue here wasn't ethnicity it was spiritual and not spiritual in the way people use spirituality today the issue was a matter of faith it was doctrinal theological if you would the other nations had their gods so the issue would be the intermixing of beliefs not ethnicity but you understand that the intermixing of beliefs because we kind of do that today, right? You know, we stand next to the person That's a Jehovah Witness. We stand next to the person that's Catholic. We stand next to the person that's Mormon. We so, you know

1:02:11  
We all have our different beliefs, you know, but we said we love the same God Come on now Well, I you know who am I to say anything back to contending for the faith who are you not to? It's the call upon us as Christians, right? I'm not asking you to go in and start kicking over people's laptops at your job, but you can say something especially when they're saying something to you. And so this should be how we

1:02:33  
begin to move forward, but here we have this place where again the opening verses reminded us how Balaam sought to curse Israel, but the Lord wouldn't let him. So he advised their enemies, this is how you get back at him just get your wives to marry them seduce the men you seduce the man don't intermarry and in no time they will compromise their faith and it works and it worked because the Moabite women married the men of Israel to buy as I just said wasn't just a friend he stayed

1:03:06  
connected through marriage and Nehemiah 1030 we will not give our daughters to the people of the land or take their daughters for our sons. They knew this would lead to spiritual compromise. They knew it. All one needs to do is consider Solomon, the wisest man to walk, right?

1:03:22  
1 Kings 11, verse 1. Now King Solomon loved many foreign women, along with the daughter of Pharaoh, Moabites, Ammonites, Edomites, Sidonites, Hittites. He loved him some women. From the nations concerning which

1:03:36  
the Lord had said to the people of Israel, you shall not enter into marriage with them, neither shall they with you. For surely they will turn away your heart after their gods. Solomon clung to these in love. He had 700 wives who were princesses and 300 concubine.

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And his wives turned away his heart. For when Solomon was old, his wives turned away his heart after other gods. And his heart was not wholly true to the Lord as God, as was the heart of David, his father." Isn't it amazing?

1:04:09  
Solomon had all the wisdom in the world. He knew what the Lord had declared. Yet we see in all of his wisdom, his disobedience caused his heart to be turned from the Lord. Nehemiah, he saw that Israel had not only began to intermarry. You know what got it really ticked him off? It's when the kids couldn't even speak Hebrew. They're

1:04:37  
speaking the language of the astronauts. So he had to be gone at least for a little period of time for this to take place. Should you get the picture? Tobias chilling, the priest are out working, no one's faithful to the Word of God. They've intermarried with foreign women and the kids don't even know Hebrew. Can you say we're going right back to where we started when we were in exile? You see the picture. Do you see why Nehemiah is so enraged? He sees exactly what's

1:05:06  
taking place and in a few generations we could just be gone. Nehemiah 13 25 I confronted them hold it He straight up my hands at this point And curse them beat some of them and pulled out the hair Now I want you to think about that for a second, okay, cuz it's off the chain now My son-in-law wore his hair down today, so he should have done that okay

1:05:27  
So it would be like he'll do something crazy, and then I came home my daughter's beating on him, pulling out his hair, pulling out his beard. I want you to get the picture, right? Because that's what it was like. It was at this point, it didn't say he had a conversation with say,

1:05:48  
hey, so I noticed you guys are kind of intermarrying, right? Like, you know, talk to me about it, right? Meanwhile, the kid's speaking a language he don't even know. And so he's like, what did your son just say? And so it's like, like what happened?

1:06:02  
I want you to, this is how bad it got. I don't speak Ash to die. Like what's the kid saying? He's sitting there, right? And so he just gets, he just starts cursing. He just begins to grab them.

1:06:12  
He begins to beat them. He begins to pull out their hair. Now again, beloved, oh, cause I know I set y'all loose today, all right? And so I don't need any domestic violence calls. I don't need chalupini, mace, I don't need, listen.

1:06:25  
I was just standing for the Lord, Pastor Will, and that's not what I... Please, hear what I'm saying. I want you to get the picture. Nehemiah was a man after God's own heart like David. So I want you to understand that in his response, I'm not condoning that we get violent.

1:06:46  
What I am saying is this. There's a time to take a stand but you want to make sure you might want to make sure that you're a man of prayer first go back to Nehemiah 1 before he did anything he prayed and as I said his was a lifestyle of prayer so we can look at this and know that he wasn't just acting out of the flesh he understood what was happening. In verse 28,

1:07:16  
And one of the sons of Jordiah, the son of Elishev, the high priest, was a son-in-law of Sambaleth the Horenite. I'm done. So hold it. Now you're telling me Tobiah was one who was always against me, but his road dog was Sambaleth. And we get to the very end. Now you're telling me that somebody is the son-in-law of the other dude who was chasing me around. And what does it say? Immediately he started chasing him down too. I want you to understand this picture

1:07:42  
because this doesn't look like the book should end this way. Chapter 12 was the perfect ending. Everybody was happy. They had two choirs. They were standing up and praising God. Everything was perfect.

1:07:57  
Now we got stuff everywhere in disarray. Everything's going wrong. People are laying on the ground I don't know what happened man. Nehemiah got a right hook. I ain't never seen it coming man. Dude yanked my hair I'm being cussed on this I like what just happened

1:08:12  
That's what Nehemiah was saying What just happened How could you guys give your word like this and Just in a short amount of time Act as if you never said a word. Hold it.

1:08:31  
Not just act. You're living it. Hold it. In the temple of all places. God allowed us to build a wall around this holy city to protect us, to keep us, so that we would be able to give him glory, so that we would be able to worship him so all the nations can see. He kept us, he

1:08:58  
provided for us, he stood with us, he fought with us, he gave us victory and we could not wait to say we will never neglect you again. And I was gone before It was like you'd never met him at all. That's the state of many in the church today. The thing is, nobody wants to throw anything around anymore, because we need to be politically correct.

1:09:28  
We need to make sure that we say the right things. As I was studying this chapter, I wasn't going to preach. And I'd asked somebody to stand last week and then this week with everything that was going on with my family. But as I told many of you on the phone when we talked, I can't say I can do all things

1:10:01  
through Christ if I don't do all things through Christ. I'm not going to preach to you, and then tell you, oh, but this, and so I can. Oh, but this, but I wish I could. See, all the other times when I'm preaching, it's difficult, because I'm asking the Lord

1:10:22  
to give me a word in due season, to lead me, to guide me. But I'd almost have pain and heartache like I've had the past two weeks in my heart. I'd almost feel like I'm so broken that I can't even think. That I find myself sitting at a table and just staring off into space. Someone gave me a card that helped me out a lot. It said that a grandparent's pain is twofold. They cry once for their grandchild and then again for their child. Those were the words that I spoke as I was blessed to give a eulogy at my granddaughter's

1:11:02  
service yesterday. I didn't know how I would be then, and I didn't know how I'd be now. And there were moments in that eulogy where I know my son as well as I felt like throwing everything around like I've just seen right now. But I've seen courage in you that I haven't even seen in myself. Proud of you. And I watched how God continued to guide each and every one of us through.

1:11:35  
So here's the picture. I didn't do anything today. I did it through Christ who strengthens me. Now your turn. That comes back to each and every one of us. And so, I spoke with Asandra a little bit yesterday and she said, what does this week look like for you coming up? I said, it's going to look different for everybody. Because I believe that what I was looking for, God gave me in chapter 13. So I will speak the truth, and I will speak it boldly.

1:12:08  
I'll speak it in love, but I'll speak it so we can move forward. Because I always feel like we need to grow, beginning with me. I know I lead here, But really all I do is follow. He leads. I just surrender to follow. And I pray that for the leadership that's here, and for the people who are in this body.

1:12:30  
Because there are people dying who don't have the gospel. And as I was driving in, I said in the service yesterday that for 15 months, people would ask me about my granddaughter's relationship with God. Somebody was even bold enough to ask me, did I want them to go speak to them about Jesus like I ain't never met Him. And I kept saying, no, I'm good. I'm good.

1:13:05  
I'm good. The Lord said, now, you're no longer her grandfather. Be her pastor. So I was able to baptize her. I was able to pray with her. But what I found amazing is that that service,

1:13:29  
the countless doctors and nurses that cared for her over the last 15 months, not one time did I share Jesus with them. They came in countless times while I was praying. Countless times. Excuse me, I'm sorry.

1:13:48  
I know you're praying. No, it's okay, it's okay, it's okay. Me talking with her about God, me praying with her countless times over the last 15 months. I'm thinking, should I have shared the gospel, but every time, God kept saying, you're good. The funeral was over. The doctors, the nurses were there. And they all came up to me one

1:14:18  
I found it interesting that in the moment that I needed to be a grandfather, He let me. And in the moment that I needed to be His son, He allowed me. In one fell swoop, He preached to all of them at one time. I got to talk to them all one by one. That's the God we serve when we're faithful to push through.

1:14:53  
Because I didn't know that I could stand there and do it. So my prayer for you leaving here today is we're closing Nehemiah, but we're not closing Nehemiah. He's not a character that we want seen and then we forget. He said three times, verse 14, remember me, oh my God, concerning this and do not wipe out my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God for his service. He says in verse 22, remember this also in my favor, oh my God, and spare me according

1:15:27  
to the greatness of your steadfast love. And again in verse 30, remember me, oh my God, for good. Beloved, oh that we could just say, Lord, remember what you've done through me. Just remember. Not that he would ever forget. But let me ask you about that good. Does it come from you? Let me tell you something. If you hold to your commitment and to your vow, you will find more often than not that the goodness of God that led you to repentance will be the goodness that you do. And it won't be because of who you are, it will be

1:16:09  
because of everything that He is. We are imperfect people, but as we seek to purify ourselves, as we seek to devote ourselves to the Lord, we too should cry out in our prayer, remember us, O God, with divine mercy, as we seek to live for you. I said before and I'll say again I can't thank you enough and I can't thank my God our God enough for this amazing letter that was needed for such a time as this. And so, let's go to the Lord and praise Him.

1:16:53  
Father, we thank You that in the book of Nehemiah, Lord, You've taken us on a journey. A journey as a local church. A journey as a body of believers. A journey as a group of leaders.

1:17:09  
A journey as servants. You've reminded us of what it means to worship You. You've sparked revival in some of us as we turn back to the book And begin to praise you for all that you are and all that you have done as we continue to look at your living word And recognize that it's living on the inside of us as we continue Lord to say we're going to Discard those things that do not bring you glory and begin to hold on to those things that magnify your name as we keep our eyes heavenward as we begin and continue to remember

1:17:40  
that this isn't our home father as we begin to understand that we can have all types of relationships but nothing should stand in front of our commitment and loyalty and faithfulness to you because nothing stood in your love for us nothing stood in the way you gave all and now you've empowered us through the precious Holy Spirit to give it right back father we thank you as you have carried us through as you've ministered to our hearts as you have kept us and so now Lord We say goodbye to Nehemiah, but not goodbye

1:18:11  
Until we see him Until we see our loved ones who know you Until we see Tatiana again We love you so much and we know that's only possible because you first loved us And it is to thee we give all the glory All the honor in all the praise in the mighty name of your precious son the Lord Jesus the Christ

1:18:32  
We pray and let the body of Christ say amen Turn around hug somebody before you leave Oh, Christ be magnified.

Transcribed with Cockatoo