

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - September 8, 2022

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Ten Steps to Spiritual Renewal

Lesson IX - Step 9

Title: "Doing Away With Compromise"

Scripture Reference: Nehemiah 13:1-31

In this lesson we find an example of how to be relentless in rooting out sin and restoring righteousness.

Outline

Because Satan is relentless in his attacks on the work of God, it is not a question of "if" the attacks will come but "when" and "how."

The responsibility of every Christian, and every local church, is to be a covenant-keeper, remembering every responsibility which lordship to Jesus Christ requires.

Here is the outline that we will work through during this lesson.

I. Four Violations

- A. They Forgot Their Vows of Separation
- B. They Forgot Their Vows of Support
- C. They Forgot Their Vows of the Sabbath
- D. They Forgot the Sanctity of Their Vows

II. Two Lessons

- A. Be Aware of the Craftiness of the Enemy
- B. Be Aggressive in Confronting the Enemy

Overview

A. Chapter 13 of Nehemiah introduces a darker theme than the steadily rising, positive theme of the Chapters leading up to it.

B. In Chapter 13, we found all of Jerusalem celebrating the dedication of the wall that had been built under Nehemiah's leadership. But in the next chapter, which we will study in this lesson, we find Nehemiah absent from Jerusalem for about twelve years (verse 6). What happens in his absence is not at all like what happened when he was present.

I. Exposition [Part I] - Four Violations

While Nehemiah was in Persia (modern day Iran), those in Jerusalem went back on four commitments they had made under his leadership.

A. They Forgot Their Vows of Separation

1. A man named Tobiah, a (half-Jew) Ammonite, had been a thorn in Nehemiah's side all during the rebuilding of the wall (Neh. 2:10, 19).
2. He tried several times to undermine Nehemiah's credibility and authority with the people (6:17-19). But Nehemiah had successfully defended himself and Jerusalem against Tobiah's conspiracies to derail the rebuilding of the city.
3. However, when Nehemiah returned from his lengthy trip to Persia, he was shocked to find Tobiah living in one of the temple store rooms.

Comment: The room Tobiah occupied had been one of the temple

storerooms (v5).

4. A priest named Eliashib, who had become connected with Tobiah by marriage, had allowed Tobiah access to the inner sanctum of the temple, something Nehemiah never would have done.
5. Tobiah had infiltrated the people of God and actually had an apartment in the temple present.
6. Nehemiah was greatly upset at Eliashib's actions and Tobiah's presence. Verses 8 and 9 tell us what Nehemiah did as a result.

"And it grieved me sore: therefore I cast forth all the household stuff of Tobiah out of the chamber. Then I commanded, and they cleansed the chambers; and thither brought I again the vessels of the house of God, with the meat offering and the frankincense." (Neh. 13: 8,9)

7. Nehemiah might have been gone for twelve years, but he had not lost any of his zeal for the house of God. He didn't call a meeting or ask anyone's permission. He knew defilement when he saw it and set about to make things right.
8. He even had the rooms ceremonially purified in order to make them suitable for the work of God again (V 9).
9. Tobiah was relentless in undermining Nehemiah's work. He

was as determined as the devil himself, and that is the lesson for us.

10. Just when we think we've gained victory over our enemy's attempts, we find him sneaking in by another means.
11. The Jews had forgotten what they had read in the Word of God: "The Ammonite and the Moabite should not come into the congregation of God for ever:" (Neh. 13:1)
12. It was twelve years earlier, when the Jews heard Ezra read these words, "they separated from Israel all the mixed multitude." (v3)
13. But, they forgot their vow. Tobiah waited until their spiritual leader was absent, and until the people had settled into their old routine before making his move.

//That is exactly how Satan will attempt to defile us!//

B. They Forgot Their Vows of Support

1. The rooms Tobiah was living in were obviously not being used for their original purpose. They were empty of the "grain offerings, the frankincense, etc. (v5), which were supposed to be stored there.
2. Why were they empty? It was because "the portions for the Levites had not been given them" (v10a). So, the Levites and the singers, that did the work, were fled every one to his field." (v10b)
3. Things had completely fallen apart in Nehemiah's absence.

So, he called the Jewish leaders together and asked, "Why is the house of God forsaken?" and then he "gathered them together, and set them in their place."
(v11)

4. His message to them was this: Because they stopped giving their tithes and offerings for the Levites, they created a vacuum - the rooms where the offerings should have been stored were empty.
5. Into that vacuum, that absence of righteousness - was filled with evil. Our hearts are like that storeroom in the temple. If God is not filling our hearts, if we have allowed a vacuum to appear, the devil will quietly move right in!
6. The people had forgotten their vows to support the work of God with their tithes and offerings. They had forgotten to make God the priority with their material resources.
7. Because the resources stopped coming in, the Levites had no support, so they returned to the outlying areas to try to create a living for themselves.
8. Nehemiah reprimanded the leaders - those who had signed a covenant agreement to be faithful to the Word

of God and its stipulations (9:38), and to bring their tithes into the storehouse of the temple (10:37-39).

9. Their last statement was, "**and we will not forsake the house of our God.**" (10:39)
10. They had made a vow to support the temple but had not kept it, and Nehemiah was not pleased.
11. After Nehemiah had expressed his displeasure, reform took place and Nehemiah 13:12 says - "Then brought all Judah the tithe of corn and the new wine and the oil unto the treasuries(i.e., the storehouse).

C. They Forgot Their Vow of the Sabbath

1. Keeping the Sabbath had been part of the covenant agreement they had signed a dozen years earlier (10:31).

Comment: We do not live under Jewish Sabbath laws today in the Christian Church - but they did, and they were not keeping them.

2. One of the reasons the Jews spent seventy years in Babylon was for violating the Sabbath years command to let the land rest every seven years (Exodus 23:10-11; Leviticus 25:4).
3. For 490 years they ignored that law. They "owed" God seventy years of rest for the land, and He removed them from the land for seventy years to allow that to happen

(Leviticus 26:34; 2 Chronicles 36:20-21).

4. Pagan vendors from the city of Tyre had moved into Jerusalem to sell their goods seven days a week (Neh. 13:16) and the Jews themselves were doing all their normal work as well (13:5).
5. As a result, Nehemiah confronted the leaders of Judah over this just as he had over the other issues (Vv 17-18).
6. Then Nehemiah took charge of the gates of the city to make sure they were closed on the Sabbath-eve, shutting out the vendors.
7. He even drove them away from setting up shop around the base of the wall outside the city. Listen to what Nehemiah told them - "Then I testified against them, and said unto them, why lodge ye about the wall? If ye do so again, I will lay hands on you. From that time forth came they no more on the Sabbath." (Neh. 13:21)

Comment: Nehemiah was zealous and jealous for the Word of God. He was the only one who seemed to remember that it was their profaning of God's laws and His Sabbath that landed the nation in Babylon, and he knew it could happen again.

D. They Forgot the Sanctity of Their Vows

1. There was a final problem: The Jews had begun to intermarry with the pagan population (13:23-28). They had forgotten the sanctity of marriage in God's sight. This was another area to which they had committed themselves to God in writing (Neh. 10:30).
2. The men had taken wives from all the surrounding pagan nations, and many of their children did not even know how to speak Hebrew (13:23-24).
3. This violation of their standards seem to upset Nehemiah the most: "And I contended with them, and cursed them, and smote certain of them, and plucked off their hair, and made them swear by God, saying, Ye shall not give your daughters unto their sons, nor take their daughters unto your sons, or for yourselves." (Neh. 13:25)

Comment: The word "curse" in verse 25 does not mean what it means today (i.e., swear words). Rather, it meant pronouncing God's judgment on the people for violating God's laws.

4. Verse 26 - Nehemiah reminded them of king Solomon's sins with foreign wives. The Jews knew this, but they were ignoring their own history.
5. Remember Eliashib, the priest who gave Tobiah an

apartment in the temple to live in? Eliashib's grandson had married the daughter of Sanballat, who was one of Tobiah's partners in the attack on Nehemiah (Neh. 2:10).

6. As a result, a chief priest had allowed his grandson to marry into the family that was part of an alliance against Israel. Consequently, in the last part of verse 28, Nehemiah says - "**therefore I chase him from me.**"
7. Nehemiah was exercising great courage and determination in cleaning up the mess he had found, and he continued to pray that God would be merciful (vv 14, 22, 29).

We can draw two important lessons from this period in Nehemiah's ministry in Jerusalem.

II. Two Lessons

Both lessons have to do with living with an enemy: being aware of the enemies craftiness and being aggressive in confronting the enemy.

A. Beware of the Craftiness of the Enemy

1. The enemy of God - whether Satan himself or those he empowers - will look for any opportunity to come in and oppose and disrupt the work of God.

C. Be Aggressive in Confronting the Enemy

1. Throughout the passage we are studying, there are a number of action verbs indicating the energy with which Nehemiah addressed the failures of the Jews in Jerusalem.
2. In verses 11, 17, and 25 we find the word "**contended**" - an aggressive word.
3. In verses 9 and 19 the word "**commanded**" occurs. The word "**testified**" is in verses 15 and 21 (KJV).
4. In verse 8 is the term "cast forth," referring to Tobiah's furniture that Nehemiah threw out of the apartment in the temple.
5. In verse 25 Nehemiah "cursed," "smote," and "plucked" out hair.

Comments:

- 1) These are all very forceful words that describe Nehemiah's actions. He was bold and aggressive in confronting the enemies of righteousness and obedience.

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the biblical passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. Each passage has been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"When thou _____ a _____ unto God, _____ not to pay it; for he hath no _____ in _____: pay that which thou hast _____. _____ is it that thou shouldest _____ vow, than that thou _____ vow and _____ pay."

[Ecclesiastes 5:4-5]

"For as by one man's _____ many were made _____, so by the _____ of _____ shall _____ be made _____."

[Romans 5:19]

"Be _____, be _____; because your _____ the _____, as a _____ lion, walketh about, _____ whom he may _____."

[1 Peter 5:8]

"Be ye not _____ yoked together with _____: for what _____ hath _____ with _____?
And what communion hath _____ with _____?"

[2 Corinthians 6:14]

"And what _____ hath Christ with _____? or what part hath he that _____ with an _____? And what _____ hath the temple of God with _____? for ye are the _____ of the _____ God; as God hath said. I will _____ in them; and _____ in them; and I will be _____ God, and they _____ be my _____."

[2 Corinthians 6:15-16]

"Wherefore come _____ from among them, and be ye _____, saith the Lord, and _____ not the _____ thing; and I will _____ you. And will be a _____ unto you, and ye shall be my _____ and _____, saith the Lord _____."

[2 Corinthians 6:17-18]

I truly pray that you have been blessed from the study of this lesson and don't Compromise when it comes to the Word of God. "Be ye steadfast, unmovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord; for as much as ye know, that your labor is not in vain, in the Lord."

Jude 3

Pastor Austin