

GOVERNING TO HONOR GOD ~ Nehemiah 5:1-19

→Read - Exodus 22:25-27, Leviticus 25:35-38, Deut. 15:12-14

CONFRONTING LAW BREAKERS ~ Nehemiah 5:1-9

[1] Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their Jewish brothers. [2] Some were saying, "We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain." [3] Others were saying, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine." [4] Still others were saying, "We have had to borrow money to pay the king's tax on our fields and vineyards. [5] Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our countrymen and though our sons are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others."

Serious Problems:

- food shortage - vs. 2
- going into debt to survive - vs. 3
- borrowing to pay taxes - vs. 4
- selling sons and daughters into slavery - vs. 5

[6] When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. [7] I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, "You are exacting usury from your own countrymen!" So I called together a large meeting to deal with them...

... So I called together a large meeting to deal with them [8] and said: "As far as possible, we have bought back our Jewish brothers who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your brothers, only for them to be sold back to us!" They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say. [9] So I continued, "What you are doing is NOT RIGHT. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?"

Deuteronomy 15:7-8 *If there is a poor man among your brothers in any of the towns of the land that the LORD your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward your poor brother. [8] Rather be openhanded and freely lend him whatever he needs.*

APPLICATION

1 Peter 2:11-15 *Dear friends, I urge you, as aliens and strangers in the world, to abstain from sinful desires, which war against your soul. [12] Live such good lives among the pagans that, though they accuse you of doing wrong, they may see your good deeds and glorify God on the day he visits us. ...[15] For it is God's will that by doing good you should silence the ignorant talk of foolish men.*

- **We don't belong here**
- **Live good lives AMONG the pagans**
- **God's Will that we DO Good**
- **Silence ignorant talk**

RESTITUTION AND RESTORATION ~ Nehemiah 5:10-13

[10] I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. But let the exacting of usury stop! [11] Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses, and also the usury you are charging them--the hundredth part of the money, grain, new wine and oil." [12] "We will give it back," they said. "And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say." Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised.

[13] I also shook out the folds of my robe and said, "In this way may God shake out of his house and possessions every man who does not keep this promise. So may such a man be shaken out and emptied!" At this the whole assembly said, "Amen," and praised the LORD. And the people did as they promised.

APPLICATION

What happened?

- Sin was Confessed
- Repentance & Restoration took Place

DO NOT FORGET ME OH GOD ~ Nehemiah 5:14-19

[14] Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second year--twelve years--neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor. [15] But the earlier governors--those preceding me--placed a heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels of silver from them in addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people. But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. [16] Instead, I devoted myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the work; we did not acquire any land. [17] Furthermore, a hundred and fifty Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the surrounding nations. [18] Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some poultry were prepared for me, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine of all kinds. In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because the demands were heavy on these people. [19] Remember me with favor, O my God, for all I have done for these people.

SO WHAT ??

1 Corinthians 6:19-20 *Do you not know that your body is a temple of the Holy Spirit, who is in you, whom you have received from God? You are NOT your own; [20] you were bought at a price. Therefore honor God with your body.*

Matthew 5:14-16 *"You are the light of the world—like a city on a hilltop that cannot be hidden. [15] No one lights a lamp and then puts it under a basket. Instead, a lamp is placed on a stand, where it gives light to everyone in the house. [16] In the same way, let your good deeds shine out for all to see, SO THAT everyone will praise your heavenly Father. (NLT)*