Nehemiah

Part 7 – Chapter 5

Removing Burdens

* Review
* Background
	+ There was a famine in the land (5:3)
	+ With the people focused on rebuilding the wall, there was less time to harvest grain and make money
	+ Many people were destitute (5:2)
	+ Landowners were mortgaging their land in order to eat and to pay taxes (5:3-4)
	+ Other families were forced to “debt slavery” (5:5, cf. Deut. 28:32)
	+ Babylonian, Median, and Persian governments engaged in heavy \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_taxation which amounted to taking advantage of others
* Nehemiah’s response (5:6-13)
	+ Righteous anger (5:6)
	+ \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ before action (5:7)
	+ Confronting wrong-doers (5:7) – “exacting usuary” = lending with interest (forbidden with other Jews Deut. 23:19) or lending against a pledge (regulated by Deut. 24:10)
	+ Convincing appeal (5:8)
	+ Why are these things wrong? (5:9)
	+ A plea to stop these practices (5:10-11)
	+ The people respond favorably (5:12)
	+ Nehemiah’s illustration and the people’s worship and obedience (5:13) – What’s interesting about their response?
* Nehemiah’s example (5:14-19)
	+ Nehemiah practiced what he preached
		- He didn’t take advantage of the governor’s food allowance in light of the economic realities of his people (5:14, 18)
		- He did not \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ the people with taxes as previous governs had done (5:15)
		- He, his servants, and his other officials all joined the people in working on the wall (5:16-17)
	+ Why did Nehemiah live this way? (5:15, 19)
* Leadership insights
	+ Leaders can’t be so focused on the work or progress that they ignore interpersonal challenges or \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ issues between people (especially different types or classes of people)
	+ Nehemiah’s anger, as with his other expressions of strong emotion in this story, demonstrate that a leader’s strongest affections ought to be tied to moral issues of faith and obedience to the Lord (perhaps as opposed to pragmatic issues)
	+ Leaders remind people that fearing the Lord and walking in \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ ought to be of first importance and that taking advantage of others, even when times are hard, is a serious violation of the Lord’s will and gives occasion to enemies of God (5:9)
	+ Leaders practice what they preach out of a fear of the Lord and a desire to be an example to the people