Studies In Nehemiah 10

**The Sacrifices of Restoration**

Neh. 13:4-9

Introduction:

1. In our modern world of broad tolerance and political correctness casting one out of the temple because he is an Ammonite seems foreign to us.

2. I suppose Nehemiah could have been accused of being a religious zealot, prejudicial toward his own race, unloving, unfavorable to the economy and grossly insensitive to families and children.

3. He could easily have been accused of allowing his religion to exercise too much influence in his governmental affairs. I doubt that he could be elected to a position of authority in our country.

4. But he was a leader who demanded radical sacrifices from the people. His desire was to restore the nation to its former glory. The way to do that, in his understanding, was to return to the way of the Lord. It would require sacrifices of enormous proportions.

Discussion:

I. The way of the Lord demands relational sacrifices (13:4-9).

 A. Eliashib, the priest appointed over the chambers in the house of God, had prepared a

 place for Tobiah, an Ammonite, to live there.

 1. “It was only a storage room and besides, it was probably not being used, since the

 people were not bringing their tithe of grain, wine and oil anyway” (13:12).

 2. In addition, “Tobiah is a relative of Eliashib.”

 3. “Why shouldn’t Tobiah be allowed to use the room?”

 4. Because it was designed by God for a different purpose.

 5. Because Tobiah is an Ammonite and the people of God are to be a separate people.

 Tobiah’s presence in the temple represents the fact that the people of God have

 embraced the world.

 B. When one becomes a Christian there is typically a change in friendship patterns.

 1. Before becoming a Christian a person’s associations are generally with the world.

 2. After becoming a Christian these associations are changed.

 a. Christian’s influence their worldly friends (1 Pet. 4:1-6).

 b. Some of them respond by becoming Christians too.

 c. Yet, some reject the message of Christ and these differences create stress on

 relationships and sometimes there are separations (Matt. 10:37-39; Lk. 14:26; Lk.

 18:28-29; Num. 25:1-9).

 C. Nehemiah was willing to stand for the Lord when it required sacrifice. He demanded

 sacrifice from others.

 1. His absence was felt.

 2. His presence was felt.

II. The way of the Lord demands financial sacrifice (10-14, 15-22).

 A. The Levites have had to “go to the fields,” because the officials were neglecting the

 house of God and Judah was not bringing the tithe.

 1. Is a similar problem inherent among God’s people today?

 a. Failure to consider worthy of double honor elders who work hard at preaching and

 teaching (1 Tim. 5:17-18).

 b. I know there are those who in their greed exploit with false words (2 Pet. 2:3). I

 know there are hirelings (Jn. 10:11-13).

 c. But are we withholding the honor due those who work hard at preaching and

 teaching? Are we withholding the honor due the Lord’s work? Do we even care

 enough to consider such matters?

 d. Are those who serve as elders so enticed by the income they can make doing

 secular work that they would never be satisfied with what God’s people might

 provide?

 e. Are you an advocate for the house of God?

 B. Nehemiah was such an advocate.

 1. He demanded the tithe of the grain, wine and oil.

 2. “We are not required in the N.T. to give a tenth.” Technically this is correct. But this

 is not justification for withholding from the work of God.

 3. The tenth is superseded by free-willing offerings given cheerfully, not grudgingly or

 under compulsion (2 Cor. 9:7-8).

 4. Give deliberately! Give generously! Give for the work! Give because you believe in

 the work of God! Give sacrificially! If it doesn’t cost you anything how is it a

 sacrifice? David said, “I will not offer burnt offerings to the Lord my God which cost

 me nothing” (2 Sam. 24:24).

 C. The way of the Lord required financial sacrifice on the Sabbath (13:15-22).

 1. The Sabbath was established from Sinai, finding its precedent in the creation (Ex.

 20:8-11).

 2. “Six days,” the Lord said, “You shall do all your work, but the seventh day is a

 Sabbath of the Lord.”

 3. God is the God of our time.

 4. We are to labor, yes, but He is the one we honor more than the pursuit of material

 and economic prosperity.

 5. They were treating the Sabbath just like all other days.

 6. Some reason that Sunday is the Christian’s Sabbath; others that the Sabbath is no

 more. Some reason that since the Sabbath is not binding today men are free to

 pursue economic pursuits on Sunday.

 a. It is true that the seventh day is no longer binding (Col. 2:16).

 b. The first day of the week is a special day for the Lord. On this day Christians in

 N.T. times came together (Acts 20:7; 1 Cor. 16:1-2). They celebrated the Lord’s

 sacrifice; they gave; they considered the Lord’s words, even as we are doing

 today.

 c. But because the Sabbath day is no longer binding does not mean that we are

 free to neglect the Lord and exalt the pursuit of economic advantage as primary.

 The Lord still governs our time and He is still to occupy first place in our lives.

 Are you expressing that today? How? Some are by choice, too busy with other

 things to assemble to worship!!!! What if the preacher or the elders said, “I have

 hay to cut today. I don’t have time for the assembly?????

 7. Judah had become like the world in its pursuits (13:16ff). Nehemiah took a hard

 stand against this!!

III. The way of the Lord demands family sacrifices (13:23-31).

 A. If all the other sacrifices are not severe enough certainly this one is most demanding!

 B. The Jews had married women from Ashdod, Ammon and Moab.

 1. Their children had been culturally assimilated.

 2. Half spoke the language of Ashdod.

 3. None of them spoke the language of Judah.

 C. Nehemiah contended with them and cursed them and struck some of them and pulled

 out their hair, and made them swear by God not to give their sons and daughters to the

 foreigners in marriage. And you thought Donald Trump was flamboyant and abrasive!!!

 D. Nehemiah cited Solomon as the example not to follow.

 E. Note v. 28.

 F. Nehemiah was not just a reformer he was a restorer.

 G. Three times now Nehemiah has asked God to remember him for the good things he

 has done.

Conclusion:

1. Nehemiah is a leader for the Lord.

2. He has the people’s best interest at heart.

3. He takes his stand on what God has revealed.

4. He demands, in no uncertain terms, that people abide by what God has revealed.

5. He recognizes that restoration requires great sacrifice!! But he demands it!!!!!!

6. If we are to return to the glory associated with the people of God it is going to be costly. God sacrificed His son for us. His kingdom is just that valuable. Do we value ourselves the way He values us? Then let us make whatever sacrifices we need to make to be the people of God.