

Bethany Baptist Church / Adult Sunday School - Dec. 8, 2024
Christ Centered Exposition - Ezra & Nehemiah: Nehemiah 6-7

Application Points & Questions

(Consider connections with and parallels to recent sermons from Philippians 1 & 2 about living a life worthy of the gospel.)

1. Perseverance through Overt Opposition (6:1-9)

- a. How do we view the importance of God's work in comparison to the world's perspective on our priorities and what we commit our time and energy to?
- b. Who are the enemies to God's work that we are doing, and how are their intentions veiled to appear as something they are not?
- c. We are called to make disciples; what distracts us from doing that work?
- d. Is there overt opposition to the work of THIS church?
- e. How do we respond when others oppose us, fabricate rumors and false accusations against us, or misrepresent our intentions to those in authority?
 - i. Matthew 5:11-12, "Blessed are you when others revile you and persecute you and utter all kinds of evil against you falsely on my account. Rejoice and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven, for so they persecuted the prophets who were before you."
- f. Nehemiah's example: don't respond too quickly... stand firm, pray, move forward.

2. Perseverance through Covert Opposition (6:10-14)

- a. Are there veiled threats or covert opposition to the work of THIS church or your service in the work God has called you to do?
- b. Do we know the bible? Do we know what God has said and what He hasn't? Are we able to discern falsehood by measuring it against God's standard?
 - i. Should a compromise ever be considered? Is collaborating toward a mutually beneficial solution ever an option?
 - ii. James Hamilton - "If someone tells you to do exactly what the Bible says not to do, you know that person does not speak for God."
- c. Are we compelled to stage a counter-assault when we've been wronged, or do we enlist the God of the universe to "remember" our enemies, rightly leaving justice in His hands, so we can continue forward?
- d. Nehemiah's example: don't give in to sin... stand firm, pray, get back to work.

3. Perseverance through the Project with People (6:15-19)

- a. What seemingly impossible task has God called you to, for His purposes and His glory? (if none, pray about that) Do you believe that "with God all things are possible" (Matt. 19:26, Mark 10:27)?
 - i. James Hamilton - "We want to be people who do things that can only be done because God is helping us. We don't want to be people who do things that can be explained away by ordinary human effort."

- b. In what ways have we “intermarried” with the world, with those who are NOT God’s people and are not committed to His work?
 - i. Are there internal threats / opposition to the work of THIS church?

4. Perseverance after the Project with People (7:1-73)

- a. The 12-tribes of Israel represented God’s people under the old covenant.
 - i. Hebrews 9:15, “Therefore he is the mediator of a new covenant, so that those who are called may receive the promised eternal inheritance, since a death has occurred that redeems them from the transgressions committed under the first covenant.”
- b. Under the new covenant... It’s not about the genealogy anymore, it’s about knowing Christ.
 - i. Galatians 3:27-29, “For as many of you as were baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither slave nor free, there is no male and female, for you are all one in Christ Jesus. And if you are Christ’s, then you are Abraham’s offspring, heirs according to promise.”
- c. This is an example of why we have membership and practice church discipline here at Bethany, they are for the purpose of the purity of God’s people.
 - i. Just as the purity of God’s people in Jerusalem under the old covenant was essential, the purity of Christ’s local church in Dollar Bay (and every other NT local church) is essential. God’s people have to know who they are.
 - 1. There needs to be a determination and understanding of who is and who isn’t a true follower of Jesus Christ, that is covenanted together with this local body.
 - ii. What about matters of unrepentant sin, blatant deviation from the member covenant, or a person’s response to church discipline? Are they indicators or measures of their standing with Christ and His church?
 - iii. Maintaining membership protects from outside influences that contradict what God has said and seek to oppose God’s purposes.