

king's chapel

Community Group Discussion Guide

Week of May 24, 2015

This Week's Focus: Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem and finds God's people have backslidden and broken the promises they made. Nehemiah cleanses the temple and calls them to radical repentance because of God's unfailing love.

This Week's Text: Nehemiah 13

With the temple and walls rebuilt, Nehemiah initiated a covenant renewal, typifying the way Jesus would come and replace the temple, provide the people with security, and initiate the new covenant. **James Hamilton**

For I do not understand my own actions. For I do not do what I want, but I do the very thing I hate. Now if I do what I do not want, I agree with the law, that it is good. So now it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. For I know that nothing good dwells in me, that is, in my flesh. For I have the desire to do what is right, but not the ability to carry it out. For I do not do the good I want, but the evil I do not want is what I keep on doing. Now if I do what I do not want, it is no longer I who do it, but sin that dwells within me. So I find it to be a law that when I want to do right, evil lies close at hand. For I delight in the law of God, in my inner being, but I see in my members another law waging war against the law of my mind and making me captive to the law of sin that dwells in my members. Wretched man that I am! Who will deliver me from this body of death? Thanks be to God through Jesus Christ our Lord! So then, I myself serve the law of God with my mind, but with my flesh I serve the law of sin. **Romans 7:15-25**

Related Texts: Numbers 22; Matthew 11:28-30, 21:12-13; 1 Peter 2:22-25

Observations and Questions for Discussion:

- What was most inspiring about this week's text/sermon?
- Describe the story unfolding in this last chapter of Nehemiah.
 - Summarize the story in the books of Ezra and Nehemiah.

- When Nehemiah returns to Jerusalem from his long leave of absence he finds the people have annulled the oath made in chapter 10. Why did this happen? As Christians, why do we return to our rebellious ways? Reference Romans 7:15-25. Discuss our need for God's continued grace in our lives.
- Why did God command Israel to remain separate from the Ammonites and Moabites? Reference verses 26-27.
 - Discuss how God's laws are safeguards against idolatry.
 - Explain why studying, knowing, and obeying God's word is necessary for a deep, abiding relationship with Him.
- According to verses 4-9, Eliashib the priest "prepared for Tobiah a large chamber" in the courts of the house of God. Why was this a major issue?
- Nehemiah was understandably and justifiably angry about the corruption in Jerusalem.
 - What is the difference between righteous anger and sinful anger? What typically fuels your anger?
- In this chapter, Nehemiah deals swiftly and harshly toward sin. Are there sins in your life or evils around you that require strong, combatant actions?
- Nehemiah doesn't simply rebuke the people of Israel; he also directs them toward acts of godliness. How are positive actions the fruit of repentance?
- How did they "profane the Sabbath day?" Reference verses 15-18. What does this mean, and why was the Sabbath significant to the people of Israel.
 - How is the Sabbath principle important to us today? Reference Matthew 11:28-30.
- In response to Israel's sin, Nehemiah took the following steps: he warned the leaders, he shut Jerusalem's gates, he threatened the merchants, and he called the Levites to be purified and to guard the gates. What principles can we draw from Nehemiah's actions?
- Nehemiah records 4 brief prayers in this chapter. Reference verses 14, 22, 29, and 31. What does he pray and why?
- Why does this book appear to end unfinished? What future hope does it point to?
- How is Jesus the true and better Ezra and Nehemiah?
- How does Ezra-Nehemiah promote the mission of God's church, namely to demonstrate and proclaim the Gospel to the ends of the earth?

Next Week's Text: Matthew 18:1-14