

## DO WE CARE?

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### Nehemiah 1:1-11

1. In Psalm 11:3 David asked an important question, "If the foundation are destroyed, what can the righteous do?"
2. The next verse says, "The Lord is in His holy temple; the Lord's throne is in heaven."
3. Regardless of what is happening on the earth, we, the followers of the Lord Jesus Christ, must remember that God is still on the throne.
4. In 445 BC, under the leadership of Nehemiah, the Jews rebuilt the wall of Jerusalem in fifty-two days: a wall that had been destroyed by the Babylonians 141 years earlier in 586 BC.
5. The rebuilding of the wall was the final stage of a three-stage process that begin with a remarkable event in 538 BC. 2 Chronicles 36:22-23  
Now in the first year of Cyrus king of Persia — in order to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah — the Lord stirred up the spirit of Cyrus king of Persia, so that he sent a proclamation throughout his kingdom, and also put it in writing, saying, 23 "Thus says Cyrus king of Persia, 'The Lord, the God of heaven, has given me all the kingdoms of the earth, and He has appointed me to build Him a house in Jerusalem, which is in Judah. Whoever there is among you of all His people, may the Lord his God be with him, and let him go up!'"  
NOTE: This event illustrates the reality stated in Prov 21:1  
"The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes."
6. A man named Zerubbabel answered the call and led a total of 42,360 people from Babylon to Jerusalem, and the Temple was eventually completed in 516 BC.
7. In 458 BC the scribe, Ezra returned, and began strengthening the spiritual foundations of the nation. Ezra 7:8-10  
He came to Jerusalem in the fifth month, which was in the seventh year of the king. 9 For on the first of the first month he began to go up from Babylon; and on the first of the fifth month he came to Jerusalem, **because the good hand of his God was upon him. 10 For Ezra had set his heart to study the law of the Lord and to practice it, and to teach His statutes and ordinances in Israel.**
8. That brings us to Nehemiah and the series of events that led to him returning to Jerusalem to rebuild the city's wall.
9. I believe that a similar progression must be true in our lives if we are going to be used by God to accomplish what needs to be done in our day.
9. Notice the progression that led to Nehemiah committing himself to a great task.
10. Note six things we learn about Nehemiah in this chapter.

### I. He cared enough to check. 1-2

- A. When a group of men that included Nehemiah's brother returned from Jerusalem he asked them about the situation there.
- B. Now Nehemiah was in a pretty comfortable and important position; he was the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes.
- C. He was doing fine regardless of how others were fairing.
- D. The question we must ask ourselves is do I really care about what is going on the lives of people around me, in the life of the church, the life of our nation, and in the world?
- E. Self-centered, self-serving people will never invest themselves in that which advances the plans and purposes of God in the lives of others and in the world we live in.

### II. He cared enough to cry. 3-4

- A. Upon hearing the report related to the situation in Jerusalem Nehemiah was moved to tears by what he heard.
- B. For days he wept, mourned, fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.
- C. As I have meditated on this thought I was reminded of Jesus' words in Matthew 9:35-38.  
Jesus was going through all the cities and villages, teaching in their synagogues and proclaiming the gospel of the kingdom, and healing every kind of disease and every kind of sickness. 36 Seeing the people, **He felt compassion for them**, because they were distressed and dispirited like sheep without a shepherd. 37 Then He said to His disciples, "The harvest is plentiful, but the workers are few. 38 "Therefore beseech the Lord of the harvest to send out workers into His harvest."
- D. Compassion involves more than just feeling sorry for people; it is the ability to put ourselves in the place of another.
- E. Jesus told the disciples that they were to **beseech** the Lord of the harvest.  
NOTE: The word beseech means to beg for urgently or anxiously, to request earnestly, to implore.

### III. He cared enough to call. 5-6a

- A. Note Nehemiah's approach to God, "I **beseech** You, O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who preserves the covenant and loving kindness for those who love Him and keep His commandments."
- B. Nehemiah's concern was so real that it led to his beseeching God on behalf of Jerusalem and its people.
- C. What characterizes our praying?
- D. Sadly most professing Christians do not even care enough about our current state of affairs to pray at all.

### IV. He cared enough to confess. 6b-7

- A. Nehemiah confessed his own sins, the sins of his family, and the sins of his people.
- B. He was specific in naming sin.

C. Two passages come to mind.

1. 2 Chronicles 7:13-15

If I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain, or if I command the locust to devour the land, or if I send pestilence among My people, 14 and My people who are called by My name humble themselves and pray and seek My face and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, will forgive their sin and will heal their land.

2. 1 John 1:9-10

If we confess our sins, He is faithful and righteous to forgive us our sins and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

#### **V. He cared enough to contend. 8-10**

A. The word contend can mean to argue or state something in a strong and definite way.

B. He was not afraid to remind God of His promises to His people.

C. He pointed out that God had clearly stated what He would do if His people would meet His conditions.

D. He also reminded God that he and his countrymen were in fact His servants, His people, who He had redeemed by His great power and strong arm.

#### **VI. He cared enough to commit. 11**

A. Nehemiah referred to himself as God's servant who revered God's name.

B. He asked God to make him successful and grant him compassion before the king to whom he planned to appeal.

C. Do we care enough to commit ourselves fully to being God's man or woman in this evil day?

#### **APPLICATION**

1. Not much is going to happen related to revival in America until some person or group cares enough to check, to cry, to care, to confess, to contend, and to commit.

2. The same is true related to seeing God work in our lives and in the lives of those within our circle of influence.

3. Some only care enough to complain, but Nehemiah cared enough to do something about the situation he was faced with.

4. Things get done by doers; people who believe God can use them to make a difference.