

The Holiness of God and the Holiness of Man  
Nehemiah 13:15-18

**I. The First Shock: Did You Hear That?**

**A. Nehemiah's Reforms:** Did you see what He did?

1. Sabbath
  - a. Shuts the gates to merchants
  - b. Warns of physical force against disobedient
2. Marriages
  - a. Not the first time the exiles have tackled this problem (Ezra 10)
  - b. Married to Philistines, Ammonites, and Moabites
  - c. **Nehemiah 13:25 (ESV) <sup>25</sup> *And I confronted them and cursed them and beat some of them and pulled out their hair. And I made them take an oath in the name of God, saying, "You shall not give your daughters to their sons, or take their daughters for your sons or for yourselves.***

**B. Why does Nehemiah take the actions He takes?**

1. Remember: they are rebuilding a city destroyed because previous generations disobeyed God's covenant commands in the same way.
2. Nehemiah acts for two loves
  - a. Acts for love of his people
    - (1) Disobedience leads to desecration
    - (2) Desecration leads to destruction
      - (a) God makes it clear that even if no one else realizes your sin, He does
        - i) **Numbers 32:23 (ESV) <sup>23</sup> *But if you will not do so, behold, you have sinned against the LORD, and be sure your sin will find you out.***
        - ii) **Luke 12:2 (ESV) <sup>2</sup> *Nothing is covered up that will not be revealed, or hidden that will not be known.***
      - (b) God judges sin
        - i) The soul that sins it shall die
        - ii) The wages of sin is death
    - (3) Nehemiah acts out of love for His people to prevent them wandering off on a path that leads to national and spiritual death!
  - b. Acts for love of God's glory among those who are not God's people
    - (1) **God's glory is most clearly seen by the unbelieving world through the covenant relationship between God and His people.**
    - (2) **Matthew 5:16 (ESV) <sup>16</sup> *In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works***

*and give glory to your Father who is in heaven.*

3. Nehemiah acts fervently out of love for his people and love for God's glory and sets an example for all those who love and commit their lives to God's glory.

## II. The Real Shock: So Little Love for God's Glory in Our Day

### A. The Great Sadness of Contemporary Christianity: Lovelessness

1. Desecration (treating God's word and Person with less honor and obedience than they deserve) destroys
  - a. The people of God -
    - (1) the love of many will grow cold
    - (2) a great falling away
  - b. The witness of God
    - (1)
  - c. The will of God
    - (1) **2 Peter 3:9 (ESV) *The Lord is not slow to fulfill his promise as some count slowness, but is patient toward you, not wishing that any should perish, but that all should reach repentance.***
    - (2) How few seem to care that many will perish
      - (a) Loveless, compassionless, heartless beasts
      - (b) Practical universalists who truly believe everyone get to heaven eventually
        - i) **Revelation 20:11-15 (ESV) <sup>11</sup> *Then I saw a great white throne and him who was seated on it. From his presence earth and sky fled away, and no place was found for them.* <sup>12</sup> *And I saw the dead, great and small, standing before the throne, and books were opened. Then another book was opened, which is the book of life. And the dead were judged by what was written in the books, according to what they had done.* <sup>13</sup> *And the sea gave up the dead who were in it, Death and Hades gave up the dead who were in them, and they were judged, each one of them, according to what they had done.* <sup>14</sup> *Then Death and Hades were thrown into the lake of fire. This is the second death, the lake of fire.* <sup>15</sup> *And if anyone's name was not found written in the book of life, he was thrown into the lake of fire.***
        - ii) Not everyone goes to heaven!
2. The Great Joy of Contemporary Christianity: Jesus
  - a. The way to God
    - (1) If we know love and forgiveness and freedom, then our

- hearts ought to break for the lost
    - (2) If we know love and forgiveness of sin and freedom from fear of death then we ought to be willing to go to the extreme to show the way to God
  - b. Jesus shows the way to God
    - (1) Left heaven
    - (2) Set aside divinity
    - (3) Took on the form of the servant
    - (4) Gave Himself in obedience to death, even death on a cross

## **B. Becoming Like Jesus**

1. Becoming like Jesus in our walk of faith
  - a. But how can we claim likeness to Jesus if we
    - (1) Love less than Jesus
    - (2) Live less than Jesus
    - (3) Suffer less than Jesus
    - (4) Serve less than Jesus
    - (5) Sacrifice less than Jesus
  - b. Jesus so loved the Father's glory that He gave Himself to death on the cross so the world could see and know God's glory.
    - (1) Nehemiah so loved God's glory that he acted fervently among God's people to preserve and advance God's glory
    - (2) What about us?
2. Jesus shows the way
  - a. **Luke 9:23-26 (ESV)** <sup>23</sup> *And he said to all, "If anyone would come after me, let him deny himself and take up his cross daily and follow me. <sup>24</sup> For whoever would save his life will lose it, but whoever loses his life for my sake will save it. <sup>25</sup> For what does it profit a man if he gains the whole world and loses or forfeits himself? <sup>26</sup> For whoever is ashamed of me and of my words, of him will the Son of Man be ashamed when he comes in his glory and the glory of the Father and of the holy angels.*
  - b. Three Steps on the Journey
    - (1) Deny Your Self - Refuse Selfishness
    - (2) Take Up Your Cross Daily -
      - (a) Prepare to die
      - (b) Chicken and the Pig
        - i) Chicken makes an offering
        - ii) Pig makes a total commitment
    - (3) Follow Me - Actively pursue the teaching, the life, and the love of Jesus