

Living Out Unity

Nehemiah 5

1. Chosen Identity: What value do I place on others? vs. 1-8

Nehemiah was very angry as he realized through the famine that the community's issue was more than an economic issue, but an identity issue as well as a unity issue; taking advantage of other Jews who were in desperate need of compassion and love.

The identity that we place on others will influence on how we treat others. If we do not view those within our church family as children of God (John 1:12, 2 Corinthians 5:17), unity will be lost, as we are choosing to ignore what Jesus has done for us (Colossians 3:12-14).

2. Covenant Loyalty: What is my agreement with God? vs. 9-13

Nehemiah questions the Jews loyalty towards their relationship with God, as they were not applying God's word for their daily life. The nobles and officials admitted their sin, repented, made an oath before God to make things right, worshipped God, and they did as promised.

Because of Jesus sacrificial love, we have a new covenant with God. (Luke 22:20) Only through our loyalty to our grace, mercy and love filled relationship with God, can we be the church God calls us to be. (Ephesians 2:13-14)

A Covenant: "A relationship that is more intimate and loving than a mere legal contract could create, yet one more enduring and binding than personal affection alone could make... the whole self giving of two parties to each other." (Timothy Keller)

3. Character Reflection: Does my character reflect Christ? Vs. 14-19

Nehemiah understood that his Persian governorship was under the authority of Yahweh Himself, as he reverently served God in how he led God's people by surrendering his advantages so he could help alleviate the burden of those who were in need.

Through Jesus selflessness, "He made himself nothing" and took upon Himself "the very nature of a servant" (Philippians 2:6-8); Jesus came not for His own benefit but for ours. When our attitude is the same as that of Christ Jesus (Philippians 2:5), unity within the church remains; unity with our God and with our church family.

Questions:

- What value do I place on others? Our actions and words reveal the answer to this question. What steps do we need to take to make sure that we value people the way that Jesus has placed value on us?

- What is my covenant (agreement) with God? Our understanding of God's word is a must to truly answer this question. How has the sacrifice of Jesus Christ dying on the cross for your sins and rising again three days later impacted your life? In what ways do you live out your relationship in Christ through the way you love others?
- Does my character reflect Christ? How does God's faithfulness in Jesus lead you to serve others beyond what is expected? Reflect on and recount how Jesus used His advantage for our disadvantage? What advantages do you enjoy that can be used for the disadvantages of others?