

Plan and Work Together

S.R. Neh. 1:3-4

12 – 13 - 2020

I. Nehemiah 1:1-4 Nehemiah learns of tragedy

- A. In this first chapter consider the heart of Nehemiah. You can learn a lot about someone's heart by what they **ask** about, what they **cry** about, what they **pray** about and what they're willing to **Do**.
- B. What does Nehemiah ask about and what does that reveal about his heart?
1. What he asks about:
 - a) Nehemiah asked about **God's people and God's city**... in that order.
 - b) People are more important than places, buildings and tools.
 2. What that **shows about his heart**?
 - a) Nehemiah is asking about a place he has never been to, about people, most of which, he has never met, and a situation that has absolutely no bearing on his present condition.
 - (1) Not only had he probably never been to Jerusalem, but his father had never been, his grandfather had never been.
 - (2) But when some of his countrymen return to Susa from the promised land, Nehemiah asks about the condition of the people and the city. Why?
 - (a) Because Nehemiah was a man who cared about God.
 - (b) And when you care about God you care about the things He cares about.
 - (c) And when you care about the things God cares about you ask about them. **"I asked them concerning the Jews and about Jerusalem."**
 3. Nehemiah cared enough to ask.
- C. Hanani's answer and Nehemiah's response:
1. Hanani: God's people are in constant distress. And God's holy city is in ruins.
 2. Nehemiah: At the immediate hearing of these words, he fell down and wept bitterly. For days.
- D. Why does Nehemiah respond in this way?
1. We react like this when we hear surprisingly tragic news we did not expect.
 - a) I don't think Nehemiah expected to hear this report. Why?
 - (1) Because Nehemiah wasn't the first person who went back to Jerusalem to rebuild the walls. (**90 years earlier**)

- (2) went to rebuild the temple and walls.
- (3) Ezra went back to rebuild the walls (Ezra 4-5). (13 years earlier)
- (4) And Nehemiah worked in the courts of the same king that sent Ezra **13 years before** which means I think Nehemiah would have known Ezra and had been expecting to hear that God's people and city were fully restored.

The task of **rebuilding the walls** was something that the Jews had **tried multiple times** over a period of almost one hundred years and had failed every time.

- 2. You can tell a lot about a man from **what he weeps about**. Nehemiah weeps.
 - a) Nehemiah cared enough to weep.

E. But Nehemiah does more than ask and then weep, **he prays**.

- 1. How does Nehemiah pray and what does it reflect about his heart and view of the situation?
 - a) Urgently "When I heard these words..."
 - b) Constantly "For days..." or "night and day...(v.6)"
 - c) Diligently "Month of Chislev(1:1)" to "the month of Nisan(2:1)"
 - (1) Nehemiah spends what was likely sixteen weeks (four months) in urgent and diligent prayer for a task that took seven weeks to complete.
- 2. The presence of prayer in the Nehemiah's response demonstrates an awareness of his own need for God's assistance.
 - a) In other words, this task, this problem, this mission is too great for me. God, I need your help. I cannot do this on my own.
 - (1) Nehemiah cared enough to pray.

F. How does that relate to me?

- 1. What made Nehemiah unique was not the information he possessed but his **response to the information** everyone else already knew.
 - a) The news Hanani shared with Nehemiah was the same news that thousands of Jews already knew.
 - (1) That wasn't where Nehemiah distinguished himself.
 - (2) The difference between Nehemiah and everyone else was his response to the news.
 - b) The same is true for us.
- 2. We have the news regarding Cason Lane family needs.
 - a) The question is how will we respond?
 - b) Will we ask – cry – pray and work?