

**“When The Problem Is You”**  
**Nehemiah 5:1-13 \* February 14, 2010**

I. “Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their Jewish brothers.”

A. What’s the problem here?

B. It’s a recurring theme with us. Left to ourselves what happens?

C. What is this conspirator within my heart?

“Sin...is more than an unfortunate outward act or habit; it is a deep-seated \_\_\_\_\_ corruption. In fact, the sins we commit are merely outward and visible manifestations of this inward and invisible malady...a moral disease...It is a tendency or bias of \_\_\_\_\_, which we inherit, which is rooted deeply in our human personality and which manifests itself in a thousand ugly ways.” ~ John Stott

D. But hasn’t human nature changed since Nehemiah’s time?

<p><b>Three Ways We Should Deal With This Enemy</b></p>
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**Step One: It starts with \_\_\_\_\_ . I must become aware of the problem I have.**

A. What did Nehemiah do first?

B. The problem with dating violence today is worse than we realize. Why?

C. How many can I come up with?

- |          |          |
|----------|----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____ |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____ |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____ |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____ |

9. \_\_\_\_\_ 10. \_\_\_\_\_

D. How do we bring people to the realization of what good behavior is and isn’t? The Reformers said we need to:

1. Preach the \_\_\_\_\_.

a. What does this mean?

b. What 2 things will happen when we do this?

1. People will learn the difference between \_\_\_\_\_.

2. It will drive people to the \_\_\_\_\_.

2. Then preach the \_\_\_\_\_.

a. What does this mean?

**Step Two: I must \_\_\_\_\_ of where I have gone wrong.**

**(Step Three: I must \_\_\_\_\_ new ways to live.)**

A. What does “repent” mean?

B. Where do we see this happening in Nehemiah 5?

C. Two observations about repentance:

1. To be real, it should come packed with \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Scriptures:

2. The Bible promises the repentant soul  
 \_\_\_\_\_ & \_\_\_\_\_.  
 Scriptures:

What is God speaking to my heart this morning?

**“When The Problem Is You”**  
**Nehemiah 5:1-13 \* February 14, 2010**

I. “Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their Jewish brothers.”

A. *What’s the problem here?*

**The problem is not money. A downturn in the economy is just the occasion which brings the problem to the surface. The problem is their selfishness.**

B. *It’s a recurring theme with us. Left to ourselves what happens?*

**We live in a way that is selfish, stupid, animal-like, destructive. When it comes to building our lives up in good and godly directions, there is an enemy inside of me that left to itself will sabotage all the efforts I make at improving my life. And now the doing of good and living selflessly is unnatural to me. It takes a massive effort.**

C. *What is this conspirator within my heart?*

“Sin...is more than an unfortunate outward act or habit; it is a deep-seated inward corruption. In fact, the sins we commit are merely outward and visible manifestations of this inward and invisible malady...a moral disease...It is a tendency or bias of self-centeredness, which we inherit, which is rooted deeply in our human personality and which manifests itself in a thousand ugly ways.” ~ John Stott

D. *But hasn’t human nature changed since Nehemiah’s time?*

We’re going through our own economic downturn as a nation. How do you think we’re performing under the pressure? Can you think of any stories of people ripping other people off during this recession? How are the banks doing in treating its customers? And how about those credit card companies – are they keeping interest rates low and manageable out of concern for the public? Did our politicians serve selflessly during this crisis? No one profited during this time at the taxpayers’ expense did they? And when people stopped watching and regulations weren’t being enforced, people behaved well, didn’t then. Nothing bad happened did it? Because we humans are so much better than back then, aren’t we?

**THREE WAYS WE SHOULD DEAL WITH THIS ENEMY**

**STEP ONE: IT STARTS WITH REALIZATION. I MUST BECOME AWARE OF THE PROBLEM I HAVE.**

A. *What did Nehemiah do first?*

**Nehemiah had to confront the Jewish aristocracy with their self-centeredness, their pride, their injustice.**

B. *The problem with dating violence today is worse than we realize. Why?*

**Someone in a Bible study where we were discussing violence in the context of men-women relationships really depressed me when they said, “And it’s not like boys know they’re acting badly, and feel guilty about it. Most of them don’t even know they’re acting badly. This is just how they are. It’s how they’ve grown up.” You know at least in Nehemiah, the rich Jews knew what they were doing was wrong because when Nehemiah confronted them about it, how’d they respond? Verse 8 – “They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.” But today, there are a lot of people out there who don’t feel guilty or ashamed of acting like an animal, because they *don’t know it’s wrong*. The Bible says of such people, “Their consciences are seared as with a hot iron.”**

C. *How many can I come up with [The Ten Commandments]*

- |          |           |
|----------|-----------|
| 1. _____ | 2. _____  |
| 3. _____ | 4. _____  |
| 5. _____ | 6. _____  |
| 7. _____ | 8. _____  |
| 9. _____ | 10. _____ |

D. *How do we bring people to the realization of what good behavior is and isn’t? The Reformers said we need to:*

1. Preach the **Law**.

a. *What does this mean?*

**First let people know the demands of God’s law. Here is the behavior which a holy God requires of us. And you lay it out there. All of it. Every “Thou shalt” and every “Thou shalt not.” You**

teach it over and over again. Teach it in the home. Teach it in church. And you let it be known that if you fail to keep God's law, if you fall short of living by these standards, then you will fall short of God himself.

*b. What 2 things will happen when we do this?*

*1. People will learn the difference between right and wrong.*

*2. It will drive people to the Cross.*

*2. Then preach the Gospel.*

*a. What does this mean?*

The more people hear about God's law and God's standards, the more they're going to realize, if they have half a brain, and they're honest, that they fall so short of what God expects. And that's where the gospel comes in. God knows that we've blown it. And that left to ourselves we'll keep on blowing it. But that's why he became human in Jesus Christ, and came to this earth, and died on that cross. He did what we couldn't do. He kept God's law perfectly, all of it, and then he traded in his perfect life for my sinful life, and now if I stand in his shadow, and cling to him, I can be forgiven of every one of my sins, and what more, Jesus promises to come and live inside of me to help me do it better. To give me the power to live as I was created to live.

**STEP TWO: I MUST REPENT OF WHERE I HAVE GONE WRONG.**

**(STEP THREE: I MUST RELEARN NEW WAYS TO LIVE.)**

*A. What does "repent" mean?*

In the Bible, the word for repentance literally means "to change your thinking." It's not just saying you're sorry. A child can be coerced into uttering an apology for something they've done wrong, "Sorry!", but until they agree with you in their very thinking that what they did was wrong, you're not going to get very far with them. For an apology to be more than window-dressing, for a confession to be genuine, there must be a true meeting of the minds, an agreeing that something wrong occurred.

*B. Where do we see this happening in Nehemiah 5?*

In the middle of verse 10, Nehemiah says, "Let the exacting of usury stop! Give back to them (the poor Jews) immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses." Then verse 12. "We will give it back," they said "And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say." Then the very end of verse 13. "And the people did as they promised." That's repentance.

*C. Two observations about repentance:*

*1. To be real, it should come packed with emotion.*

*Scriptures:*

**2 Corinthians 7:10** – "Godly sorrow brings repentance that leads to salvation and leaves no regret...See what this godly sorrow has produced in you: what earnestness, what eagerness to clear yourselves, what indignation, what alarm, what longing, what concern..." As you start to grow in your realization of the sin inside of you, and then you consider what our sin cost God – the death of his son on that cross – if that doesn't start to trigger some chain of emotion inside of you, that I have to truly wonder if you even do love God. Sin is no trivial thing in your life, and it is not to be trifled with. Sin's intent is nothing short that to make a ruin of your life now and drag your soul into hell when this life is through. That God would rescue you from that, that God would open up a way for you to escape that destiny should do something inside of you. Should fill you with urgency to be rid of this! "Blessed are those who mourn," Jesus said, referring to a mourning we should show for our sin.

*2. The Bible promises the repentant soul*

**Forgiveness & Cleansing.**

*Scriptures:*

**Acts 3:19** – "Repent, then and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped out, that times of refreshing may come from the Lord." Or try **Romans 8:1** on for size. "There is no condemnation for those who are in Christ Jesus."

*What is God speaking to my heart this morning?*