

Connecting Through the Faces of Justice III

“Angry Face”

KJV Nehemiah 5:1 And **there was a great cry of the people and of their wives against their brethren the Jews.** ² For there were that said, We, our sons, and our daughters, are many: therefore we take up corn for them, that we may eat, and live. ³ Some also there were that said, We have mortgaged our lands, vineyards, and houses, that we might buy corn, because of the dearth. ⁴ There were also that said, We have borrowed money for the king's tribute, and that upon our lands and vineyards. ⁵ Yet now our flesh is as the flesh of our brethren, our children as their children; and, lo, we bring into bondage our sons and our daughters to be servants, and some of our daughters are brought unto bondage already: neither is it in our power to redeem them; for other men have our lands and vineyards. ⁶ And I **was very angry when I heard their cry and these words.** ⁷ Then I consulted with myself, and I rebuked the nobles, and the rulers, and said unto them, Ye exact usury, every one of his brother. **And I set a great assembly against them.** ⁸ And I said unto them, We after our ability have redeemed our brethren the Jews, which were sold unto the heathen; and will ye even sell your brethren? or shall they be sold unto us? Then held they their peace, and found nothing to answer. ⁹ Also I said, It is not good that ye do: ought ye not to walk in the fear of our God because of the reproach of the heathen our enemies? ¹⁰ I likewise, and my brethren, and my servants, might exact of them money and corn: **I pray you, let us leave off this usury.** ¹¹ **Restore,** I pray you, to them, even this day, their lands, their vineyards, their oliveyards, and their houses, also the hundredth part of the money, and of the corn, the wine, and the oil, that ye exact of them. ¹² Then said they, We will **restore them, and will require nothing of them; so will we do as thou sayest.** Then I called the priests, and took an oath of them, that they should do according to this promise. ¹³ Also I shook my lap, and said, So God shake out every man from his house, and from his labour, that performeth not this promise, even thus be he shaken out, and emptied. And all the congregation said, Amen, and praised the LORD. And the people did according to this promise.

- We have seen an inquiring face of justice.
- We have seen a weeping face of justice.

The project of rebuilding the walls and gates was finished in 52 days.

Nehemiah 6:15 So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in **fifty and two days**.

No matter how much progress we make, there are always those in the community who want to take advantage of the least of these: the marginalized and the most vulnerable.

Prophets and prophetic communities **hold** officials accountable for their actions.

Prophets and prophetic communities **call** the communities to God's standard.

Prophets and prophetic communities **demand** justice for the least of these, the marginalized, and the most vulnerable in the community.

Prophets and prophetic communities **cry aloud** and speak up for those who have no voice or whose voices are not being heard.

□ Now, we see an angry face of justice on Nehemiah.

□ ^{KJV} **Nehemiah 5:6** And I was **very angry** when I heard their cry and these words.

I

When you and I arrived back in the land, it was a time of famine. Vs 3

There was much work to be done, but there was a scarcity of resources.

Some of the nobles took advantage of the opportunity of scarcity to make a **profit** and **produce** more hardship for the people.

Nehemiah's arrival in the city, rebuilding the walls and restoring the gates, brought hope to the city.

□ *"Hope has two beautiful daughters; their names are **Anger and Courage**. **Anger** at the way things are, and **Courage** to see that they do not remain as they are."*
Augustine of Hippo

II

Nehemiah let his anger turn into **action**.

Nehemiah confronted the nobles. Vs7

Nehemiah met with the nobles one-on-one first, and then he met with them publicly in a great assembly.

Nehemiah made a demand to **stop** the heavy interest and usury.

☐ Power concedes nothing without a demand. It never did, and it never will.
Frederick Douglas

III

The Nehemiah action was public, **confrontational** and had **tension**.

- ☐ What you will not confront, you cannot change.
- ☐ Never complain about what you have not confronted.
- ☐ Whatever you have not confronted, you permit to exist.
- ☐ Confrontation brings about change.
- ☐ All truth is confrontational.

Nothing in all the world is more dangerous than sincere ignorance and conscientious stupidity. Dr *Martin Luther King, Jr.*

Sin is both personal, individual, and institutional.

The Nehemiah action included...

A clear statement of the problem.

A clear statement of the solution.

- A demand from the Nobles and officials.

A commitment before a great assembly to work towards a solution.

A time to follow up on the solution and check on the progress of the solution. **Vs 8-13**

Let's take nonviolent, direct action!

- Let's solve community problems in Columbus, Ohio!

KJV **Matthew 23:23** Woe unto you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! for ye pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have omitted the weightier matters of the law, **judgment, mercy, and faith**: these ought ye to have done, and not to leave the other undone.

NKJV **Matthew 23:23** Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, hypocrites! For you pay tithe of mint and anise and cummin, and have neglected the weightier matters of the law: **justice and mercy and faith**. These you ought to have done, without leaving the others undone.

(Video)

☐ When was the last time you inquired about our city, wept over our city, or took action over Columbus, Ohio?

The Nehemiah Action Tuesday, May 21, 2024, The Ohio State Fairgrounds
The Celeste Center 6:40 pm pre-meeting
7:00 pm We Begin!

Tickets are available today from Rhema Christian Center Justice Ministry network members!

*Rhema Christian Center
Bishop La Fayette Scales
Saturday & Sunday, May 4 & 5, 2024
9:30 a.m.*