

Faithful to the End

Scripture: Nehemiah 13
(03-01-26 Pastor Tony Hao)

Despite the public covenants made earlier, the people quickly reverted to old sinful habits (13:6-8, 14). Nehemiah's rhetorical question asked whether the people had learned anything from history. Had they not promised to keep the Sabbath holy earlier? Did these people really want to invite God's wrath to rain down destruction on the nation again?

Nehemiah's confrontation was described using a term that often refers to bringing a court case against someone (13:23-25). The curse Nehemiah spoke probably was the curse these people called down on themselves some years earlier when they renewed their covenant with God and promised not to intermarry with pagans. The physical beating and pulling of hair sounds like extreme abuse, but it was a common way of expressing great anger and grief in that culture.

Nehemiah consistently relied on God for wisdom, guidance, and compassion (13:14, 22b, 31b). He did what was right because he loved God. He believed it was important to follow God's word, and he knew the future history of the nation depended on bringing the people to the point where they would dedicate their lives to serving a holy God.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. Why was Nehemiah so angry that Eliashib the priest allowed Tobiah, an enemy of God, to live in a temple storeroom (13:8-9)? In what ways might modern Christians commit "spiritual treason" by what they allow to exist in their hearts or church communities?
2. What factors influenced the people to break their promise about doing business on the Sabbath (13:15)? How can we prevent economic activities or external "secular influences" from compromising our spiritual commitments?
3. Why was Nehemiah so concerned that the children could not speak the "language of Judah" (13:23-25)? How can families ensure children are fluent in the "language" of their faith today?
4. How does Nehemiah's repeated prayer for God to "remember" him resonate with your own spiritual journey (13:14, 22, 31)?