

October 16th, 2022AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier

Nehemiah 10:28-31 – “Endeavor after New Obedience”

- A. Imagine a church group has fallen from God’s grace both in doctrine & practice for many years. Such a church that fell into sin & compromise yet later returned to the faith should remind us of the people of Judah under Nehemiah.
- B. After the wall was completed, there were great celebrations of thanksgiving which included worship with the reading of lots of Scripture leading to a conviction of sin.
- C. Born out of true repentance, they sought to walk in obedience before their Lord. → **Neh 9:38**
- D. Just before we get to **v28f**, Nehemiah, the priests, Levites, & nobles all wrote their name upon a document which renewed their covenant oath before God. All God’s people followed their example.

God calls you to endeavor after new obedience.	I. <u>A SEPARATE, HOLY PEOPLE</u> II. <u>THE HOLY SABBATH DAY & YEAR</u>
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I. **A SEPARATE, HOLY PEOPLE** → **(v28)**

- A. It is key that they **“separated themselves from the peoples of the lands to the law of God.”**
 - 1. There are isolationists in this world who try to separate themselves from the rest of society. That isn’t how we should apply **v28**.
 - 2. To separate ourselves to the law of the God is to live the way He tells us to live & not how society, our peers, or even the supposed experts of day tell us how we ought to live if they are not in accord with God’s Word.
 - a. According to **2 Cor 10:5**, you are to be about the business of **“destroying speculations & every lofty thing raised up against the knowledge of God, taking every thought captive to the obedience of Christ.”**
 - b. Paul gave us further guidance how we are to live as a holy & separate people. → **1 Cor 5:1-5, vv9-13**
 - 3. A very important job of Christian parents is to do everything in your power to protect your children from marrying someone who is not a true Christian filled with the fruit of the Spirit. In **v30**, they made a solemn commitment to God: **“will not give our daughters to the peoples of the land or take their daughters for our sons.”**
 - a. According to **Ezra 9**, many in Judah did not do this & married pagans from the surrounding nations.
 - b. This command still stands today after the perfect work of Christ; it is to be held as very serious by parents but also by young & older single people alike.
 - c. Again Paul in the NT tells us how to be a separate, holy people. → **2 Cor 6:14-18**
- B. Notice Jews from every part of society from priests & nobles to servants took the oath along with those mentioned in the **2nd ½ of v.28f**. Look there.
 - 1. When you take membership vows, you make a similar promise.
 - a. Like the Israelites, you make a promise that you cannot fully keep because of sin.
 - b. Your promise to lead a godly life includes: (1) turning to God to ask forgiveness of your sins & pleading for His grace to help you grow more & more to put those sins to death, & (2) asking forgiveness of those whom you sin against.
 - c. This is what it means to endeavor after new obedience.
 - 2. They also vowed to endeavor to keep the 4th commandment.

II. THE HOLY SABBATH DAY & YEAR →**v31**

A. Many Christians today live as though they only have 9 commandments to obey.

1. The 4th commandment is perhaps the most neglected & ignored among American Christians.
 - a. According to WSC 59, “From the beginning of the world to the resurrection of Christ, God appointed the 7th day of the week to be the weekly sabbath; & the 1st day of the week ever since, to continue to the end of the world, which is the Christian sabbath.”
 - b. In this Christian Sabbath, you are to have a day of rest & holy worship.
 - c. Apart from deeds of necessity, it is to be a day of rest to you, your daughter, & your servants.
 - 1) Many of us would say that we don’t have servants as the Jews did when the commandments were written; however, there is still application for us today.
 - 2) Buying wares & grain was forbidden according to **v31**.
 - 3) Still, if one of us is sick, God would want us to go to a pharmacy to get necessary medicine.
2. We have to beware of being legalists like the Pharisees who conspired with the Herodians on how to destroy Christ because he healed a man’s withered hand on the Sabbath (**Mk 3:1-6**).
 - a. Deeds of mercy & necessity are both permissible.
 - b. Be thankful the hospitals are open when you have to deliver a baby or fracture a bone on the Lord’s Day.
 - c. According to the 4th commandment, the Lord’s Day is only holy day we must observe.

B. As Jesus said, **“The Sabbath was made for man, & not man for the Sabbath”** (**Mk 2:27**).

1. Matthew Henry said, “Those that covenant to keep all God’s commandments must particularly covenant to keep sabbaths well; for the profanation of them is an inlet to other instances of profaneness. The sabbath is a market day for our souls...”
2. You cannot live by bread alone but by every Holy Word that comes from the mouth of God.¹
 - a. We ought to have a daily feeding on God’s Word throughout the week in private & family devotions.
 - b. The Sabbath ought to be like a market day feast for your souls. Try to come & feast morning & evening if you are able.

C. According to the **end of v31**, another promise they made to God was to **“forego the crops the seventh year & the exaction of every debt.”**

1. This is called the Sabbath year. Obedience to this command mentioned in **Deut 15** was accompanied by a promise of blessings.
2. The forgiving of debts from other Jews was something neglected according to **Neh 5**.
3. There is no carry-over for us to have a Sabbath year; however, there is a principle that we should apply from **Deut 15:11**: **“You shall freely open your hand to your brother, to your needy & poor in your land.”**

Review, further application, & conclusion:

Gal 3:13 **“Christ redeemed us from the curse of the Law, having become a curse for us—for it is written, ‘Cursed is everyone who hangs on a tree’”**

¹ Mat 4:4.