

## ***The Cost of Serving the Lord*** **Nehemiah 5:14-19**

INTRO:

One popular myth about serving the Lord is that only pastors and missionaries are called into “*full time ministry*.” The truth is, all of us, who know the Lord, are called to be “*full time*” in our service of our Savior and King. **Romans 12:1**, was not written only to preachers and missionaries. ***“I beseech you, therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, that you present your bodies a sacrifice, living, holy, well pleasing to God, which is your reasonable service.”***

Another popular myth says serving the Lord is all blessing and no burdens. Serving the Lord isn't all roses and no thorns. Nehemiah discovered serving God in building of the walls of Jerusalem was going to cost him something. What did Nehemiah have to do?

***I. He Had To Set Aside Ambition (v. 14-16)***

***II. He Had To Be Willing To Serve (v. 16-18)***

***III. He Had To Be Willing To Wait For God To Hand Out The Rewards (v. 19)***

***I. He Had To Set Aside Ambition (v. 14 16)***

**Nehemiah 5:14-16** ***“Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor’s provisions. But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes, even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God. Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall, and we did not buy any land. All my servants were gathered there for the work.”***

A. Nehemiah being governor in Jerusalem looks impressive until you realize what he left behind to go on this job for the Lord. Moving from being cupbearer, which was almost equivalent to being one of the closest advisers to the King, to becoming outpost governor was hardly glamorous. Becoming governor of Judah was a demotion. Still, Nehemiah was willing take that demotion to do the job that God had for him to do.

B. Not only did Nehemiah take a demotion, he was willing to serve without pay.

**vs.14-15** ***“Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year until the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the governor’s provisions. But the former governors who were before me laid burdens on the people, and took from them bread and wine, besides forty shekels of silver. Yes,***

***even their servants bore rule over the people, but I did not do so, because of the fear of God.”***

Nehemiah did not serve God for power or money. Well, then, why was he doing this? He wanted to please the LORD he loved. When we do our ministry why do we do what we do?

C. Nehemiah overcame temptations in the work. Many of Nehemiah’s predecessors abused the position. How did he overcome the temptation to misuse his position? Nehemiah wrote in effect, while everybody else was doing it, I didn't, because my relationship to the Lord wouldn't let me do it. How do I insulate myself? Build a vibrant living relationship with the Lord.

## ***II. He Had To Be Willing To Serve (16 18)***

***Nehemiah 5:16–18 “Indeed, I also continued the work on this wall, and we did not buy any land. All my servants were gathered there for the work. And at my table were one hundred and fifty Jews and rulers, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. Now that which was prepared daily was one ox and six choice sheep. Also fowl were prepared for me, and once every ten days an abundance of all kinds of wine. Yet in spite of this I did not demand the governor’s provisions, because the bondage was heavy on this people.”***

A. **Mathew 20:25-28** states the principle Nehemiah lived by in **5:16-18**. The disciples were debating who would be greatest in the coming kingdom. The Lord Jesus told them:

***“But Jesus called [His disciples] to Himself and said, ‘You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and those who are great exercise authority over them. Yet it shall not be so among you; but whoever desires to become great among you, let him be your (diakonos) servant. And whoever desires to be first among you, let him be your (doulos) slave—just as the Son of Man did not come to be served, but to serve, and to give His life a ransom for many.’”***

If we are going to serve God the way He wants us to serve Him, we must set aside our ambition, and we must be willing to become a servant. How did Nehemiah do this? How was he willing to become a servant?

B. Nehemiah was a servant in three ways.

1. **(v.16)** He and his servants worked with their hands on the wall. Nehemiah did not see manual labor beneath Him.

2. **(vs.17-18)** He served as a host for those he needed to serve. It costs money to serve God. Nehemiah was willing to serve these folks at his own expense.

3. (v.18b) He was willing to lay down his rights to serve the people for the Lord's sake.

C. Let me tell you what the bottom line of this service thing is. Being a servant is giving of self to others for Jesus' sake.

**2 Corinthians 4:5** *“For we preach not ourselves, but Christ Jesus the Lord: and ourselves your servants for Jesus' sake.”*

Why should we serve Him? We serve Him because He was willing to serve us.

### ***III. He Had To Be Willing to Wait for God to Hand out The Rewards (v. 19)***

**Nehemiah 5:19** *“Remember me, my God, for good, according to all that I have done for this people.”*

A. Two verses in this paragraph show us this truth. v. 15b and 19.

**Nehemiah 5:15b** *“But I did not do so, because of the fear of God.”*

We'll never be a good servant of the Lord unless we understand and practice what Nehemiah practiced. He willingly set aside his ambition. He also was willing to serve. Finally, Nehemiah believed God kept the books.

B. In other words, we must possess an unshakable confidence in God and a willingness to wait on Him to hand out His blessing in His time. Do you remember David? Remember how he went back to the worse job in the family, keeping the sheep even after Samuel anointed him king. When twice David could have been justified in taking Saul's life, he did not kill him. David waited for God do His will in His time.

C. Are we willing to do what Nehemiah did?

1. Will we give up what we have to do His will?

2 Will we become a servant to others for Jesus' sake?

3. Is God so real to us, that we willingly wait for God's blessing?

**Hebrews 10:35–36** *“Therefore do not cast away your confidence, which has great reward. For you have need of endurance, so that after you have done the will of God, you may receive the promise.”*

Make me a servant

Humble and meek

Lord let me lift up

Those who are weak  
And may the prayer  
Of my heart always be  
Make me a servant  
Make me a servant  
Make me a servant today

***Make Me a Servant***