

City of God Part 20 - “Leading like Jesus” (9-13-26)

Introduction: Nehemiah 5:14-19 (Nehemiah’s Leadership and Personal Reflection)

1) Removing Heavy Burdens

Nehemiah 5:14-15 (ESV)

[14] Moreover, from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of Artaxerxes the king, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor. [15] The former governors who were before me **laid heavy burdens** on the people and took from them for their daily ration forty shekels of silver. Even their servants **larded it over** the people. But I did not do so, because of **the fear of God**.

Note: Nehemiah's leadership - no heavy burdens, no “larding” over, but leading in the fear of the Lord.

Leading in the Fear of the Lord

- Being a reflection of God in our leadership
- Tending the people of God - treating people the way the Lord would treat them

Jesus is the ultimate example of this, and He calls us to lead this way! (Matt. 20 - a mother’s request)

Matthew 20:25-28 (ESV)

[25] But Jesus called them to him and said, “You know that the rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great ones exercise authority over them. [26] It shall not be so among you. But whoever would be great among you must be your servant, [27] and whoever would be first among you must be your slave, [28] even as the Son of Man came not to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many.”

Note: 2 Greek words used: katakurieuō and katexousiazō

Kata - against, over, down upon, denoting hostility

- **Lord** (Kurieuō) - to be lord of, to rule, have dominion over (ownership, to rule as master)
- **Authority** (Exousiazō) - to use power, exercise authority (legal right of authority, you have been authorized)

Jesus instead calls us to . . .

- **Servant** (Diakonos) - one who executes the commands of another, a servant
 - a servant of a king
 - a waiter, one who serves food and drink

Bottom line: Diakonos emphasizes what you do. You are carrying out activities which benefit someone else.

- **Slave** (Doulos) - a slave, bond-servant. Legally owned by another person, having no personal independence or self-disposal. Their sole purpose is to obey the master's commands.
 - a slave - one who is in a permanent relation of servitude to another, as opposed to a free man

Bottom line: Doulos emphasizes who you belong to. You don’t get to make independent choices about your life, because you belong to someone else.

Application

- **How to use authority:** Represent God accurately, and rule the way He would rule
- **1st point:** Not to extract from others by heaping heavy burdens.
- **Consider:** What do you “require” of others? Do you lead with the posture of one who serves?

2) Partnering in the Work

Nehemiah 5:16 (ESV)

I also persevered in the work on this wall, and we acquired no land, and all my servants were gathered there for the work.

Note: Nehemiah labored & led, not for his own gain, to build his kingdom, but for God's Kingdom and plans. Compare this to when the previous generation stopped building for over 15 years . . .

Haggai 1:4-5, 9 (ESV)

[4] "Is it a time for you yourselves to dwell in your paneled houses, while this house lies in ruins? [5] Now, therefore, thus says the LORD of hosts: Consider your ways . . . [9] You looked for much, and behold, it came to little. And when you brought it home, I blew it away. Why? declares the LORD of hosts. Because of my house that lies in ruins, while each of you busies himself with his own house.

Note: Leading is working alongside kingdom servants, not focused on "our thing," but partnering together in what the Lord is building!

2 Corinthians 1:24 (ESV)

Not that we lord it over your faith, but we work with you for your joy, for you stand firm in your faith.

Application: For whose gain? Ruling not to gain or acquire but to serve others in the task the Lord has given.

3) Providing in the Kingdom of Abundance

Nehemiah 5:17-18 (ESV)

[17] Moreover, there were at my table 150 men, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations that were around us. [18] Now what was prepared at my expense for each day was one ox and six choice sheep and birds, and every ten days all kinds of wine in abundance. Yet for all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because the service was too heavy on this people.

Note: Nehemiah, at great cost, provided for them. And, he wasn't just a benevolent provider, he was a host!

- It costs something to host and feed your fellow laborers. . . But he made sure they ate daily, at his table.
- And more than just having basic provision, He made sure that every 10 days they partied!

Application: A leader is a provider, and a host in the Kingdom of Abundance

Conclusion: How we are serving is ultimately tethered to Who we are serving.

Nehemiah 5:19 (ESV)

Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.

Note: What do you want to be remembered for? Who do I feel the need to make sure that they see or know what I'm doing for the sake of others?

Application: The Lord sees, & never forgets. We are in His book of remembrance. May that be enough for us!

1 Peter 5:1-4 (ESV)

[1] So I exhort the elders among you, as a fellow elder and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, as well as a partaker in the glory that is going to be revealed: [2] shepherd the flock of God that is among you, exercising oversight, not under compulsion, but willingly, as God would have you; not for shameful gain, but eagerly; [3] not domineering over those in your charge, but being examples to the flock. [4] And when the chief Shepherd appears, you will receive the unfading crown of glory.