

# Nehemiah governor of Jerusalem

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[ 0 : 00 ] I was preaching recently on the plagues of Egypt, on Egypt, and I pointed out how often in the Bible God judges a great empire to show that he is more powerful than human beings, even at their strongest.

So God humbled the Egyptians by the ministry of Moses. God collapsed the Babylonian Empire when he raised up the Persian Empire. God brought the Persian Empire to nothing at the hand of Alexander the Great.

And then God destroyed the power of the Greek Empire. And God's destruction of empires is a way of God saying that he is the all-powerful God.

And as I reflected on that great theme of the Bible, I thought how many great world empires had collapsed in the 20th century. The Ottoman Empire finally collapsed. The Hungarian-Austrian Empire collapsed. The first German Empire collapsed. The second German Empire collapsed. The Japanese Empire collapsed. And the British Empire disappeared. And I think we're about to see some more world empires disappearing over the next couple of years, if you watch your television very closely.

[ 1 : 31 ] And of course, what happens with great empires is not usually external opposition, but internal decay. It's a bit like your teeth, dear friends.

If you fall over and hit your mouth, your teeth may well survive on a good day. But if there is internal decay, then the slightest knock with a teaspoon will see instant damage, as some of you will know quite well.

And it's so striking, I think, that in the last few chapters of Nehemiah, we've seen the enemy surrounding Jerusalem ready to attack them.

And we've seen Nehemiah, the great leader, not only rebuilding the walls to defend the city, but also equipping his workers and his soldiers with swords to defend themselves against the enemy. And he promised them, as we saw last week, that their God would fight for them. And also he instructed them, as we saw last week, fight yourselves.

[ 2 : 44 ] But how distressing it is to move from the great victory of chapter four of Nehemiah, the victory of the Jewish people over their enemies, their effective defense of themselves and their city and its walls.

How saddening it is, how drastically sad it is to move from chapter four to chapter five to find that the community itself is decaying on the inside.

And, you know, the walls are pointless, aren't they, if the people are disobedient? No wall will protect them from the judgment of God.

All human devices to protect ourselves are pointless if we are offending God and God is our enemy. You may speed, as they say, but you can't hide.

And you may be speedy against God. But finally, you can't hide from God. A friend of mine contacted me at the weekend because a friend of hers was in hospital about to die.

[ 4 : 12 ] There was no chapman available. So my friend, who's not a Christian, asked me if I'd go in and talk to her friend. So I did. And this lady was not a Christian. She'd been brought up as a Roman Catholic, but lived as a teacher of yoga over her life.

And she said to me, she asked me the question, what is about to happen to me? I said, you're about to die and meet God.

We had a wonderful conversation. She became a Christian. And the wonderful thing was, every time I quoted a Bible verse, she would finish the verse with me.

Because she remembered from her distant Sunday school days, those great Bible verses like John 3, 16. And I thought, well, isn't it wonderful that those teachers were so patient with her so many

years ago.

And finally, that ministry has borne fruit in the last days of her life and led to her conversion. But God is the inescapable reality.

[ 5 : 26 ] And how immensely foolish these Jewish people were, the people of God were, to think, well, we've got our walls. We're safe. So we can live just as we like.

And the problem, I think, is just, I hope, I hope the reading brought shudders to your heart.

It is so awful, isn't it? The great outcry in verse one. We and our sons and daughters are numerous in order for us to gain ease and stay alive.

We must get grain. So they're saying, look, we're starving. Imagine that, a small community who've worked together so well to defend themselves from the enemy.

And now some people are starving. Others are saying, well, we're mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine. So they were having to raise money by mortgaging their land.

[ 6 : 25 ] Others were saying, we've had to borrow money to pay the king's tax. That's the Persian king, Artaxerxes, on our fields and vineyards. And here's the point. Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our fellow Jews, and though our children are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery.

And some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless because our fields and our vineyards belong to others. And then as you read on, you discover that as fast as the Jews are buying fellow Jews back from slavery to Gentiles, other Jews are selling Jews to slavery.

You think this, I mean, if it wasn't in the Bible, you wouldn't believe it. But how wicked could you get to sell your brothers and sisters and their children into slavery while other Jews are busy trying to rescue Jews from slavery to the Gentiles?

But of course, you and I shouldn't be surprised by this abusive behavior within the people of God, should we? Because we read about abusive behavior in the people of God today in our daily newspapers and hear it on our news.

It is shocking. It is awful. It is indefensible. But it is not surprising. It is not surprising. For the people of God are so easily corrupted by the standards of the world around them.

[ 8 : 09 ] And what I think is so shocking is that the people of God have committed the same sin just before. So I'll read a few verses from Jeremiah 7.

And here's the people of God before they go into exile. We're reading in Nehemiah after they've come back from exile 70 years later. But here's the people of God before they go to exile.

Jeremiah says, do not trust in deceptive words and say, this is the temple of the law, the temple of the law, the temple of the Lord. Don't trust in a building, he's saying. If you really change your ways and your actions and deal with each other justly.

If you do not oppress the foreigner, the fatherless or the widows, do not shed innocent blood in this place. If you do not follow other gods to your own harm, then I'll let you live in this place.

But look, you are trusting in deceptive words that are worthless. And how typical of the people of God in Jeremiah's day to say, look at the temple, we're safe. And yet to live dishonestly and disgracefully.

[ 9 : 13 ] Just like the people of God in Nehemiah's day. They've got their walls. They think they're safe. But Paul says, if God is for us, who is against us?

We might adapt those words and say, if God is against us. We are lost. And why did this sin matter? Because. Listen to this. People matter to God. Every human being is precious in the eyes of God. Every human being is made in the image of God. How we treat other human beings is the most important thing about us.

The best thing we've put on your tombstone when you die is. Ethel loved God and loved her neighbors. Jeremy loved.

[ 10 : 33 ] If that's your name, that is. If your name was Jemima, it would be a pity to put Ethel. Anyway, you know what I mean. I'm not trying to say. Jeremy loved God.

And loved his neighbors. Because those are the two great commands. And they're exactly the commands that Jesus said were the two great commands. And they're exactly the commands the Jews aren't keeping.

You see, it's not just that they're doing dreadful things. They're selling off and charging them great interest and so on. And trying to benefit from their poverty. It is that that is a failure of love.

It's not just that they shouldn't do those things. What they should be doing is think, hearing our brothers and sisters in need, how can we help them? It's not just that they're doing something bad. They're failing to do something which is good. Well, what is Nehemiah's response?

[11:37] I love it. I love it. Verse 6. When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. I pondered them in my mind.

Very wise man. Didn't send off an email immediately. He thought about it. And then, I think verse 7 is so disturbing. Then I accused the nobles and the officials.

Now, isn't that terrifying? It's not the scum of the Jews who are doing this. It's the people in power. It's the nobles and the officials.

The Jewish leaders. The leaders of the Jewish community. The leaders of God's people who are doing this. Well, what will happen when the leaders of God's people are corrupt and abusive of those in their care?

This is the worst kind of abuse, you know. So, I accused the nobles and officials.

[12:42] I told them, you are charging your own people interest. And then, rather than just dealing with this privately, I love this. He says, I called together a large meeting to deal with them.

So, he's making the matter public. Why is that appropriate? You know, if we see a friend or a neighbor, a Christian who's, you know, committing a sin, then we shouldn't make a public brouhaha about it.

We should go and talk to them privately. But here are public officials. And public officials have to be dealt with publicly. Because there's a public trust and so a public sin.

So, Nehemiah the governor is doing exactly the right thing. I called together a large meeting to deal with them and said, As far as possible, we've bought back our fellow Jews who were sold to the Gentiles.

Now, you are selling your own people only for them to be sold back to us. It sounds ridiculous. They kept quiet because they could find nothing to say.

[13:47] I don't wonder. So, I continued in case they'd missed the point. What you are doing is not right. I love this. It's very plain, isn't it? And then notice the question.

Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God? So, then sin was obviously against other people, wasn't it? But Nehemiah is saying a sin against other people is a sin against God.

For we're called to love God and love our neighbor. And God tells us to love our neighbor. So, a sin against others is always, always at the same time a sin against God.

Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?

The Gentiles must have thought, these Jews are mad. They're buying and selling each other. It's just ridiculous. It doesn't go on in our family.

[14:44] And then Nehemiah points out to what he and his brothers are doing and his officials. We're lending the people money and grain.

But stop charging interest. So, just lend it to them. Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive greens and houses. And also the interest you are charging them, 1% of the money, grain, new wine and olive oil.

Sounds a bit like, who was it in the New Testament? It was a little chap who climbed a tree. What was his name? Zacchaeus, wasn't it? That's right. And then when Jesus said, I want to come to your place, he said, well, yes, you can come to my place.

And I'm going to give all the money I've ripped off people back with fourfold. Isn't that wonderful?

There was a sign of true repentance, wasn't it? I was converted in my last year at school.

And one of the first things I had to do when I was converted was to restore to the school things I had stolen. I had stolen a very long extension cord, which I thought was immensely useful.

[15:58] I didn't actually have a useful at the time, but I thought, one day this will be useful. And I had over my school career borrowed school keys, taken them to the locksmith and got copies of all the school keys.

I hadn't actually, you know, rifled anybody's say for it, but just having them made me feel more powerful. So I went into the headmaster and I said, sir, I'd like to tell you I've just become a Christian.

And so I'm handing back the things I have stolen. Well, he'd never seen this before in his life. He was a man with wonderfully bushy eyebrows.

So they went up and down a few times like that. And then he said, thank you very much. And that was it. Wasn't that wonderful? But, you know, it's one of the Ten Commandments.

Don't steal, isn't it? Well, thank God, praise God, that at this word of Nehemiah, they repented.

[17:11] We will give it back. And we'll not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say. Well, what a wise pastor Nehemiah was.

He didn't take them at their word. Because he knew that such a gross sin, such an awful sin must be very deep within them.

You see, because it's not that we sin because the opportunity arises. We sin because of the powerful tendency to sin which is within us.

That's where sin comes from. That's where sin comes from. As Jesus says in Mark chapter seven, it comes from the heart. From inside, out of the heart come evil thoughts and so on.

So, in verse 12, Nehemiah summoned the priests and the nobles and made, I love this, made the nobles and officials take an oath.

[18:15] That is, a promise to God to do as they had promised. So, not just that they would say to Nehemiah, we're going to do all this, but he made them promise to God.

That's a bit of a warning, isn't it? And then, in case they hadn't yet got the point, I shook out the folds of my robe. I wish I was wearing a robe so I could do that.

But, and here's his prayer, in this way, may God shake out of their houses and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So, may such a person be shaken out and emptied.

Well, they'd said they were going to hand everything back. They'd been made to make a solemn oath that they would do so.

And then they had this wonderful visual aid of being shaken out by God. At this, the whole assembly said, Amen.

[19:14] I bet they did, particularly those who'd lost money and so on. And praised the Lord and the people did as they had promised.

Now, why was Nehemiah so tough, do you think? Well, I think he was tough. Because it was a sin of nobles and officials.

And as we know from our own society, if nobles and officials are corrupt, then everybody else thinks, well, I can be corrupt as well.

That's your first thought, isn't it? Someone makes creative use of their travel expenses. So, then you think, well, perhaps I could do that too in some kind of way.

Somebody else avoids income tax and you think, well, they're getting away with it. Why shouldn't I do it? If our leaders do it, we think, well, I can do it too. You see, whenever I sin, I make sin easier for somebody else to do.

[20:24] That's awful, isn't it? My sin damages me, of course. It damages the person against whom I sinned. But it also damages other people who see me sinning and getting away with it.

And they think, well, Peter Adam did that. And he got away with it. So I can do it too. And that's true of small sins and great sins.

And I've seen that happen in congregations where somebody has sinned and got away with it, as it were. Then others have followed in the same track over the next few years.

It's awful to see it spreading like a dread disease through a congregation. And nobles and officials, that is, leaders, have a special duty and a special responsibility and so a special judgment of God.

As James says, James chapter 3, Let not many of you become teachers, for you who teach will be judged with greater strictness and quite right too. And how grotesque a sin it is to sell God's people into slavery.

[21:47] When the great record of God's action is that he rescued his people from slavery in Egypt. God is the rescuer from slavery. And these people who pretend to be serving God the rescuer are selling people into slavery.

If you read about it in a book, you wouldn't believe it. But also, of course, once the nobles and officials are acting like this, then the sin will very soon become a corporate sin, a shared sin, a communal sin.

And a sin which a whole community commits, a communal sin, then is a blinding sin. I had a very moving account on the radio a few weeks ago of a woman whose brother had gone out drinking with his friends and then thrown himself off a bridge and died.

And she said, The trouble with the Australian community is we regard drunkenness as a private matter. It is actually a communal sin. It's a community matter.

It's not just we can say, well, this person has done something very unwise. Actually, it's a whole culture of the consumption of alcohol, which is a problem with not just the individuals who do it, but with a community, you see.

[ 23 : 14 ] It's a bit like the worship of mammon. Every Australian is trained to worship mammon. And so it's so pervasive in our society that we don't notice it happening. We're blind to it.

Because sin blinds us to its presence in our own lives and corporate sin, communal sin, national sin blinds us to its presence because everybody else is doing it.

And we think, well, that must be the ordinary way to live. It's like if your church is prayerless. That's a shared sin, a shared value, if I could put it that way.

It'll be very hard for the prayerful people to keep on praying it because nobody else is bothering to pray. And the young people who become Christians will think prayerlessness is the normal way to live the Christian life.

And those who are converted and join the church will think it's OK to be prayerless because everybody else is. You see, shared sins do so much damage, not just to the church as a body, but also to every member of the church.

[ 24 : 13 ] But the converse is true. How wonderful to belong to a prayerful church. Because if the church is prayerful, if everyone naturally prays when they meet together, they can't stop praying together.

And you have to keep on saying to people, stop praying. It's time to go home now. Well, then everybody will be challenged to be more prayerful and the young people will learn to be prayerful. And the new Christians will learn that prayerfulness, deep dependence on God, turning to God at every moment is exactly the right thing to do. So you see, your prayerfulness encourages others to be prayerful as well.

But if I'm prayerless, I discourage prayerfulness in others. I want you to see that the way we live affects other people.

You might think that what you do doesn't matter. It's only between you and God. No, that's not true. The way you live has a powerful effect on other people. Forgive me if you've told me this story, if you've heard this story before.

[ 25 : 23 ] But I used to go to St. Matthew's Paran. And there was a lovely lady there called Heather who was very old and very ill. And she used a walker to go around.

But she said to me one day after church, she said, well, I'm so pleased because the local council has given me money so I can buy food for my neighbours in the housing commission flats and I can cook them lunch.

She said they don't like Meals on Wheels. So each morning I go down to the market and buy some food and take it home and cook it. And then I take each of them their lunch.

It was about 10 people, I think. And she said, I always buy a bunch of flowers and I put a flower on everybody's tray when I give them their lunch so they feel really special. Well, you know.

And she wasn't boasting. She was saying, isn't this a privilege? Well, I was so moved by her example of selfless generosity.

[ 26 : 31 ] It's warmed my life since then. I still think about it very frequently. And I talk about it. It's such a profound effect on me, you see. So people's goodness, goodness is wonderfully infectious and contagious.

If you meet a godly person, you'll think, well, I'd like to be like that. But the danger is if you meet somebody who's a Christian is drifting from God, you think, well, I could get away with it, too. Well, that's what I think anyway. I'm sure you don't, but I do. In this way, may God shake out of their house and possessions.

So may such a person be shaken out and emptied. Well, this is hellfire and brimstone preaching, isn't it? Such as we used to enjoy back in the 1920s.

I worked in a church in Durham in the 1970s. And they had a hellfire and they had a hellfire and brimstone preacher in the 1920s. And one night he was midway through describing the torments of hell for the congregation.

[ 27 : 39 ] And the church heating system blew up. And he was surrounded with a cloud of steam and so on. And the congregation, as a man, jumped up and started running from the building out of

sheer terror, no doubt.

But he had the presence of mind to say, to call out as they were leaving, please leave your collection, which I thought showed a nicely pragmatic view of life.

Even in the midst of hellfire and brimstone, please leave your cash. Very sensible too. And of course, there are some people who universalize a chapter like Nehemiah 5.

And the only motivation they use is the wrath of God. But please see that here is the motivation is escape God's wrath.

But when Jesus says, come to me, all who labor and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest. Take my yoke upon you and learn of me, for I am gentle and lowly of heart.

[ 28 : 48 ] He isn't threatening. He's enticing, isn't he? He's beckoning. He's gently encouraging people. So what we mustn't do is have just one motivation, which we find in some chapters in the Bible, and use it all the time.

The one I hear most frequently in evangelical circles is, God said it, we must do it. Well, that's sometimes the motivation in the Bible.

But notice how often in Paul's letters that he doesn't order people to do things. He says, I appeal to you. What's the difference between ordering and appealing?

Ordering says, do it. Appealing says, I beg you to do it. It matters to me that you do it. It matters to me that you open your heart.

So what we mustn't do is to read a kind of default motivation into every instruction in the Bible when it isn't there. Not only find what God wants us to do, but look at the motivation as well.

[ 29 : 50 ] And why does Nehemiah use the threat of the wrath of God, the judgment of God?

Because the sin is a gross sin, a sin of public, a failure of public responsibility, a sin of abuse, a sin against their neighbors, and of course, a sin against God.

Well, it worked. The people did as they had promised. And then Nehemiah talks about his example. And I find this immensely moving. From the 20th year of King Artaxerxes, when I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah until his 32nd year, 12 years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor.

Well, it would be a bit like a politician refusing to accept the travel allowance, wouldn't it? You'd think, wow, what's wrong with him? What's she done?

Something's wrong there. The earlier governors, those preceding me, placed a heavy burden on the people and took 40 shekels of silver from them in addition to the food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people.

[ 31 : 05 ] But out of reverence for God, I did not act like that. Instead, I devoted myself to the work on the wall. He was actually out on the wall trying to get the work done, wasn't he? And all my men, that is his servants, they weren't serving Nehemiah.

They were out building the wall. They were assembled there for the work. We did not acquire any land. Furthermore, he had 150 guests and officials at his table every day, as well as those who came from the surrounding nations.

Each day he provided all this love. This sounds delicious, actually. One ox, six choice sheep and some poultry were prepared for me. And every 10 days, an abundant supply of wine.

Not for him, but for his guests, you see. So, he was a kind of spontaneous, constant generosity. And in spite of this, I never demanded the food lot of the governor because the demands were heavy on this people.

Well, what a challenge for leaders in any situation. Now, you might think that what Nehemiah is doing is boasting.

[ 32 : 13 ] I think he's doing something else. I think he's showing that there is another way to live. And I praise God for his honesty.

I think it's wonderful to think that when the nobles and officials were acting one way, Nehemiah was not just being just, but generous. Isn't that beautiful? Generosity is always so lovely.

There was a Jewish woman, Simone Weil, who was converted to Catholicism, Rome Catholicism, during the Second World War.

And she wrote some words which I think are very haunting. She said, In fiction, evil is attractive and good is boring.

That is, when you see a film or read a book, often evil people are more interesting than the good people. She said, in real life, evil people are boring and good people are attractive.

[ 33 : 18 ] Isn't that perceptive? And so I rejoice at the miracle of God's grace in Nehemiah's life, that he made him a generous man.

No, no. He made him a just man and a generous man. And those of you who are mature in years will recognize what a great miracle that is.

Justice and generosity. What a rare treasure that is. What a great work of God that is. So I wrote in my notes, the corrosive effect.

Sorry, that should be a bad life. An example. Please change the notes. Look at that. Isn't that shocking? Obviously, my computer did that. I didn't do that. The corrosive effect of a bad life.

An example. The energizing effect of a good life. An example. And I want you to think back just for a moment over the good believers in Jesus Christ whose lives have enriched you.

[ 34 : 31 ] I once started making a list of them. I got to 67. And I thought, that's a lot of people who have contributed to my life. Sunday school teachers, ministers, people I've met at conventions, parishioners and so on.

And I thought, actually, all the goodness that God has worked in their life has strengthened me and encouraged me to think, yes, it is possible to be a good person.

A humble person, a gentle person, a generous person. And it's so attractive when you live that way. Whereas the longer you live, the more you see how unattractive self-serving and selfish people are.

And then the haunting prayer of Nehemiah ends the chapter. And if you have read through Nehemiah, you'll know how frequently he prays, remember me.

Remember me. Why is he praying it here in verse 19? Remember me with favor, my God, for all I have done for these people.

[ 35 : 39 ] I think he's saying to God, please use my good example to change your people. And how wonderful that Paul tells us in Rome, in 1 Corinthians 15, that in the Lord Jesus, because of his resurrection, none of our labor is in vain.

And I would love to have been there when Nehemiah prayed that prayer and said, dear brother, because of Jesus Christ and you haven't actually met, none of your work will be wasted.

God is such a wonderful housekeeper that no goodness of life is wasted. No generosity is wasted. No love is wasted. No good work is wasted.

No prayer is wasted. But all is used for the glory of God. But finally, I want you to notice that the expression, the fear of God, is used in verse 9 and in verse 15.

Go back to verse 9, if you would. What you're doing is not right, he says to these nobles and officials. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God? In other words, if nothing else will change the way you live, shouldn't you fear God?

[ 37 : 00 ] Shouldn't the fact that you can't hide from God make a difference to your life? He could appeal to their better nature. He could say, well, actually, don't you know better than this? And that would have been okay to do.

But he realizes the sin is so severe, so deep that he needs to say, fear God and stop doing it. But then how extraordinary that in verse 15, he says, my version has, out of reverence for God, I did not act like that.

The other assistants lord it over the people. But he says, actually, he says, out of fear for God, I did not act like that. Well, what a fascinating insight into the life of Nehemiah that it was the fear of God that stopped him from lording it over the people and taking advantage of them and abusing them. Now, the fear of God is not perhaps the best motivation for serving God. But when all else fails, it's worth remembering, isn't it?

So just returning to my driving, a subject dear to my heart and having committed some sins of failure of loving my neighbor a number of times today already.

[ 38 : 16 ] But the police said that they, you know, I'm a popular person and they keep on taking my photo. It's so kind of them. It's, you know, I just feel so famous because they keep writing to me saying, we've got a lovely picture of you going through yet another traffic light when it's the wrong color.

My reply is always so, oh, I'm colorblind, which is actually true. But it's not a very effective excuse. But if you ask me why I don't speed as often as I might, the answer is the fear of the police.

I wish I could say it was out of love for my neighbors on the road. But my love is so weak and pathetic, actually, that doesn't really help. Fear stops me sinning.

And I must openly confess that the fear of public disgrace stops me from many sins. Imagine opening the paper and seeing, you know, another vicar in trouble about doing something. I think, oh, no, here we go again. No, I'm not saying, I'm not boasting and saying, well, you know, this is a great example for you to follow.

[ 39 : 29 ] But perhaps you need it. Perhaps in some area of your life, you just need the fear of God in you. To keep you.

And if you need it, it's there, let me tell you. Jesus says, don't fear the person who can harm your body.

Fear him who has the power to cast you into hell. At the same time in Luke chapter 12, where he says, don't be afraid. But it's those who do fear God.

That is, who rightly respect God as a God of holiness. And a God of justice. And a God of wrath. It's those who know it is right to fear and honor God, to respect God, to shape our lives by his words and his warnings and his promises.

It's those who know that fear. Who then have no reason to fear him. As Psalm 2 puts it so beautifully.

[ 40 : 39 ] There's no refuge from God. There's only refuge. In God. So.

Whatever sins we have committed. Even great sins like the sins of the nobles and officials. In Nehemiah chapter 5. The moment we turn to God and say.

Please. Forgive me. The answer is. Always. Yes. I forgive you. Through the blood. Of Jesus. My son.

I cleanse you from your sin. And I've now forgotten it. Well you might remember somebody else. Who prayed the prayer. Remember me. It was a certain criminal. On a cross. Who was just a few feet away. From the Lord Jesus.

[ 41 : 41 ] Who was also. On a cross. And this criminal knew that. He was. Suffering. Justly. Because of his sin.

But he also knew that. Jesus was suffering. Though he was an innocent man. And he. Prayed this extraordinary prayer. To a crucified criminal next to him.

Crucified man next to him. Jesus. And said. Remember me when you come in your. Kingly power. What an extraordinary prayer. To pray. That this person dying on a cross.

Would one day. Come into kingly power. Remember me. When you come. Into your kingly power. Remember Jesus reply. Today. You'll be with me.

In paradise. And actually. The early Christians. In the first few centuries. Often. Prayed this prayer.

[ 42 : 37 ] Remember me. Not because. God forget. Is forgetful. But they were saying. I cast myself. Myself. On you. Remember me.

God's reply. I've graven you. On the palm. Of my hands. Can a woman forget. The child. She's born. She may. But I will not. I will not.

Forget. You. Let's pray. Heavenly Father. We thank you. For the example. Of Nehemiah. For his. Quickness. To act. When. Some of your people. Were being abused. For his quickness. To challenge. And rebuke. Sinners. For his quickness.

To bring them. To repentance. And thank you. For the change. He affected. In his community. In his day. And we. Thank you. Also. For his good example. Of justice.

[ 43 : 37 ] And generosity. We thank you. That he did fear you. He revered you. And wanted to serve you. In every part of his life. And wanted your people.

To serve you as well. So may a right. Reverence and respect. For you. Energize. Us. In our own lives. And energize us. In our ministry. To others.

We pray. In Jesus name. Amen.