

Victoria Fellowship Church

International & Interdenominational

Bible Study Worksheet – April 19, 2020

Theme: Nehemiah: A Vessel of Restoration **Topic:** Nehemiah's love for God and His people

Main Text: Nehemiah 1:1-11

Key verse: Nehemiah 1:4 *"So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. (NKJV)*

INTRODUCTION: By the time Nehemiah was serving the King of Babylon (Nehemiah 1:11), Israel has been exiled in Babylon for about 150 years. That means that Nehemiah must have been born and bred in Babylon. Also, Nehemiah was neither a priest nor a prophet. Notwithstanding, the book of Nehemiah opens with him burdened for the welfare of his fellow Jews and for the city God chose to make a dwelling for His Name (2 Chronicles 12:13). His concern led him to inquire from those who had recently returned from Judah. So, Hanani and the others told him, *"Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."* (Nehemiah 1:3). This report broke his heart.

1. **(a) What was it about the report from Hanani and the others that made Nehemiah go into days of mourning and fasting (Nehemiah 1:3-4)? (b) What does Nehemiah's prayer (Nehemiah 1:6- 10; 2 Chronicles 7:14-16) teach us about how he could have cultivated such a heart for God and for His people? (c) Let participants share areas about God's people or the church that are of grave concern to them.**

'So it was, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days; I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.' (Nehemiah 1:4) The news from the returnees from Judah so grieved Nehemiah. There were other Jews in Susa as well as back in Judah and in Jerusalem where the city walls have been broken. Yet it is this second or third generation 'Babylonian' who is burdened for the city of his ancestors. Nehemiah's position in the King's service suggests that he was wealthy and comfortable. Considering all he stood to lose as a key figure in the king's court, no one would have faulted him if he had concentrated on being a 'good Jew' in the king's service. But his love for God and his people would not let him.

2. **(a) Let participants read Nehemiah 1:4 and identify some visible demonstrations of Nehemiah's love for God and for God's people. (b) As people living in an increasingly pagan society, how can we cultivate and maintain a heart for God and for His people, as well as help our children do likewise, wherever they may be? E.g. Philippians 2:5-8; Luke 9:23-26**

Nehemiah was neither a priest nor a prophet. His family does not seem to be one of the prominent ones. Yet, he demonstrated a deep devotion to God and concern for God's glory. Today, we are *'a chosen generation, a holy nation, a royal priesthood ...'* (1 Peter 2:9). Likewise, 2 Corinthians 5: 18b says God *"has committed to us the ministry of reconciliation."* This places on us a greater reason to be concerned for the glory of God and of God's people. Nehemiah felt this responsibility, acknowledged, and confessed his sins and the sins of the people; he reminded God about his judgment and promise of restoration if the people repented.

3. **(a) Why do you think it was important for Nehemiah to confess his sins and those of his fathers? See 1 John 1:8-10. (b) Nehemiah mentioned specific sins in his confession. In what way(s) does this type of confession differ from the practice of making a general statement of confession? (c) What specific sins do we individually and collectively need to confess and repent of so that God's glory may be restored in our midst?**

Prayer: *Father we thank you for the example of Nehemiah. Please draw us closer to Yourself so that we can have this depth of reverence and passion for Your Name that Nehemiah had, in Jesus name, Amen.*