

<b>Topic</b>	Fearing God in a Fallen World
<b>Reference</b>	Nehemiah 5-6
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<b>Speaker</b>	Yee Dian Lee

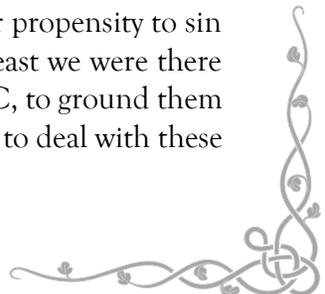
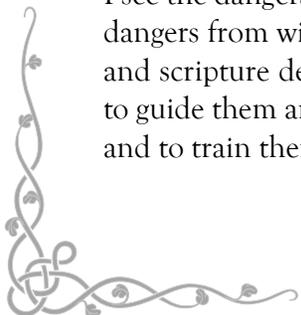
Now the account of Nehemiah building the Jerusalem wall took place 2400 years ago but you will be surprised that the text can be still as fresh and relevant to us even today.

My wife and I will be travelling to Dublin, Ireland in a few days' time to attend Jeremy's graduation ceremony. Now as an introduction to the sermon, let me tell you a little bit more about what is happening on the home front. Our son left home for Ireland three years ago in August 2016 to pursue a degree in Accounting and Finance and in a blink of an eye three years have flown by and he graduated in the middle of this year and has just started work in Dublin. I told him, you know, three years ago you left us as a boy but now you are a man, even though I still call him boy. Our daughter left home one year later in August 2017 and she has just finished at that time two and half years of medicine at IMU in Bukit Jalil and she left for UK to continue her studies for three more years and she is now doing a final year in the City of Exeter in England.

Now ever since they both left home, my wife and I found ourselves in a new phase of life in our so called emptiness or shall I say we are two old love birds in an empty nest. In the past, all our energies were directed at the kids but now we have to channel our attention to each other and that takes a bit of getting use to. I look at my wife and she looks at me, what to talk about. Now I am sure many of you have similar experiences going through a new phase of life with kids having left home to build a future of their own. Now the children on the other hand, they are also going through a new phase of life as they transition into young working adults. We harbored kind of mixed feeling when they left us one by one, needless to say, we knew that we are going to miss them very much and therefore we were very sad to see them go, because they had always been a very bit part of our lives and there absence is something that we have to get accustom to.

Some parents are also worried if their children can take care of themselves, but my wife and I we had no such worries because we trained our children to be independent and to be able to take care of themselves. We are also not worried if they would succeed or not in their academic pursuits because through their growing years we instilled in them the values of hard work and responsibility. In fact, I am proud to tell you that Jeremy graduated with first class honors. But there is one thing that was of great concern to us and that is whether their spiritual grounding was strong enough for them to function and to flourish as followers in Christ out in the open. All those years in Sunday School and Youth, all those years of spiritual training, will they bear fruits or at the very least, will our kids be able to avoid deviating from the path of faith, and those were the questions swirling in our heads and they still do.

I see the dangers on two fronts, threatening to derail your walk with God; dangers coming from within and dangers from without. The dangers from within are largely post by our fallen nature, our propensity to sin and scripture describes this using the word, our flesh. When the kids were with us, at least we were there to guide them and to nurture them spiritually and then there is also the local church, FBC, to ground them and to train them spiritually, but now that they are on their own, how well are they going to deal with these



threats from within. The dangers coming from the outside are equally dire and worrisome. Western societies, especially in Europe are becoming increasingly Godless and secular, beseech by all sorts of unbiblical progressive ideas. When Jeremy first arrived at Dublin he told me that he stumbled upon this huge street parade by LGBT activist, fighting for their rights. And this is just one of the many examples I can give you.

How are our kids going to withstand all these assaults to their faith? This backs the question, why then send them overseas? Why not have them study in local universities? Well, there are several reasons and one of them is this is going to be their trial by fire so to speak. We are sending them into enemy territory so to speak and this is their chance for their faith to be authenticated, to be proven true.

Now in relating all this to you and telling you what our children face both internally and externally, I am actually painting you the overall scene behind Nehemiah chapters 5 and 6. Because chapter 5 describes threats from inside the Israelite community, chapter 6 deals with threats from the outside and we will see how this is so as we dive into the text shortly. Now this sharing is meant to be an introduction to the sermon but at the same time I also want both our kids to hear this, because they do listen to my sermons online via the FBC web site. So this is much for their ears as it is for yours.

Now let me dive into our text and we will see what is going on first in chapter 5 and then in chapter 6. Next Sunday, Arnold will describe the actual building of the wall detailed in chapter 3, but at this point in time in chapter 5 the project was well underway, not completely finished yet but by the end of chapter 6 the wall was fully erected from chapter 6 verse 15, the wall was completed on the 25<sup>th</sup> of Elul, in fifty two days. Elul is the 12<sup>th</sup> and the last month in the Jewish calendar. I was thinking, wow they finished the wall in Jerusalem in less than two months. That was some construction. From the onset of chapter 5 the building narrative took a pause. In order to address the very grievous, very serious problem brewing amongst the Israelite, the first five verses described how sizeable segment of the population, specifically the poorer ones who were lamenting about their economic life. They were suffering severely from financial hardship and some were even starving. This crisis was precipitated by a famine mentioned at the end of verse 3. Many of them were impoverished farmers, working the land and as a result of the famine their crops failed them and they have to borrow money in order to survive. And what made it worse is that they had also to pay a land tax to the Persian king and so they borrowed money from the rich by mortgaging their lands and when they couldn't pay back the money they borrowed, their collaterals were seized. And with their lands taken away they have no more source of income to settle the debts. The biggest injustice of all is that, because they still couldn't settle their debts they were forced to give up their children as slaves to their creditors as explained in verse 5. Some of these creditors then sold these kids to gentiles in order to recoup their losses.

In verse 6 when Nehemiah found out about the plight of these Israelites, he became very angry. He was so upset when he heard how so many of them were crushed by debts and oppressed by slavery and here we need to ask, why was Nehemiah so infuriated by what was going on, why was he so angry. Is it because he had a soft spot for the poor, he pitied them. Well that might be the case but it actually goes deeper. It is useful to read this portion of text in the context of God's laws in the earlier books of the Old Testament because in Deuteronomy 15, God commanded his people to be kind to the needy.

### Deuteronomy 15:7

*If anyone is poor among your fellow Israelites in any of the towns of the land the Lord your God is giving you, do not be hardhearted or tightfisted toward them.*

Nehemiah therefore was very angry because they were blatantly disobeying this commandment. They were openly sinning against God. He understood that it is pointless for him to build a wall so high or so strong to defend the city against enemies outside when sin was rampant inside. He was well aware that their sins could invite God's wrath and would cause their enemies to prevail, because he remembered how sins of his forefathers many years ago led to the destruction of Jerusalem by the Babylonians in 586 BC. Nehemiah's line of thought can be seen clearly in verse 9 when he tried the nobles and officials,

*9 So I continued, "What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies?"*

Now I need to go deeper. On top of this, there was another sin they committed that got Nehemiah so angry, which is charging interest on the money that the poorer Israelites have borrowed as evidence from 6. This was directly going against another God's law in Exodus 22

**Exodus 22:25**

*If you lend money to one of My people among you who is needy, do not treat it like a business deal; **charge no interest.***

Very clear commandment and not only that in Deuteronomy,

**Deuteronomy 23:19**

*Do not charge a fellow Israelite **interest**, whether on money or food or anything else that may earn interest.*

So it is very clear in the Old Testament, hence not only they were guilty of oppressing the poorer Israelites, they also committed the sin of charging them interest. Interestingly, the interest rate that the rich imposed on the poorer Israelites is specified in verse 11. It says here one percent, which is actually not a lot, but what is not stated here is that is actually one percent per month. So it is actually 12 percent per annum which is rather high even by to this standards. Now before I go on, I want to offer you some side lessons on the use of money. So let me briefly offer you three basic biblical principles to direct our attitudes towards money. This is not from the text but it is a logical extension of what we are discussing. Firstly,

**Deuteronomy 8:18**

*But remember the Lord your God, for it is He who gives you the ability to produce wealth,...*

Meaning, we should always be reminded that the money we earn be it from hard work or business or investment, don't think for a minute that it is solely the result of your talents or genius or hard work. ultimately, it comes from God. This is the first principle. Secondly,

**1 Timothy 6:10 (NIV)**

*For the love of money is a root of all kinds of evil. Some people, eager for money, have wandered from the faith and pierced themselves with many griefs*

So money itself is not a bad thing. It is merely a medium for exchange and the store of value, but the love of money can and often leads us into the path of sin as we have seen in chapter 5 and indeed because of money many believers have strayed from God who have denied themselves the full rewards of faith. The third principle is this

**Proverbs 19:17**

*Whoever is kind to the poor lends to the Lord, and He will reward them for what they have done.*

God is very-very happy to see us using our financial resources to help the needy and He will eventually recompense us for efforts. We are also reminded in Psalm 15

**Psalm 15:1,5**

*Lord, who may dwell in Your sacred tent? Who may live on Your holy mountain? (The one) who lends money to the poor without interest;*

So to continue quickly with chapter 5. At the end of verse 7 we see how Nehemiah summon all these nobles and officials, and in a large meeting he scolded them for their ill treatment and neglect of the poor Israelites and for their disobedience of God's commandment and their response at the end of verse 8 was silence. They had nothing to say. They offered no excuses nor any defense of their actions, so it was an indirect admission of their guilt. Indeed the first thing to do when we sin is to admit or confess our wrongdoing then only will it lead to repentance, then only will the repentance be meaningful. Further in verse 11 Nehemiah then demanded that they return all the lands and properties that they have ceased from the poor together with the accumulated interest that they have collected. Although not mentioned here, to also return the children that they have taken as slaves, to which they all agree to do so.

So at the end of verse 18, they carried out what they have promised to do. Hence what started as grievous sins in chapter 5 ended up with full repentance, transgressions gave way to contrition, many wrongs were made right. When you look at this theme of sin and repentance in the later part of the sermon. Now for the sake of time, I will quickly go the rest of chapter 5 verse 14. Here we see Nehemiah changing his approach to these nobles and officials. Earlier he admonished them and rebuked them, but now he was encouraging them by sharing with them the way he did it. You see, he was the provincial governor and his position as the governor came with all kinds of perks and privileges but he decided to forego all these benefits. At the end of verse 14 he said

*neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the governor.*

Later in verse 18 he gave his reasons for denying his rights as governor. He said,

*I never demanded the food allotted to the governor, because **the demands were heavy on these people.***

Further up in verse 15 he also talked about how his predecessors placed a heavy burden on the people, and so he was urging that these nobles and officials to imitate him, to obey God's law, to be kind to the poor and so you call this leadership by example. This concludes our overview of chapter 5. Now to make it easier

for you to go through this passage later if you want to study it further, I have broken down the chapter into four parts

**Structure of Nehemiah 5**

- 1. **Evil**                                verses 1~ 5
- 2. **Exposure**                        verses 6~ 11
- 3. **Expiation**                        verses 12~ 13
- 4. **Example**                         verses 14~ 18

Lets now survey what is happening in chapter 6. Now in introduction to the sermon I talk about my children and how they have to face this internal and external threats in the conduct of their faith. Similarly, Nehemiah was confronted with dangers from within and we have discussed that at length in chapter 5. Now in chapter 6, Nehemiah have to content with dangers from without threats post by enemies from the outside. At this point in time, the wall around Jerusalem was almost completed. Verse 1 says that only the doors needed to be set in all the gates. Now this development with the wall almost 99% done, made three persons very disturbed and agitative. Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem; three enemies of Israels. W hen they heard that the Jerusalem now had a strong wall, they reacted with apprehension because they didn't want to see their enemies, the Israelites having a fortified city and being strong.

Now before I continue I would like to digress a little bit, couple of minutes to give you some historical background on the wall of Jerusalem. Now many of you know that the city of Jerusalem today has a beautiful wall around an area known as the Old City. Total length of the wall is about 4 km long. This wall is not Nehemiah's wall. This wall was constructed in between 1537 to 1541 AD by the Sultan of the Ottoman Empire known as Suleiman the Magnificent. The present wall is relatively new, only about 480 years old. In contrast, Nehemiah's wall was built 2400 years ago and so almost 2000 years stand between these two walls.

What about the famous Western Wall that we often hear about and which today is the holiest site to the Jews. We must understand that in the centuries after Nehemiah the city of Jerusalem grew in size rapidly especially during the reign of King Herod and so old walls were demolished to make way for the expansion of the city and new walls were erected. So by the time of Jesus, the walls were different. These walls were then destroyed by the Romans in 70 AD along with the temple except for one section along the temple mount on the west of the temple mount, that's why it is now called the Western Wall. It is the only part of the wall that remain dating to the first century to the time of Jesus. Nehemiah's wall was almost all gone.

Now if the Western wall is the only thing that remains from Jerusalem's wall in Jesus time, the big question is, are there any remnants of Nehemiah's wall. For centuries, they couldn't find anything, so much so that there were many skeptics who dismissed the Book of Nehemiah as just a piece of fiction and suddenly in November 2007, a stunning announcement was made. The archaeologists have found traces of Nehemiah's wall. I am relating all this to you to declare to you that what is recorded in the Book of Nehemiah is neither myth nor legend, it is factual and historical.

Now Sanballat was the governor of Samaria to the north, Tobiah was the governor of the province of Ammon to the east and Geshem was the governor of a province to the south and hence the Israelites were

literally surrounded by enemies on three sides. There was literally external threat on three sides and these three names, Sanballat, Tobiah and Geshem also appeared in chapter 2 and Peter mentioned it in the sermon and mentioned again in chapter 4 and let me zoom in on this character Sanballat.

In 1907, over 120 years ago a fifth century BC document, this documented is dated 407 BC was discovered in Southern Egypt, written by a small Jewish community, turned out to be a letter they sent to the governor of Judah and there was a date 25<sup>th</sup> November 407 BC, about 40 years after Nehemiah's time and on the reverse side of this document the writer wrote that they actually had sent another letter to Delia and Shelemia, the sons of Sanballat the governor of Samaria. It was mentioned in this historical document, which is prove that Sanballat existed and so we are talking about real historical figures here.

Now I have also divided chapter 6 into four parts,

### Structure of Nehemiah 6

- |    |                      |              |
|----|----------------------|--------------|
| 1. | <b>Invitation</b>    | verses 1~4   |
| 2. | <b>Incrimination</b> | verses 5~9   |
| 3. | <b>Intimidation</b>  | verses 10~15 |
| 4. | <b>Infiltration</b>  | verses 16~19 |

Throughout this chapter we see the schemes of Nehemiah's enemy unfolding. First from invitation to incrimination then to intimidation and then finally to infiltration and all this to rattle Nehemiah's confidence and to make him stop what he was doing. So it started with the invitation to Nehemiah to meet up and the invitation came not once but four times as mentioned here, but Nehemiah answer was very blunt. From verse 2 Nehemiah suspect that they were up to no good, perhaps they were setting a trap for him. From verses 5 to 9, they changed their tactic to incrimination and so Sanballat sent Nehemiah a letter in which he wrote, I heard that you are planning a rebellion and that's why you are building that wall, you better come and meet us, otherwise I will tell the king and you will be in big trouble. Nehemiah kept his composure and in verse 8 he sent back his answer.

*8 I sent him this reply: "Nothing like what you are saying is happening; you are just making it up out of your head."*

What is important is that, at the end of verse 9 Nehemiah prayed to God for strength and Dr Peter has already taken us through the power of prayer. From verse 10, they then tried to intimidate him and this character called Shemaiah who was in cohorts with the enemy, he urged Nehemiah to run and hide inside the temple because his life was supposedly in danger because there were people coming to kill him, but Nehemiah refused in verse 11. Now this needs a little bit of explanation.

Why did Nehemiah refused?

One possibility is that, by going into hiding how was he going to lead the project of building the wall but the better explanation is that. If you were to go into hiding it will mean that he had no faith that God will protect him. These are all very possible reasons, but the real reason why he refused to hide in the temple is that. There is a specific law stated clearly in Numbers chapters 1, 3 and 18 that only permits priest to enter

the temple building. So because Nehemiah was not a priest, he didn't want to sin by going into the sanctuary because he would be violating God's commandments by doing so.

Enemies last tactic in the rest of chapter 6 is perhaps the most grievous. They had infiltrated the ranks of the Israelites and Shemiah in verse 10 was not the only one who was with the enemy. In verse 17 and 18 you can read that many were secretly supporting Tobiah and some were even related to him by marriage. Tobiah's wife was a daughter of a prominent Israelite. His own son also married a Israelite woman. The text doesn't give us any further details as to how this infiltration caused problems for Nehemiah but what he did to stamp out this corruption.

Now we have gone through two chapters of Nehemiah and let us now dig deeper and see how this text can relate to us believers today. Now as I promised at the beginning we will now examine some, what I call broad strokes that are not so apparent if you just skim the surface of these verses. Now some people are fond of using the Book of Nehemiah to teach biblical leadership. Certainly Nehemiah can teach us a lot about biblical leadership and then there are also churches who like to study the book of Nehemiah before they undertake a major building project and I am sure the Book of Nehemiah can help to direct our spiritual direction when we want to build a church building of some sort and there is nothing wrong in studying the Book of Nehemiah for these various purposes, but it will be really missing the point. It will be really missing the big picture, overlooking what is really pertinent. It would be like seeing a painting but instead of admiring the art you are admiring the picture frame.

So what is the overarching theme behind the Book of Nehemiah. What is Nehemiah all about and I submit to you that together with the Book of Ezra and these two books should be read together. These two books are really to me one elaborate metaphor for our own spiritual journey on earth. It begins with Ezra chapter 1 when the Israelites have returned from exile to now Nehemiah chapter 6 when the wall was completed. It is one big metaphor for our own walk with God and let me show you how this Ezra-Nehemiah metaphor works and there are four parts to this metaphor.

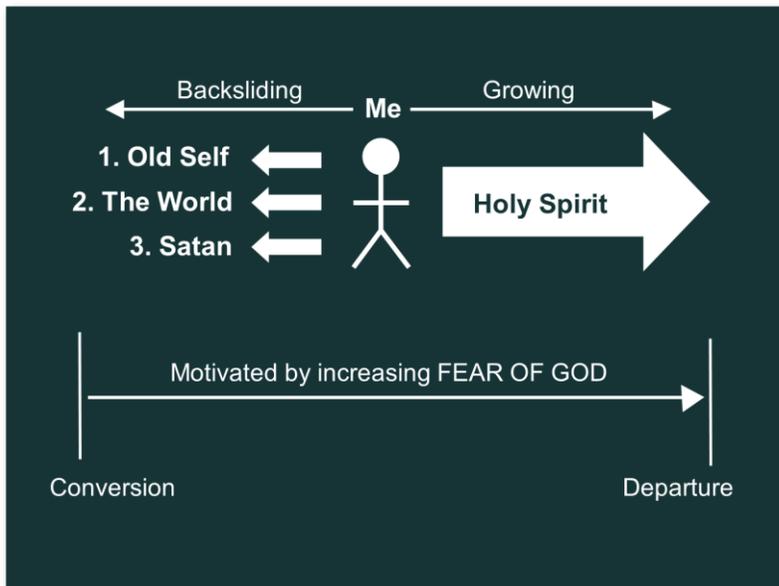
**The Ezra-Nehemiah Metaphor**

- |    |                                 |                                   |
|----|---------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. | <b>The years in exile</b>       | <b>pre-salvation</b>              |
| 2. | <b>The return to Jerusalem</b>  | <b>our salvation</b>              |
| 3. | <b>The building of Temple</b>   | <b>in-dwelling of HS</b>          |
| 4. | <b>The building of the wall</b> | <b>fortification of our faith</b> |

To begin with during the Israelites years in exile in Babylon and also later in Persia they were held in captivity, they were held in bondage as they found themselves in enemy territory and this corresponds to the years before we were saved and the years when we were in bondage to sin when we are in a sort of spiritual wilderness. Secondly, when the Israelites finally returned to Jerusalem which is well documented in Ezra chapter 2, they were taken out of bondage and they came home. It is again to the moment of our salvation when we came home spiritually to be reconciled with God. So that is the second part of the metaphor. Next the building of the temple in Jerusalem recorded in Ezra chapter 3 to 6. This is so important because the temple was the place where the presence of God dwelt. So they came back to Jerusalem and God dwelt with them. This is symbolic of the moment at the point of the salvation when the Holy Spirit came to dwell within us. When they came to Jerusalem, God came to dwell with them.

You must remember that our body is the temple of the Holy Spirit and finally as for the building of the wall in the book of Nehemiah, it is about fortification of the city to protect its inhabitants from danger. So the analogy is that, similarly after our conversion, after the indwelling of the Holy Spirit our faith needs to be fortified, to be strengthened in the process known as sanctification, so that we can better deal with the dangers that threaten to undermine our righteous living. So as you can see that our text in Nehemiah 5 and 6 corresponds to the tail end of this extended metaphor. The dangers Nehemiah faced from inside and from the outside kind of square with the dangers that our faith face internally and externally.

To move on, we have spent a fair bit of time discussing the dangers that Nehemiah had to face from within and without. Now what about us? What are the dangers that we face both internally and externally and here I would like to go even deeper to map it out for you in a easy to understand way. Now many years ago, when I preached from Acts chapter 4 on obstacles to growth, I showed you this diagram to illustrate our spiritual journey.



It shows how as we try to move forward with the Holy Spirit working in us, there are always this three forces trying to pull us back. As we try to grow spiritually, our progress is sometimes halted by these opposing entities and the three forces always trying to pull us back are:

1. Our old self
2. The world
3. Satan

Our old self is the internal danger that I talked about while the world and Satan are the external dangers I talked about. Now for the first one, our old self, let me call it our fallen sinful nature. Now the term fallen world in the title refers not only to the fallen world outside but also to our fallen nature inside, which is supposed to have been crucified at the cross but somehow it refuses to die, so it keeps haunting us. As for the external force of the world, it encompasses all sorts of worldly values, but chief amongst these worldly

values is the love of money. Indeed for the love of money many Christians have deviated from the faith and I have already shared with you three biblical principles to govern our attitudes towards money.

As for the last one for Satan, he is always trying to stumble us, constantly at work to draw us away from God by tempting us and by deceiving us and out of this three the last one is the most subtle. Now you have to understand that there is no such thing as remaining in the spiritual equilibrium, you know staying put in one place, because this is not a static but a very highly dynamic situation. Our spiritual life has to face these constant battles with these three forces, either you are growing even though slowly or you will be backsliding or loosing ground. Depending on how strong the forces are both sides of the equation.

While meditating on these two chapters of Nehemiah, I realized two things. Firstly, it seems to me that the dangers coming from within us seems to be more serious than those from without. Because it is far more difficult to overcome our old self than the world or Satan. I don't think anyone of us will be readily willing to allow money or Satan to sit on the throne of our lives. God should be sitting on the throne of our lives but instead we enthrone ourselves. You see, we want to run our old lives and therefore it is very hard to deal with this old self. It follows that if we can succeed in eliminating the dangers of inside, meaning if we can allow the Holy Spirit to work with us to banish the old self then it follows that the world and Satan would find it much harder to have a hold on us if we have sufficiently decreased and God has increased.

Secondly, as you can see at the bottom of the diagram, the foundation that undergirds this dynamic spiritual journey is really the fear of God. The fear of God should be our motivation for walking in the spirit. If you recall in chapter 5 verse 9 when Nehemiah confronted those rich Israelites who sin, he reprimanded them,

<sup>9</sup> So I continued, *“What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in **the fear of our God***

What does it mean to fear God? To fear God does not mean to be terrified of God as if he is always angry and always threatening to punish us. Further down in verse 15 Nehemiah fortunately use a different phrase synonymous to the fear of God because when he was explaining how he refrain from taking food allotted to the governor, he said

*out of **reverence for God** I did not act like that.*

This is the synonym for the fear of God. Thus to fear God means to revere him, to consider him in the highest esteem, to look up to him so much and that should be our motivation for not wanting to sin and our motivation for repentance when we do sin and this is how we dethrone the old self and when the old self is diminished or dethroned we will be in a stronger position to deal with the other two opposing forces working against us as I explained a while ago and this is how we forge ahead in the empowerment of the Holy Spirit and to do this we must learn to fear God. We must place Him first above everything else.

Now to drive this home, I promised to explain why I call my children boy and girl and not by their names. You see, I wanted to convey maybe in a subconscious way the idea that there must be a hierarchy in the house, it is important to me. You are a girl, you are a boy and I am the man. I am the man of the house. The point is I am their father and they are my children, otherwise how to teach them and lead them in the right path. Few years ago, my kids told me you as a father must earn our respect. Well, that's true about

only to a certain extent. I am not perfect, I have my weaknesses, sure I must do my best to be worthy to be called a father but I also told them this, in spite my imperfection my authority as a father is something positional not conditional. If I need your approval to earn my title as father then you are above me.

Our mighty God is holy and perfect in every way. If an imperfect earthly father ought to be respected, how much more should God be revered because he is far far above us. He is our creator God. He has to be esteemed and held in awe. It is only by fearing him that we can make progress in our spiritual journey then only will our faith be authenticated. Just as how the discovery of Nehemiah's wall in 2007 authenticated the Book of Nehemiah. To be authenticated means to be proven through. My hope is that, my faith and your faith will be proven through overtime as much as I hope that my children's faith will be proven through as they live overseas.

### **PRACTICAL LESSONS FROM NEHEMIAH 5.**

**1. We must take sin seriously.**

If you recall Nehemiah's reaction when he found out about the sins in their midst, he didn't say, oh it is okay, let it go. To him sin is never a trivial matter. He took a strong stance against the breaking of God's commandment and similarly we must not overlook or ignore or gloss over sin in our lives and also in our midst.

**2. We must confront sin resolutely.**

If you recall how Nehemiah summoned those guilty of sin and how he confronted and chastised them and so at a collective level within our community of believers we must be ready to confront sin whenever it surfaces. Because if sin is rampant in our midst you will be weak and vulnerable to threats from the outside. I must also say that when we confront sin we must confront our own sins first and not go around looking for other people's sin unless you are Nehemiah.

**3. We must confess our sins honestly.**

When confronted by Nehemiah with their sins those guilty didn't give an excuse, they acknowledged what they did was wrong, albeit in silence. Whenever we sin we must come humbly before God and admit that we have done wrong.

**4. We must repent of our sins sincerely.**

We saw how those guilty of sin make restitution to those who they have wronged. Nehemiah 5 is a book about repentance and repentance will open the door or the gates of God's approval and blessings.

**5. All leaders of the church must lead by example**

Finally in the face of threats from inside let us live righteously, in the face of threats from outside let us live courageously. Above all, fear God and revere him.