**GOD’S MERCY ON DISPLAY**

**Nehemiah 13**

**THE BIG IDEA: We may not always live up to our commitments to God, but God demonstrates His mercy by allowing our sin to be revealed to us, confronted by others, and repented of by us.**

**ALLOWING OUR RELATIONSHIPS WITH OTHERS TO SUPERCEDE OUR RELATIONSHIP WITH GOD INVITES REBUKE AND THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE**

* *“Now before this, the priest Eliashib had been put in charge of the storerooms of the house of our God. He was a relative of Tobiah 5 and had prepared a large room for him where they had previously stored the grain offerings, the frankincense, the articles, and the tenths of grain, new wine, and fresh oil prescribed for the Levites, singers, and gatekeepers, along with the contributions for the priests.”* (Nehemiah 13:4-5)
* **There is no relationship that exists that is more important than our relationship with the Lord.**
* *“I was greatly displeased and threw all of Tobiah’s household possessions out of the room."* (Nehemiah 13:8)
* **Our sin rarely only affects us; most of the time our sin negatively impacts others as well.**
* *“I also found out that because the portions for the Levites had not been given, each of the Levites and the singers performing the service had gone back to his own field. 11 Therefore, I rebuked the officials, asking, ‘Why has the house of God been neglected?’”* (Nehemiah 13:10-11a)
* **When we are confronted about obvious sin in our lives we should respond with humility and gratitude rather than being defensive or combative.**

**NEGLECTING OUR COMMITMENT TO LIVE RIGHTEOUSLY FOR THE LORD INVITES REBUKE AND THE NEED FOR REPENTANCE**

* *“I rebuked the nobles of Judah and said to them, ‘What is this evil you are doing—profaning the Sabbath day? 18 Didn’t your ancestors do the same, so that our God brought all this disaster on us and on this city? And now you are rekindling his anger against Israel by profaning the Sabbath!’”* (Nehemiah 13:17-18)
* **A true friend will not sit by and watch you continue in sin, but will lovingly confront you in hopes of helping you get back on track.**
* *“Then I instructed the Levites to purify themselves and guard the city gates in order to keep the Sabbath day holy.”* (Nehemiah 13:22)
* *“In those days I also saw Jews who had married women from Ashdod, Ammon, and Moab. 24 Half of their children spoke the language of Ashdod or the language of one of the other peoples but could not speak Hebrew. 25 I rebuked them, cursed them, beat some of their men, and pulled out their hair. I forced them to take an oath before God and said, ‘You must not give your daughters in marriage to their sons or take their daughters as wives for your sons or yourselves!’”* (Nehemiah 13:23-25)
* **Intermarrying with people who don’t worship the LORD, or who worship a false god, jeopardizes the purity of your relationship with God, and the ability to raise children who know the LORD and His Word.**
* *“So I purified them from everything foreign and assigned specific duties to each of the priests and Levites. 31 I also arranged for the donation of wood at the appointed times and for the firstfruits.”* (Nehemiah 13:30-31)

**GOD IS DEMONSTRATING HIS MERCY AND LOVE TO US WHEN WE ARE REBUKED FOR SIN AND BROUGHT TO REPENTANCE**

* *“But God, who is rich in mercy, because of his great love that he had for us, 5 made us alive with Christ even though we were dead in trespasses. You are saved by grace!”* (Ephesians 2:4-5)
* **When the Holy Spirit convicts us of sin, or a fellow Christian confronts us of sin, it is a clear display of God’s mercy and love for us.**
* *“But when the kindness of God our Savior and his love for mankind appeared, 5 he saved us—not by works of righteousness that we had done, but according to his mercy—through the washing of regeneration and renewal by the Holy Spirit.”* (Titus 3:4-5)
* **If God left us in our sin with no conviction or confrontation, we would die in sin and suffer the consequences, BUT God is rich in His mercy and provides a way through Christ to be renewed into right standing before Him!**
* **We should express unwavering gratitude to the Lord and to our fellow believers who reveal our sin to us, because it allows us to repent and be restored.**

**CONNECT GROUP DISCUSSION**

**Ice Breaker:** What is the funniest thing someone ever shared with you in conversation?

**Start thinking:**

* What do we learn about God from Nehemiah 13?
* What happened in Jerusalem after Nehemiah returned to the King’s palace to resume his responsibilities there?
* Who was Eliashib and what did he do that caused so much ruckus?
* Why do you think none of the other Jews spoke up and confronted Eliashib, Tobiah, and those who intermarried?

**Start sharing. Discuss in depth to create openness.**

* In what ways do we resemble the Jews in Nehemiah today (both good and bad)?
* How do you respond when someone confronts you about sin? Even if their approach is not necessarily tactful.
* Why is it important to embrace rebuke even when it is uncomfortable?
* Why is it important to lovingly confront others when we see them in sin?
* How does receiving rebuke and following that with repentance demonstrate spiritual growth and maturity?
* What is your big takeaway from this message?

**Pray**

* Share prayer requests and pray for each other.
* Pray for our community to be open to the Gospel.
* Pray for our church, and leadership.
* Pray for our government leaders, and local leaders.
* Pray about anything else the Holy Spirit leads you to pray