

SERVANT LEADERSHIP

BY

Calvary Chapel Outreach Fellowship

Lesson 8 **What is Revival?**

By

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When Nehemiah heard of the condition that existed in Jerusalem from those who had come back to Persia, he was very grieved. He heard how demoralized the people were. The wall was broken down, the enemies were attacking them, and the people were greatly discouraged. So Nehemiah prayed, he fasted, and he mourned. Then as he was bearing the cup to the king, the king observed that there was something wrong and he questioned Nehemiah. Nehemiah was sort of shook-up that the king would observe that his countenance was not bright and happy. He said, “How can I be happy when the city of my people is in ruins? The walls are destroyed.” The king asked him what his desire was, and Nehemiah said, “Well, I would love to go back and lead the people in the rebuilding of the wall.” The king said, “How long will you be gone?” He gave him an estimate of time that he felt it would take to get things restored. Nehemiah said, “Perhaps it will take twelve years.” The king gave him the papers, appointed him governor over the land, and sent him back that he might oversee the job of the rebuilding of the walls, which went rather fast. He remained in Jerusalem for a period of time to establish the leadership among the people.

We read that when they rebuilt the walls, it was a time of great rejoicing. It was a time of spiritual uplifting. In the last few lessons we have had in Nehemiah, we have seen this revival. We have seen this excitement among the people as God has been working. And there was great rejoicing. The people got into the Word of God again and in the Word they saw so many things. There was first conviction, as they were reading the words the people began to weep before the Lord with a consciousness of their sin. Then the priest said, “Do not weep. This is a day unto the Lord. It should be a day of rejoicing” (cf. [Nehemiah 8:9](#)). And the people made the renewal of their commitment to God.

Evidently the king liked Nehemiah very much. Nehemiah felt honor-bound to return to Persia because he had told the king he would be away for a specific period of time. No doubt Nehemiah had been reporting to Artaxerxes the success of the mission and all; yet having been to Jerusalem, his heart was in Jerusalem. He remained with the king for certain days, but no doubt he requested to be able to go back and just remain in Jerusalem. His heart was not there in Persia.

When he got back to Jerusalem, he met with some very unsavory conditions. The people had quickly turned from their excitement that they had felt for the Lord. Do not mistake religious excitement for true revival. Often during a time of special emphasis people can get all excited. It is the continuing work that I am interested in, not how many came forward during a meeting. A year later how many are still going on with the Lord? That is where the true measure of a revival is discovered. It is not in the excitement of the meeting itself, but in the lasting fruit.

Jesus said to His disciples,

You have not chosen Me but I have chosen you and ordained you that you should be My disciples, and that you should bring forth fruit, and that your fruit should remain. (cf. [John 15:16](#))

The lasting fruit of the ministry is what is important. And that is really what thrills me when I am gathered with you because God has worked marvelously in our midst. No one can deny that. This is an exciting move and work of God. But if the Lord tarries, one of these days I am going to be blessed and the Lord is going to keep His promise to me. He said,

If I go away I will come again and receive you unto Myself, that where I am, there you may be also. ([John 14:3](#))

The Lord is going to keep that promise to me.

Dr. Orr was a walking encyclopedia on revival. This man could just start at any date in history, and tell you what the Lord was doing. He was very interested in what God was doing at Calvary Chapel because revival was his thing. We had many wonderful times together. He would say, “Chuck, what are you doing to perpetuate this? There are so many revivals that spring up, but when that instrument that God has used passes on, then so many times things just sort of slough off. What have you done to perpetuate this?” I said, “Well, it is the training of the young men.” And I can go and rest in peace tonight. If the Lord should say, “Okay Chuck, it is time to come home,” I could go tonight and be at perfect peace that the work of God is going to continue. That it is lasting truth of men who have caught the vision of the teaching of the Word, and have gone out and have established work upon the Word of God. I know that the fruit is lasting fruit because it has been built upon the Word. They have caught the vision and they are continuing to follow the model of just teaching God’s Word to the hungry hearts of His people.

When Nehemiah returned to Jerusalem it was a great disappointment. Nehemiah 13 tells us of some of the conditions that he discovered. The problem is that a corrupted priesthood means spiritual decline. Eliashib, the high priest, had oversight of the temple. He had prepared for Tobiah (of all people) a great chamber which used to be one of the big storehouses in the temple. He refurbished it, remodeled it, and made a lovely chamber for Tobiah! Tobiah was the man who was angry when Nehemiah came because he was one who was seeking the good of the people of God. Tobiah was the one who said concerning the wall, as they started to build it, “If a little fox would go up against it, he could knock it down.” He was the one who, by ridicule, was seeking to discourage the people. Tobiah was one of those in the conspiracy to kill Nehemiah. Now here he is comfortably quartered right in the temple itself, as an accommodation to him by Eliashib.

Nehemiah explains in [Nehemiah 13:6](#), this all happened because he was not around. He had gone back to Artaxerxes.

I came to Jerusalem and I understood of the evil that Eliasheb had done for Tobiah in preparing him a chamber in the courts of the house of God. And it grieved me sore; therefore I cast him out with all of his household stuff. (cf. [Nehemiah 13:7-8](#))

He took the furniture and everything and tossed the whole thing out. He tossed Tobiah out on his ear. Sometimes situations call for drastic action among the people. And there was a need here for drastic, decisive, immediate action.

Now what was the problem? People can be all excited, returning back to the celebration of the feast, worshipping God, weeping before God, fasting, praying, and then how is it that so quickly they can just return back to the old ruts that they were in? Sometimes they even become worse. [Nehemiah 13:1-3](#) perhaps gives to us a hint or an indication of what the problem was. It tells us that they discovered in the law of Moses that God had said that the Ammonites were never to come into the temple of God. When the children of Israel were passing through their land in their journey to the Promised Land, they did not come out to help them, but stood against them. And so God ordered that they were not allowed to come into the temple of God forever.

What had happened is that the people had begun to intermarry with those from Ashdod, those from Amman, and those from Moab, so that the kids were sort of half-breeds. They were speaking half the language of Ashdod and half the language of the Jews. They were what were called “the mixed multitude.”

We find in the book of Exodus that when the children of Israel came out of Egypt, there came with them a mixed multitude from Egypt. We read in the book of Numbers that as they were there in the wilderness, the mixed multitude began to lust after the things of Egypt. They began to cry and complain. They said, “We are sick of this bland, yucky manna. Manna for breakfast. Manna for lunch. Manna for dinner. We don’t even have any garlic or onions to cook it with. We are sick of it!” They began to mourn for the garlic, the leeks, and the onions of the flesh pots of Egypt. They cried, “Oh, remember those delicious onions. Man, what I would not give for an onion now.” It spread throughout the camp of Israel, and they began to murmur and complain against the Lord. God began to plague them. It was the mixed multitude who fell to lusting after the flesh.

In our churches, we have a mixed multitude who are mixed with the people of God. You know that it is true. You have those people in your church who are dedicated and committed to following Jesus Christ. They are full on. They are ready to go. They are eager and wanting to just have more and more of the Lord. They just cannot seem to get enough.

But then there is also that mixed multitude who are lusting after the flesh. They are there on Sunday mornings unless there is something better to do. On Superbowl Sunday you are not apt to find them, or on especially sunny days, or on rainy days. It takes just a special kind of day in order for them to come to church. The mixed multitudes have a detrimental effect upon the whole body because they are the ones who complain. “Can’t we have more entertainment? Can’t we have more parties? All you want to do is study the Word and that is not very exciting. Don’t you find that sort of bland sometimes? We need some excitement. Let’s get a prophet here who can call out our names.” The mixed multitudes are always a problem that has to be dealt with.

Do not let the mixed multitude hold back the people. Do not cater to them. Minister to those who want to go on with the Lord, and if the mixed multitude happens to fall away, rejoice! God often subtracts in order that He may multiply.

Tobiah was an enemy of the work of God, comfortably quartered in the temple of God. That just seems to be totally incongruous.

Another problem is shown in [Nehemiah 13:10](#). Nehemiah said,

I perceive that the portions for the Levites had not been given to them; for the Levites and the singers that had done the work had fled every one to his field.

In other words, the people had quit tithing. They had quit supporting the work of God. Now before he left they had set up the singers again like they had in the times of David and Asaph. They had set up the order of the priests and everything was functioning and going great. Nehemiah thought, “Oh, it is all fine. I can take off for a while and go back to Persia. It would be nice to see the king. The king loves me so much. I get a lot of perks back there in Persia. I will go back to Persia for a while.” And he went back, but when he returned, the whole thing had just deteriorated. It has gone to pot. The priests and the singers that had all been established and set in order were all back again working in their fields because they had to survive. The priests had their own property and would work their fields and come and spend some time doing the priesthood. They had to forsake the ministry of the temple in order to survive, and they were back in their fields.

So Nehemiah said, “I called the rulers and I contended with them.”

We have company that takes care of our arrangements when we are in Israel. They take care of all our hotels and the buses. That is their responsibility. And this one gal, Anna, who works for the company over there, is always telling us about the problem that she has with these hotel managers who are wanting to cut corners or whatever. She says, “I fight with him.” She is always talking about how she is fighting with them.

That word “contend” is the same thing as fight.

I contended—[or fought]—with them, and I said, “Why is the house of God forsaken?” I gathered them together and I set them in their place. Then brought all of Judah the tithes of their corn, the new wine, the new oil, the treasures. ([Nehemiah 13:11-12](#))

He rebuked them and got things going again. And the tribe of Judah began to bring again their tithes. He made the treasurers over those treasuries. He put faithful men in the office of distributing of the goods to their brethren.

Nehemiah saw another problem.

In those days I saw in Judah some who were treading their wine presses on the Sabbath, and bringing in sheaves, and loading down their donkeys with wine, grapes, figs, and all manner of burdens, which they brought into Jerusalem on the Sabbath day. And I testified against them in the day wherein they sold the victuals. ([Nehemiah 13:15](#))

He saw people bearing burdens on the Sabbath day, weighing down their little donkeys with wares, treading the wine presses.

Mark Martin has done a series of tapes on the covenant. If any of you have people who are Seventh Day Adventists or others who are hung up on the seventh day worship, I would recommend that you get these tapes. They are masterful. They are outstanding. Coming from his background, understanding the position of the Seventh Day Adventist and having been freed, he has done a masterful job on this subject. He deals with the covenants that God has established with man. In every covenant that God has established with man, God has had a sign of that covenant. He established a covenant with Noah. What was the sign of the covenant? It was the rainbow. He had established a covenant with Israel. He gave them the law. “You keep this law, I will be your God, and you will be My people.” Now what was the sign of the covenant? The sign was keeping the Sabbath day. You can read it in Exodus, keeping the Sabbath day was the sign of the covenant with Israel throughout all their generations. He made a new covenant with us through Jesus Christ. What is the sign? It is the cup, the blood of Christ. A new covenant in My blood, shed for the remission of sins” (cf. [Matthew 26:28](#)).

Keeping the Sabbath day was a sign of God’s covenant with the people. The fact that they violated the Sabbath then was indicative of a broken covenant. They had broken the covenant of God by treading out the grapes, loading down the donkeys, and bringing in the wares on the Sabbath day. He testified against them and said, “Stop that now! You are not going to do it again.”

Now there were men from Tyre that were around there, who brought fish and all manner of wares, and they sold these on the

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Sabbath day to the children of Judah in Jerusalem. So I fought with the nobles of Judah and I said to them, “What evil thing is this that you do? You profane the Sabbath day.” (cf. [Nehemiah 13:16-17](#))

He got back, he found things in a mess, and jumped right into the middle of it, started grabbing everybody and dealing with the issue. He said, “Do you not realize that your fathers did the same things and because they did, they brought on all of this evil and their captivity? The whole problem came out of this kind of stuff. Didn’t you learn? Don’t you know? What is wrong with you guys?” And he contended with them over these things.

So he ordered them to keep the gates closed until the Sabbath day is over. “Do not open the gates. We are not going to have any kind of traffic going in and out of the gates of Jerusalem. Keep them closed until the Sabbath day is over” (cf. [Nehemiah 13:19](#)).

Now, the merchants and the fellows with all these kinds of goods, just sort of stayed outside of the city of Jerusalem one or two Sabbaths after he had ordered the gate closed. And so he said,

I went out and I testified to them and I said, “Why do you lodge here around the wall? If you do it again I am going to lay my hands on you. [I am going to beat you up, man.] (cf. [Nehemiah 13:21](#))

Evidently he really seemed serious to them, because they quit coming. They knew that this guy meant business. Then he commanded the Levites that they should cleanse themselves, that they should come and make sure that the gates were closed, so that the Sabbath day would be kept holy.

It is amazing that all these problems could arise in so short a time. Nehemiah notices another problem.

In those days also, I saw Jews that had married wives of Ashdod and Ammon and Moab. Their children spoke half the speech of Ashdod. They could not speak in the Jews’ language but they were speaking according to the language of each group: Moabite, Ammonite and so forth. [This really got him upset.] I fought with them, I cursed them, I hit certain of them, I plucked off their hair, and I made them swear by God that they would not give their daughters or their sons to the other nationalities, nor would they take daughters or sons from them for their own children. (cf. [Nehemiah 13:23-25](#))

He made them swear and had them by the hair of the head. “Promise me you are not going to do it!” He yanked their hair out. “Promise me!” Boy, I would love to take action like Nehemiah sometimes. I think that there is a time for righteous indignation. Surely Jesus was indignant when He came into the temple and saw how they had made a profit in the temple courts by selling the oxen and the sheep. He made a scourge out of cords and He began to drive them out, overturning their tables, rebuking them.

I think that sometimes we are a little too soft, a little too weak in making a very firm stand against evil that exists within the church. I think sometimes we have to be very stern with people. There

have been people who have disturbed services here and we have told them, “If you come on the grounds again and we see you on the grounds, we are calling the police immediately.” And when they come on the grounds again, we have called the police immediately and we have held them, some of them by force, until the police got here. Some people only seem to understand force.

A man came to my door when our oldest child was just a little girl. The fellow declared that he was Elijah the prophet that was to come in the last days. And when I was obviously skeptical of his claims, he said, “What would you do if something would happen to your little daughter?” I looked him in the eye, grabbed him by the shirt and said, “If something should happen to my little daughter, I would search the world until I found you, and I would kill you with my bare hands.” I knew the guy was mentally off and I did not want him to get any ideas of trying to harm my little girl. I was serious.

Nehemiah took drastic action in order to get things back in order.

You would think that you could come to a place as a minister, where things would just be smooth from here on out. The wall is built. We have celebrated. “Glory, hallelujah!” Everything is wonderful and everybody is excited, rejoicing, praising God. “We have done it!” And here they are in such a mess so soon. “I was gone just for a year and come back and oh, look at this mess!” You would think that somehow you could hit a plateau or arrive at a place, where you would have no more problems, where everyone would live happily ever after. Oh, we will, but as long as we are in these bodies and as long as your people are in those bodies, we are going to have to contend with and deal with the problems that arise from the flesh.

The incidents of Nehemiah 13 point me to the necessity of strong leadership. The people need strong leadership. When Moses brought the children of Israel out of Egypt with many signs and wonders and they came to Mount Sinai, Moses went up on the mount to meet the Lord. Moses was on the mount for forty days, and that is not very long. But before Moses could get back with the two tables of stone upon which God had engraved the laws—the Ten Commandments—the people had come to Aaron and said, “Make us gods that we might worship them. As for this man Moses, we do not know what has happened to him.” Moses came back with this tremendous spiritual experience, having talked with God, having met with God, and having God inscribe with His finger on these two tables of stone, the Ten Commandments. “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make any graven image to bow down to them to worship them.”

Moses comes back with these holy commandments of God, to present them to the people and before he even gets there he hears all of this noise. Joshua says, “What in the world is that? There must be a war.” And he says, “That is not the sound of war. That is the sound of partying.” And when they came in sight of the tents, here they were all dancing around this golden calf. It was a big orgy as they were worshipping the golden calf. Right there on the tablets it says, “Thou shalt have no other gods before Me. Thou shalt not make any graven image” (cf. [Exodus 20:3-4](#)). And Moses, literally and symbolically, took those two tables of stone, threw them on the ground and they broke in pieces. The law had already been broken by the people. The covenant had already been broken by the people. Moses had only been away forty days. He came back to find things in chaos. The people were worshipping a golden calf (cf. [Exodus 32:19](#)). The people need strong leadership.

If God has made you a leader of His flock in your community, take care of the flock of God. The words “feed My sheep, translated into Greek mean “to tend, take over, or oversee”. “Take care of My sheep,” Jesus said. And when Peter was writing to the elders, as an elder himself, he used that

same word. “Take care of the flock of God that is among you” ([1 Peter 5:2](#)). Tend them. Do not forsake them. Do not neglect them.

If you are gone from them for too long or too much, all kinds of evils will start springing up. I believe that Satan often seeks to divert our attention to other fields. We soon find ourselves neglecting the basic call of God upon our lives. There is something rather heady about having people weep as you leave and say, “Oh, please come back. Oh, we need you desperately here.” Or, “No one can minister to us like you can. We need you desperately.” There is something heady about having invitations to come speak to giant rallies, to speak in soccer stadiums in Romania, to address 5,000 youth in Hungary. There is something heady about that when they write and say, “Oh, we have heard your tapes and we feel that you have the message. We feel that you can do a lot here.” There is a strong temptation to say, “Yes, I need to go.” There is something very heady about being there, having all of the excitement, and being taken to the hotels while people say, “Oh, you cannot believe how wonderful it is to have you here.” There is something very heady about all of that.

Watch out! You can neglect the basic call that God has upon your life to minister to that flock of yours. If you spend too much time away from the flock, you will find that without strong leadership they can get into all kinds of evil.

Years ago God called Dave Wilkerson, a country preacher, to New York to minister to gang members who were deeply involved in drugs. He went with all of his naiveté, into this sophisticated metropolitan area where there were all of these gangs, corruption, beatings and everything else. Led by the Lord and divinely protected by God, he went right up against the gates of hell and began to shake them. God blessed Dave Wilkerson there and gave him tremendous fruit. As the result, the book *The Cross and the Switchblade*, was published to share what God was doing in the streets of New York, and invitations began to come to Dave Wilkerson from all over the United States to come and speak to these great youth rallies. David Wilkerson began to travel around the United States, speaking at these giant youth rallies. He began to wear white jackets, suede shoes, and styled hair. He was successful.

He was no longer on the streets of New York, but he was now an authority in youth problems and was speaking at giant rallies all over. His name drew a crowd, but his heart became empty. Why? It was because God did not call Dave Wilkerson to speak at giant rallies around the country. God called Dave Wilkerson to the streets of New York. Dave began to flounder spiritually. Not that he left the Lord, but he was just empty. He was just miserable. He had left his place of calling. Satan had diverted him into these other activities. They were legitimate activities, of course. Kids were coming to Christ in these rallies, of course. He started this big ranch in Texas. He started Teen Challenges all over the United States. He began to sit in this fancy office as an administrator, and jetted around the country. But that is not where God had called Dave Wilkerson. The call of God was to the streets of New York. I am happy to say that Dave is back on the streets of New York and happy again, but he went a long, circuitous route.

There is always that danger of leaving the basic, primary calling of God because of the attractiveness, the allurements of far away places with strange sounding names, with hungry hearts and hands that are outstretched, waiting for you. But many a pastor has come back from these places and found that the church that he was pastoring is in shambles. Divisions have come up and since there was not any strong leadership to deal with it, the people had become fractured.

The Lord has been dealing with me and perhaps this is why I am so into this. The Lord has been dealing with me personally on this subject, so I am just talking out of my own heart. That is why

this year, I have sort of taken a sabbatical from going out. It is not a sabbatical from the church here. I am spending more time right here. This is the first summer in years that I am going to be home. This is where God has called me.

The fellows who have the pastors' conferences around the country, know that I have not come this year. The only one I went to was Hawaii and I needed a little vacation. But last year, I think there were thirty weeks that I was gone Monday through Wednesday, speaking at various conventions and conferences and all. Tuesday is my day that I usually take off. I was not keeping the Sabbath. I was taking one in seven. I would get home on Thursday, do the Thursday night study, work all day Friday and Saturday to catch up with things that are in the office, do the services on Sunday and take off either Sunday night or Monday morning early for the next convention or rally or conference. I was hardly home last fall at all, except I was always careful to be here Thursday night and Sundays. But the Lord began to speak to me. Thank God for good assistants. We still had leadership and things did not go to pieces, but some things did arise that I probably could have dealt with had I been here. You see, Nehemiah was the recognized leader of the people. The people looked to him for leadership. People look to you for leadership. People look to me for leadership.

Some of you are going to return from this conference, and though you have only been here a few days, you are going to find some problems have arisen since you have been gone. You may even find that they have voted not to have you as their pastor any more. Do not neglect the flock of God.

Being a leader, Nehemiah dealt decisively with the situation and with the problems. He was stern. He was severe. And because he was their leader, they received his rebuke. Had anyone else tried to take those same stern measures that Nehemiah had taken, it would have created a revolution. If anybody else had grabbed and pulled their hair out and smacked them across the cheek, there would have been some real problems. But because they recognized Nehemiah as the God-appointed and ordained leader, they received his rebuke and his correction.

If God has called you to be the shepherd over a flock, no one else can take the necessary actions to protect that flock and the purity of the flock. Beware about neglecting that flock of God over which the Lord has made you the overseer, because often projected periods of absence will take their toll. Limit your times away from the pulpit. Be there for the people.

That is what the Spirit says to me out of Nehemiah 13. Take care of the ministry to which God has called you.

Father, we thank You that You have called us and ordained that we should be Your disciples, that we should bring forth fruit and that our fruit should remain. We thank You, Lord, that You have anointed us, shepherds over Your flock. Help us, Lord, that we might be shepherds that are pleasing to You, tending the flock, feeding the flock, loving the flock, and nourishing the flock. In Jesus' name, Amen.