

**“Walk in the Spirit”**  
**Nehemiah Sermon #22**

Nehemiah 10

We have been out of Nehemiah for a little while and we only have a few chapters to go.

Let me refresh your memory

Nehemiah 6:15 – the wall of Jerusalem was completed.

The Jewish people finished a great construction project, but there is something far more important than buildings and that's people.

In Nehemiah 7 – The people are listed and the people called for a preacher.

Nehemiah 8 – Ezra brought the Book – the Word; he read it and taught it

In Nehemiah 9 – the people responded to the Word of God with repentance and with confession of sin.

They understood the poor decisions of their past.

The crux of their downfall was that they failed to trust God and His Word.

I've entitled today's sermon “Fully Committed”

Nehemiah 10:1

Let us stand for the reading of God's Holy Word.

Nehemiah 10:1, 28-39, (vs. 38)

Let us pray.

You may be seated

## Fully Committed

Ezra's preaching of this book resulted in a genuine confession of sin.

Then, to demonstrate their sincere resolve to change, the Israelites made a covenant with God. (vs. 1)

Have you ever been broken over your sin because of the preaching of God's Word?

But, was their emotional response sincere? Would it last? Was their dedication real?

It's one thing to offer the Lord a crying prayer of confession, and quite something else to live an obedient life after the crying is done.

Let me start by saying, *serious decisions precede any significant change.*

9:38 - *Written plans confirm right priorities.* . . . Write them down!

Weaknesses – work on – written down

The people in the assembly were serious about their commitment and were determined, by God's grace, to make a new beginning and live to please the Lord.

There are at least three evidences given in this chapter that these people really meant what they said.

These same evidences will be seen in our lives if our spiritual life is real.

### **The First Evidence of Spiritual Life is - Submission to the Word of God**

Notice in vs. 29b, to walk in God's law is to be subject to the Holy Scriptures.

The primary issue in that day was the people's attitude to the Law of God.

Of course, this always is the central issue of faith.

What is our attitude toward the Word of God?

Take a good look at your Bible.

Is this the first time you looked at it since last Sunday?

Vs.1 – they put their signatures to it.

Should believers today bind themselves with oaths as they seek to walk with the Lord and serve Him? (vs. 29)

Probably not. Our relationship to the Lord is that of children to a Father, and our Father wants our obedience to be based on love.

Oaths are often based on fear (“I had better do it or God will judge me!”), and fear is not the highest motivation for Godly living, although it does play a part (II Cor. 7:1).

Notice also in verse 28 – that this was a family affair.

In verse 29 there is a general promise to *obey* what God had declared as a family.

Worship of God is not left at church, folks, it’s in our homes, our vehicles – at work.

“Sons and daughters” reminds us that the young people and children must be included in this commitment.

That’s why the Proverbs tell us – a child left to himself will shame his mother.

One of the toughest jobs on earth is to raise children in an ungodly culture.

The Israelites were surrounded by heathen tribes and pagan people who marched to a different drumbeat.

The easiest thing in the world would have been to lose their distinctiveness as “the people of God,” and so the leaders of each home promised.

When morals of a nation are under stress, the home is the first to suffer.

This covenant was initiated by the people themselves.

They bound themselves and their families.

As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord.

You know where that starts—that starts with Daddy when he decides to lead his home in a Godly direction.

Parallels might be drawn between this solemn league and the covenant of marriage, which has at its very core the idea of commitment.

The marriage ceremony, with its vows and pledges, its witnesses and its signings, clearly spells out the commitment of one partner to the other.

These people committed themselves to walk God's way – that is God's Word.

### **The Second Evidence of Spiritual Life is - Separation as the people of God**

Like I said before, the Jewish remnant was surrounded by idolatrous Gentiles/heathen people.

They needed to live separately.

The Law prohibited God's people from living like the Gentiles.

The Bible tells us that we are not to walk like unbelievers.

The Bible tells us that we are not to live like lost people.

We are saints – we are called out ones. We are Christians – we are Christ-like.

Ephesians 2:2 talks about our past and how we walked according to the course of this world, which is disobedience to God.

Corinthians tells us to come out from among them and be ye separate.

Ephesians 4:17-24:

17 *“That ye henceforth walk not as other Gentiles walk, in the vanity of their mind,*

18 *We do not have our understanding darkened, we are not alienated from the life of God. We are not in ignorance, we are no longer blind.*

20 *We have not so learned Christ;*

21 *If so be that ye have heard him, and have been taught by him, as the truth is in Jesus:*

22 *That ye put off concerning the former manner of life, which is corrupt according to the deceitful lusts;*

23 *And be renewed in the spirit of your mind;*

24 *And that ye put on the new man, which after God is created in righteousness and true holiness.*

### **Vs. 28b – Separated Themselves**

The phrase “all who separated themselves” indicates change.

Now the people of God are not perfect, but they should be a process of change.

We should be growing.

See, separation from the wicked people was important to maintain the holiness of the Bible standard.

God’s people will be different from the world – our beliefs and standards are distinctive. They set us apart.

God still wants His people to be separate by recognizing and rejecting values and beliefs that are contrary to His will and His teaching.

We must take seriously the Scriptural emphasis on separation without falling into an isolationist situation.

Separation is simply total devotion to God, no matter what the cost.

See, when a man and woman get married, they separate themselves from all other possible mates and give themselves completely to each other.

The Jews separated *from* the peoples around them and *unto* the Lord and His Word. This all begins with knowledge and understanding, Vs. 28.

From a mouth of cursing – to a mouth of praise, edification or gossip.

From wicked thoughts – to pure thoughts

From being selfish – to selfless

From taking – to giving

There is an unholy life and there is a holy life—I don't do this, but this is what I do.

Only the Holy Spirit can give us the kind of balance we need to live a Godly life in this ungodly world.

The liberal pays no mind to what God desires of his life, but the legalist wants to live by rules.

That style of life only keeps you immature and dependent on your spiritual leaders – there is no relationship with God in legalism except that you become God's policeman and critical of all others.

When we get married – forsaking of all others—but then there is the cleaving to your spouse.

Separate from sin but that is only half of it – separate unto God.

The only way to grow in a balanced life is to give yourself totally to God and follow Him by faith – saved by faith and we live by faith.

First, there was the keeping of God's law, which then in turn requires separation – from sin and separation unto God.

There were three areas specifically dealt with by the Israelites—in the separation matter—first the question of marriage, then there was God's day (Sabbath), and finally there was the matter of maintaining God's house (temple).

Their covenant is to keep the Law, and they list specifically three items to which they commit themselves.

Obviously, they list these because they had not been keeping these items of the Law.

### **Vs. 30**

This seems to have been a perpetual problem with Israel.

No intermarriage with the heathen is what God said.

The first rule forbids marriage outside of the community of faith.

Converts like Rahab and Ruth were accepted in the community because they separated themselves from sin and unto God.

Solomon married many foreign women who turned away his heart from following the Lord. (See I Kings 11:1).

When God talks about foreign women – He is not talking about nationalities or ethnic backgrounds.

He is not talking about the color of someone's skin.

He is talking about believers and unbelievers.

God is very clear about this.

Even today, we are not to yoke ourselves up in marriage to an unbeliever.

David married a pagan woman who came from Geshoor (II Sam. 3:3).

She was the mother of Absalom and Absalom was a cancer to David and his family.

Failure at this point (marriage) has led to much compromise and caused many problems, especially where children have been involved and the same is true today.

Mixed marriages, not on racial but on religious grounds  
They commit their children to marry followers of God.

Next, the signers promised to *conduct business* in an obedient manner. (Verse 31)

The distinction of a Godly leader is that when he does business, he does it with integrity/ Biblically.

If you want to have selective vision – selective obedience – selective hearing, you will kill yourself financially.

I am getting ahead. You never get ahead by sinning. It is always a losing proposition.

God will honor the person who honors Him.

The Jews had declared they would put first things first in their homes and in their business activities.

So, the second area to which they committed is that there will be no trade on the Sabbath day or on any of the holy days.

At the dawn of creation, God had established the principle of one day in seven as a day of rest.

Israel's observance of the Sabbath became a witness to the surrounding nations that they were different. From Friday night to Saturday night – the Jews world was shut down.

★The nation's observance of that day was a simple and graphic way of bearing testimony to who they were and to whom they belonged.



In a similar way, we can bear a witness by our regard for the Lord's Day (Sunday).

It can be a testimony to our ungodly neighbors.

Anybody knows that when a family gets out on Sunday morning with their Sunday best  
– they are headed to church.

The non-Jews were bringing merchandise to sell on the Sabbath day.

These people were pledging themselves to heed the Word of God—no business on the  
Sabbath.

Now we see the third evidence of spiritual life.

Here we see the maintenance of God's House.

They turned their attention to their *place of worship*.

Nine times in Nehemiah 10:32-39, the "house of God" is addressed.

It's not difficult to catch the theme.

**Vs. 32 - 33** Temple support was needed both in cash and in offerings (animals and  
grains).

Putting it all together, verse 39 concludes . . .

"We will not forsake the house of our God!" (Neh. 10:39)

They were determined not to do this – remember Haggai

There were duties of the house of God, which included the upkeep of the temple and  
temple property.

A community of believers that loves God will not neglect these responsibilities.

Our worship and service does require some structure and leadership.

That requires labor and finances.

In practical terms, this means providing faithful labor and financial support that enables  
the ministry of the church.

This points to the importance of commitment and contribution by families to God's building and ministries [lawn mowing, cleaning].

Look at **Vs. 35**

The Jews were taught to give God the first and the best, and this is a good example for us to follow today.

Proverbs 3:9, *"Honor the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase"*

Giving can be a great blessing, but those who give must avoid at least two dangers:

- (1) giving with the wrong motive, out of a sense of duty, fear, or greed - "If I give, God must prosper me!"
- (2) thinking that they can do what they please with the rest that remains. We are stewards of God for all that He place in our hands.

Chapter 10 contains many challenges for Christians today:

- (1) It shows the importance of submission to God's Word.  
They held firmly to the authority of God's Word, they have a firm anchor against drifting.
- (2) It emphasizes the holiness of the believing community—the importance of being separated from the world's ways/values.

*A loss of distinction and conformity to the world go hand in hand.*

Do you want to know today whether you have really conformed to this world or not? Check out your distinction; check on your authenticity compared to New Testament Christianity.

Look at your life, your home, your work, your worship, and then ask yourself, “Am I really distinct? Could a person see God’s message on display? Can people see Christ in me?”

(3) It challenges us to be faithful in the support of worship, both in attendance, labor, and finances.

These are very simple—but life-changing—principles from chapter 10.

Let us stand for closing invitation

These people were fully committed. They signed on the dotted line. They put it into writing. They committed their families.

First, to be doers of the Word – not just in public but in private

Second, deal with integrity in all their practices – no shady deals – no under-the-table stuff, but by the Book of God

Third, treat God’s temple, God’s way with an obedient heart – attendance, service, giving. Is it out of love for God and is it faithful?

Are you fully committed?

When Jesus came to this earth – when He went to the Cross – Jesus was fully committed.

When He was bruised for our iniquities – when His blood was shed for our sins – when He died – He was fully committed.

He was buried and rose again. Now He invites all men to come to Him for salvation. He is fully committed to reconciling men to God.

Have you been reconciled to God? Will you believe upon Jesus Christ this morning?