

NEHEMIAH

Loving Our City

PRAYER & PLANNING

Main Characters

King Artaxerxes

- From the line of Cyrus the Great
- Greeks didn't think much of his economic model
- Battled for control of the western frontier with Greeks
- Reigned 40 years

Cupbearer to the King

Nehemiah's tenuous job:

- Get _____ before the king did
- Job for the trusted, expendable exile

Character of a Leader

• *Prayed for three or four months*

- It is not enough to be praying in the center of God's will
- Sometimes, it also takes perseverance

Opening Scene

Can't Hold Back Anymore

"IN THE MONTH OF NISAN IN THE TWENTIETH YEAR OF KING ARTAXERXES, WHEN WINE WAS BROUGHT FOR HIM, I TOOK THE WINE AND GAVE IT TO THE KING. I HAD NOT BEEN SAD IN HIS PRESENCE BEFORE;"

- Must be _____ in the presence of the king!

Nehemiah's Fear

"so the king asked me, "Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart."

- Broken hearted for his City he has never seen.

"I was very much afraid,"

- Should not be sad in service of the king!
- Rarely are there do-overs in leadership

The Explanation

"but I said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my fathers are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?"

- "It isn't You!"
- It is your _____ policies

Tension Builds

What do You Want?

4 THE KING SAID TO ME, "WHAT IS IT YOU WANT?"

- Nehemiah finds himself talking to the one person that can change the situation.

When All Else Fails

“Then I prayed to the God of heaven,”

- He prayed for four _____
- Then prayed again

“Pray Continually” 1 Thessalonians 5:17

Unbelievable Request

“and I answered the king, “If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it.”

- Please reverse _____

•

Decision Time

Response?

“Then the king, with the queen sitting beside him, asked me, “How long will your journey take, and when will you get back?” It pleased the king to send me; so I set a time.”

The Payoff

“I also said to him, “If it pleases the king, may I have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide me safe-conduct until I arrive in Judah? 8 And may I have a letter to Asaph, keeper of the king's forest, so he will give me timber to make beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence I will occupy?” And because the gracious hand of my God was upon me, the king granted my requests.”

- 12-year leave
- 4-month journey
- Mayor of Jerusalem
- People, lumber, resources
- Rebuild defenses
- Repair Temple
- Rebuild my house
- Letter of safe passage

Prayer & Planning

- Some Pray but don't Plan
- Some Plan but don't Pray
- We need to learn the other skill
- Teamwork usually brings both together

Conflict Begins

Taking Over

“So I went to the governors of Trans-Euphrates and gave them the king's letters. The king had also sent army officers and cavalry with me.”

- Not everyone was happy to see him . . .

“When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.”

- Sanballat: Jewish Governor
- Tobiah: Neighboring Gentile Official
- Not everyone is happy with progress:
 - Not their version of progress
 - Not their idea
 - Sometimes, progress for everyone is not beneficial to those that used to be in charge.

Learn to Pray Big