

Powerful services and great crowds in all four services! Be blessed and favored.

Love y'all!

Pastor Heard

Part 15 – Feel the Passion!

Texts:

Ecclesiastes 9:7 (The Message) - "Seize life!"

Hebrews 4:14-16 (KJV) - "Seeing then that we have a great high priest, that is passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, let us hold fast our profession. [15] For we have not an high priest which cannot be touched with the feeling of our infirmities; but was in all points tempted like as we are, yet without sin. [16] Let us therefore come boldly unto the throne of grace, that we may obtain mercy, and find grace to help in time of need."

Nehemiah 1:5-11 (NKJV) - "And I said: 'I pray, Lord God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments, [6] please let Your ear be attentive and Your eyes open, that You may hear the prayer of Your servant which I pray before You now, day and night, for the children of Israel Your servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel which we have sinned against You. Both my father's house and I have sinned. [7] We have acted very corruptly against You, and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. [8] Remember, I pray, the word that You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations; [9] but if you return to Me, and keep My commandments and do them, though some of you were cast out to the farthest part of the heavens, yet I will gather them from there, and bring them to the place which I

have chosen as a dwelling for My name.' [10] Now these are Your servants and Your people, whom You have redeemed by Your great power, and by Your strong hand. [11] O Lord, I pray, please let Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant, and to the prayer of Your servants who desire to fear Your name; and let Your servant prosper this day, I pray, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.' For I was the king's cupbearer."

- A. I have an important Word to deliver today! I want to do it quickly so I want you to listen intently!
1. **Joke:** A pastor, known for his lengthy sermons, noticed a man get up and leave during the middle of his message. The man returned just before the conclusion of the service. Afterward, the pastor asked the man where he had gone.
"I went to get a haircut," was the reply.
"But," said the pastor, "why didn't you do that before the service?"
"Because," the gentleman said, "I didn't need one then."
- B. In the book of Nehemiah, Jerusalem was in ruins because of the sins of Israel.
1. In verses 5-10 of our text, Nehemiah prays for God's forgiveness and favor for his nation.
 2. Then in verse 11, he prays for God to help him do something about the situation. It's one thing to see a need, and another to do something about it. Nehemiah volunteered himself to be used by God to fix Jerusalem's plight.

Part 12 - Incredible Keys to Incredible Breakthroughs!

- C. We have been talking about living the abundant life Jesus came to give us.

1. The secret is to not only do your best with what you have, but to draw from God's supernatural resources that were intended especially for you.
2. **John 10:10 (NKJV)** - "The thief does not come except to steal, and to kill, and to destroy. I have come that they may have life, and that they may have it more abundantly."
3. Jesus came to enable us to continue living at new, higher levels that could never be attained without His help.
4. In this series, I've been talking about how to reach that 'next' level.

D. **Key No.12:** Nehemiah moved God by providing EXTRAORDINARY LEADERSHIP in a time of great need.

1. Whether we realize it or not, each and every one of us is a leader of some kind. You may or may not lead a business or an organization, but you are leading someone.
2. You may think that you're only leading a small family as the mother, father, or grandparent. But those are some of the most important leadership roles that exist today!
3. Perhaps you are a teacher or a coach, or someone's friend. If so, then you are a leader.
4. History remembers its great leaders. If I mentioned names like George Washington, Mahatma Gandhi, Winston Churchill, or Martin Luther King Jr., every one of you would immediately know who I'm talking about.
5. At almost every level, our world suffers a dearth of good leaders. In government, the corporate world, and every other level, it seems that the people in charge care only for themselves, rather than those whom they should be leading.
6. A few years back, it was hard to believe that our government would bail out several gigantic corporations that had made bad decisions based on greed—which almost destroyed the entire economy. Then, after almost sinking our nation, what did many of those corporate executives do? They

awarded themselves millions of dollars in bonuses. I wanted to go postal on somebody! Many of our church families lost their jobs, their homes, and were forced to struggle . . . but were our tax dollars used to bail them out???

E. Nehemiah became one of the great leaders of the Bible.

1. How amazing that a foreign slave under a pagan king could rise to such prominence! Talk about taking the ball behind your own goal line!
2. In the Hebrew Bible, the books of Ezra and Nehemiah are one, since they are part of the same story. In fact, the books of Ezra, Nehemiah, and Esther originated in the same general time period of Israel's history.
3. However, they appear in our English Bible in the reverse chronological order.
 - a. Esther's story was actually first, when God began to end Israel's captivity and restore the nation to their land.
 - b. She became queen soon after the halfway mark of the 70 years Jeremiah had predicted the Jews would be in captivity.
 - c. God promoted Esther, a young Jewish maiden, as queen of the Persian realm. Her husband, King Ahasuerus of Persia, was the Artaxerxes in the opening chapters of Nehemiah.
4. This heathen king gave the command for Nehemiah to return to Jerusalem to rebuild the city walls.
5. Perhaps this accounts for a very interesting parenthesis in chapter 2, verse 6, when Nehemiah went to the king: "And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him)." That queen, I believe, was Queen Esther, the Jewish maiden who had been elevated to this prominent position by the grace of God.

F. Neither Artaxerxes nor Ahasuerus are this king's name.

1. What makes the story so confusing is that these are only titles. "Artaxerxes" means *the great king*, and "Ahasuerus" means *the venerable father*. Neither was the king's given name.
2. It may or may not be helpful to know that "Artaxerxes" and "Ahasuerus" are also Darius the Mede in the book of Daniel. And to add to the confusion, Artaxerxes in the book of Nehemiah is not the same Artaxerxes in the book of Ezra. Now, have I thoroughly confused you?
3. At any rate, in the history of Israel, Esther—an instrument of God's grace—was promoted to the throne of Persia. She so moved the heart of her husband, he allowed Nehemiah, his cupbearer, to return to Jerusalem. Nehemiah was the one who began to rebuild the city of Jerusalem.
4. As recorded about 25 years later in the book of Ezra, Zerubbabel returned with about 50,000 captives from Babylon.

G. In scripture, God reversed the chronological order of Esther, Nehemiah, and Ezra to Ezra, Nehemiah and Esther.

1. Scripture is never concerned merely with chronology. Its purpose is to emphasize the teaching of each book.
2. These three books tell the story of Israel leaving captivity and their return to God.
3. The book of Ezra begins with re-building the temple. Restoring the house of God is always foremost in returning to God.
4. Next was the building of the walls. The book of Nehemiah emphasizes the importance of security and strength.
5. Finally, the book of Esther reveals the purpose of every individual's life, and a brief survey of the three books.

H. The book of Nehemiah has two divisions:

1. The first six chapters cover the reconstruction of the wall, while chapters 7 through 13 emphasize the re-establishing of the people.

2. What does a wall symbolize? One of the most famous landmarks in the world today is the Berlin wall, which divided the city in two parts.
3. Ordinarily, a wall symbolizes strength and protection. The only true means of defense in ancient cities were the walls.
4. Many of these walls were tremendously high and thick. As recorded in the book of Daniel, the walls of the city of Babylon were 380 feet thick and over 100 feet high -- massive, tremendous walls! This is why Babylon considered its people to be very safe.
5. Nehemiah was sent to rebuild the walls or defenses of Jerusalem, which is a type of God's church.
6. In spite of great opposition and a strong campaign to smear his name, Nehemiah was very successful because he didn't try to do the work alone.
7. One of life's most important lessons is that the greater your destiny or assignment, the more you will need the help of others to achieve your goal!

I. Even the greatest and most significant causes in the world will suffer and falter if good leadership is absent.

1. Hospitals, such as the network of Veterans' Hospitals, provide extremely invaluable services. But as we have tragically learned, regardless of the help they provide, people who should have lived will die if there is poor leadership!
2. No greater cause or entity exists than the church. While hospitals may help people live longer, they will still someday die. However, the church not only helps people live, but prepares them to live for all eternity. We have been sent to continue Christ's work; but if there is poor leadership, even **His** mission will suffer.
3. Where there is poor leadership, children will not be excited about church—or even about knowing God. Teachers and classrooms that are disorganized will ultimately hinder the cause of Christ.

4. Ministries that have no passion or are not structured to bless and inspire people are hindering the greatest cause on earth. Where there is no vision or where egos hinder, people perish.
5. When ministers of music are inadequate, worship will no longer be fresh, vibrant or in cutting edge with the Spirit. We need songs and music that will minister to the heart and soul of those who are living right now!
6. Preaching of the Word that comes from inadequate leadership lacks a **now** word for the congregation. It must be delivered with the passion of Christ or listeners will fail to be impacted. We need a relevant word—for right now!
7. People often misquote the Genesis story by saying that God “walked with Adam in the cool of the day.” That is not correct. It was His VOICE that walked with Adam. His voice continually moves; it's not the same as it was 30 years ago!
8. I need a current word, a **now** word! I need to hear a message that relates with problems and difficulties in 2014; not one that was applicable 50 years ago!