

Unbelievable services today. God is awesome!

Love y'all,

Pastor Heard

Part 16 – 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 2:1-6 (NKJV) - "And it came to pass in the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, that I took the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had never been sad in his presence before. [2] Therefore the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, since you are not sick? This is nothing but sorrow of heart." So I became dreadfully afraid, [3] and said to the king, "May the king live forever! Why should my face not be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' tombs, lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire?" [4] Then the king said to me, "What do you request?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. [5] And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, I ask that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' tombs, that I may rebuild it." [6] Then the king said to me (the queen also sitting beside him), "How long will your journey be? And when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me; and I set him a time."

Key No. 12 (Part 2) - Incredible Keys to Incredible Breakthroughs!

- A. Have you noticed all the movies about super heroes in the last several years?
1. Movies, such as, Transformers, Batman, Spider-Man, Hercules, Thor, the Incredible Hulk, Fantastic Four, and Captain America are not a new phenomenon. Whenever our nation is in trouble, people become fascinated by the idea of someone with special abilities coming beside us to stem the tide of evil and darkness and save the day!
 2. The helpers they are actually hoping for are **us**—the church! The God of all creation who dwells in our hearts has entrusted us with super powers.
 3. Unfortunately, like the world, the church has also been subjected to wrong ideas. Many believe that church membership is only useful on Sundays and its primary benefits are having someone to marry your kids, dedicate your children or grandchildren and bury you when you die. On the other six days of the week you can do as you please.
 4. The problem is, we have forgotten who we really are . . . the sons of God. Having the Creator of heaven and earth live within makes us powerful! He has given us access to powers and resources that are unavailable to those who don't know Him.
- B. We have been teaching about the abundant life Jesus spoke about and how to live it.
1. The secret is not just doing your best with what you have, but to draw from the supernatural resources God intended you to have.
 2. **John 10:7-10 (NKJV)** - "Then Jesus said to them again, "Most assuredly, I say to you, I am the door of the sheep. [8] All who ever came before Me are thieves and robbers, but the sheep did not hear them. [9] I am the door. If anyone enters by Me, he will be saved, and will go in and

out and find pasture. [10] 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 live at a level we could never attain without His assistance. He is the door to **more!**
4. This series is about moving to that next level. But it can only occur when our passion moves the High Priest to act on behalf of our situation or circumstance. All that moves Him is passion!
5. We have spoken about actions of ordinary people which have moved God to do extraordinary things:
 - a. Abraham moved God with his extraordinary sacrifice.
 - b. Hannah moved God with her extraordinary prayer.
 - c. Paul and Silas moved God with their extraordinary worship.
6. Today, let's think about Nehemiah's extraordinary leadership that moved the king.

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

1. Whether we realize it or not, each one of us is a leader in some form. You may or may not be the leader of a business or organization, but you are leading **someone**, whether it's your family, a co-worker, friend or neighbor.
2. The problems of our times are so serious and pronounced, interest has dramatically escalated in superheroes. But what humanity is really longing for is what the church should be providing. Sadly, as stated before, we don't realize who we actually are!
3. True leaders will pay a price to lead. Of course, the idea of sacrificial service is not at all popular today. People are more concerned about the benefits **I** will receive than what I must give. They even expect to lose weight without exercise or changing their eating habits. Where is that

- "Krispy Kreme" diet? TV commercials even promise a "six pack" in only three minutes a day. What a joke!
4. In practically every area of society, problems will never be solved without good leadership—from City Hall to the State Capitol, Congress, the Oval Office, Fortune 500 Companies, Wall Street and the Federal Reserve. And that's equally true in business, banking, education, and labor unions. Sadly, as noted on the reality show, "Preachers of LA," even church leadership and ministries have been affected. It seems that nearly every leader has forgotten their true calling and thinks only of themselves.
 5. **Joke:** Did you hear about the "Cosmetic Solution" to losing weight? Since we all have trouble in this area, this is how one lady shared her creative solution for weight loss with a friend: "I've found a lipstick that can really help you lose weight. It's called superglue!"
 6. More than helping his people rebuild their city, Nehemiah rebuilt the identity of a downtrodden, defeated nation by reminding that they were the people of God. By making his life count, Nehemiah became one of the greatest and most successful leaders in the Bible.

D. Let's examine the context of Nehemiah's story.

1. The Babylonians, led by Nebuchadnezzar, had besieged Jerusalem and destroyed the city and the temple.
2. The Babylonian strategy was to execute the educated and allow only the poor and impoverished to remain, much like Pol Pot and the Khmer Rouge did in Cambodia. By killing everyone who may be a potential threat, they sought to prevent a future uprising of those who could think strategically.
3. Children of the educated and the nobility were carried away to be trained as future leaders of the Babylonian empire.
4. People from other defeated nations were also relocated and encouraged to intermarry with Jewish survivors. The purpose was to dilute the

national identity of the Hebrew race and further reduce the possibility of a rebellion.

5. Nehemiah, Ezra, Esther, Mordecai, Daniel and his three Hebrew friends were among the children of the executed nobility. By transporting them to Babylon, they were expected to learn the new culture and provide leadership for the rapidly expanding Babylonian Empire.
 6. In this story, Esther was married to the king. Daniel and his three Hebrews friends were now administrative officials in the empire.
 7. Nehemiah, the cupbearer to the king, wasn't a wine steward who tasted the wines. More like a human guinea pig, he took the first sip to see if the wine had been poisoned . . . certainly not the greatest job in the world!
 8. While we may intensely dislike our situation in life, hate our job and wish we were someone else, God is still coordinating and positioning all the puzzle pieces of our lives to connect at just the right time.
- E. Even though Nehemiah was only a child when carried away, hearing the news of the devastation and destruction in Jerusalem stirred his emotions—just as it was time to serve wine to the king.
1. Showing emotion in the presence of the king was strictly forbidden. Since his concerns about important matters and affairs of the state affected thousands of lives, their ruler was never to be distracted.
 2. Noticing his cup-bearer's sadness, the king asked what the problem was. This terrified Nehemiah, knowing he could be executed on the spot.
 3. Squaring his shoulders, he explained to the king the reason for his sorrow. The city of Jerusalem was in ruins and the temple had been destroyed.
 4. The king, who was married to Esther, replied, "Oh yeah, my wife and I were just talking about that the other night. What can I do to help?" Because of his love for Esther, instead of calling for Nehemiah's execution, he offered to help fix the problem.

5. Had God not promoted Esther to be queen, Nehemiah would probably have died that day!
6. Overnight, God elevated the man with one of the worst jobs in the world to become one of the greatest Old Testament leaders!
7. Don't count yourself out or begin complaining about your situation. God may be in the middle of doing a special work in your life, just as He was for Nehemiah.

F. Nehemiah was successful in doing things right for a number of reasons. These same principles will work in your business, ministry, marriage, or any area where God has called you to lead.

1. As our text suggests, by making himself available to God, Nehemiah became involved in something far bigger than himself.
2. From my own life experience, I should never have occupied this pulpit.
 - a. People look at C.T. and the nineteen daughter churches that have been launched in the greater Houston area—plus many overseas ministries—and ask how we did it.
 - b. This level was attained simply by making myself available years ago. Certainly not the most gifted or talented, my ministry began by teaching Bible studies in homes from a set of charts and a teacher manual.
 - c. I won so many people to Christ, other churches began asking me to come and teach their people to do the same. Before I knew what was happening, I was in full-time ministry.
3. God asked Moses, "What is in your hand?" Though nothing more than an ordinary shepherd's staff, that insignificant object, yielded to God, accomplished great things.
4. In Matthew 15:34-38, Jesus fed 4,000 with seven loaves and a few fish. But in Matthew 14:13-21, He fed 5,000 with only five loaves and two fish.

Did you notice that more were fed with a smaller amount of food? What made the difference? It was the breaking process in the Master's hands!

5. Nehemiah saw potential and opportunity in Jerusalem where others only saw destruction and ruin.
 - a. **Nehemiah 2:13-15 (NKJV)** - "And I went out by night through the Valley Gate to the Serpent Well and the Refuse Gate, and viewed the walls of Jerusalem which were broken down and its gates which were burned with fire. [14] Then I went on to the Fountain Gate and to the King's Pool, but there was no room for the animal under me to pass. [15] So I went up in the night by the valley, and viewed the wall; then I turned back and entered by the Valley Gate, and so returned."
 - b. Anyone can spot a problem. What will determine your promotion is being able to see solutions where others only see difficulty.
 - c. We would never have heard David's story if there hadn't been a problem named Goliath.
 - d. When Nehemiah arrived in Jerusalem, the destruction he viewed was much worse than the reports he had heard. Yet, he still saw great potential for the city.
6. Vision can inspire others to follow.
 - a. **Nehemiah 2:17 (NKJV)** - "Then I said to them, "You see the distress that we are in, how Jerusalem lies waste, and its gates are burned with fire. Come and let us build the wall of Jerusalem, that we may no longer be a reproach."
 - b. To build his team, Nehemiah had to use the impoverished people who remained in the land. This should be the mission of the church. Accept people as they are—and where they are, and then allow God to transform them into His champions!
 - c. Through the years, Christian Tabernacle has practiced this concept. All are invited to become part of the dream God has given us,

because it's bigger than we could ever imagine. In this congregation, every one of you matters!

G. **You** were meant to be a TRANSFORMER . . . a SUPER HERO! Because you are a child of God and He lives in your heart, you have been given special powers!

1. Like Nehemiah, let's fix problems rather than complaining about them.
2. Let's make ourselves available to God by saying, "Send me!"
3. Where others see problems, let's look for potential.
4. Our vision must be so big that others will want to follow us!