

Nehemiah 13:1-31, “The Story was not Supposed to End this Way!”

Introduction: All is not right in the land...

Outline:

- 13:4-9, Compromise (with the world)
- 13:10-14, Carelessness (neglect the Levites)
- 13:15-22, Commercialism (abusing the Sabbath)
- 13:23-31, Cohabitation (marrying unbelievers)

How to handle sin in a congregation:

- Gal. 6:1, “*If anyone is caught in any transgression, you who are spiritual should restore him in a spirit of gentleness. Keep watch on yourself, lest you too be tempted...*”
- Yet what about 1 Cor. 5:5? “*Deliver this man to Satan for the destruction of the flesh, so that his spirit may be saved in the day of the Lord.*” (A more ruthless approach?)
- Motto of the Reformation Church: *Semper Reformanda* – “Always Reforming.”

13:1-3, Following Mosaic law they are to exclude all the foreigners from the restoration community. What about the story of Ruth?

1. Israelites did not enforce the law regarding Ruth.
2. The use of the Hebrew *masculine* noun (only *males* were excluded).
3. *Unbelieving* immigrants from these nations were denied full rights. (Ruth believed!)

Conclusion: Six truths about Ezra-Nehemiah (*Nelson*)

1. Sin starts small but it grows quickly.
2. As the leaders fall into sin, so the people.
3. Sinful times demands strong men & women that are not afraid to take their stand.
4. Standing against sin has future rewards; but the rewards may not be today.
5. Sin mutates from one generation to the next.
6. The Law cannot remedy sin.