“Rebuild – Rise from the Rubble – Avoiding Division”

*(Nehemiah 5:1-12)*

So far in the series we have learnt…

* Nehemiah was a person of great character and compassion
* Nehemiah was a man of great COURAGE
* He was a man with a VISION who was on MISSION
* How Nehemiah handled OPPOSITION…

DISTRACTION & DISCOURAGEMENT are powerful tools of the enemy

His favourite weapon of all – DIVISION – INTERNAL OPPOSITION…

*About this time some of the men and their wives raised a* ***cry of protest against their fellow Jews****.*

 *2They were saying, “We have such large families. We need more food to survive.”*

**Hard times create NEED**

*3Others said, “We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and homes to get food during the famine.”*

*4And others said, “We have had to borrow money on our fields and vineyards to pay our taxes.*

Verse 5 helps us understand the CAUSE of the CONFLICT!

 *5We belong to the same family as those who are wealthy, and our children are just like theirs. Yet we must sell our children into slavery just to get enough money to live. We have already sold some of our daughters, and we are helpless to do anything about it, for our fields and vineyards are already mortgaged to others.”*

Hard times had created a NEED, but…

**Hard hearts create GREED**

*Neh. 5:6 When I heard their complaints, I was very angry.*

**DIVISION creates a Holy discontent!**

*Nehemiah was not a politician who asked, “What is popular?” or a diplomat who asked, “What is safe?” but a true leader who asked, “What is right?” - Wiersbe*

 *7After thinking it over, I spoke out against these nobles and officials. I told them, “You are hurting your own relatives by charging interest when they borrow money!” Then I called a public meeting to deal with the problem.*

**DIVISION must be dealt with!**

*8At the meeting I said to them, “We are doing all we can to redeem our Jewish relatives who have had to sell themselves to pagan foreigners, but you are selling them back into slavery again. How often must we redeem them?” And they had nothing to say in their defense.*

*9Then I pressed further, “What you are doing is not right! Should you not walk in the fear of our God in order to* ***avoid being mocked by enemy nations****? 10I myself, as well as my brothers and my workers, have been lending the people money and grain, but now* ***let us stop this business of charging interest****. 11You must restore their fields, vineyards, olive groves, and homes to them this very day. And repay the interest you charged when you lent them money, grain, new wine, and olive oil.”*

*12They replied, “We will give back everything and demand nothing more from the people. We will do as you say.” Then I called the priests and made the nobles and officials swear to do what they had promised.*

**DEALING with DIVISION leads to restoration and healing!**