

Servant to The King: "The Prepared Servant & the Hand of Providence" (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

Pastor Stephen Schultze

Sunday, January 4, 2009

Introduction:

A Sovereign King & a Servant's Responsibility

In Nehemiah we find a wonderful example of the sovereignty of God and the responsibility of God's servant. When an understanding of the providential hand of God is properly expressed in the lives of God's servants, much good is done in which God gets the glory and God's servants experience great joy in participating in God's work.



In the man Nehemiah we find the attitude and aptitude of the servant of the sovereign King of Kings:

I. The Attitude of the Sovereign King's Servant

A. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates patience, not inactivity. (1:1; 2:1)

The hardest thing is that most of us are called to exercise our patience, not in the sickbed but in the street."

To wait is hard, to do it with "good courage" is harder!
(George Matheson)

B. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates courage, not presumption. (2:1-2)

- Nehemiah had several reasons to be afraid:
 - The momentous implications of his behavior.
 - The massive dimensions of his request.
 - The monumental responsibility of the task.
- God does NOT SERVE US and our agenda, WE SERVE HIM at his good pleasure.

Courageous men and women of God step out into dangerous ground because they believe the unseen hand of providence is able to overcome the insurmountable odds, to protect them from unforeseen dangers and to put to silence the objections of their critics.

C. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates prayerfulness, not self-reliance. (2:4)

- *Scripture: Hebrews 4:16*

"Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message, oppose our arguments, despise our persons -- but they are helpless against our prayers."

(J. Sidlow Baxter)

D. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates gratefulness, not pride. (2:8)

- Paul's Example (*Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 15:10*)

- God loves to work through His people to accomplish His plan. (*Isaiah 52:7*)

II. The Aptitude of the Sovereign King's Servant

A. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates discretion, not manipulation. (2:3-7)

- Manipulation attempts to take in hand what only God can do.
- *Scriptures: Proverbs 2:11; 3:21-22; 11:22; 25:11*

B. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates preparedness, not randomness. (2:5-8)

- Faith is no excuse for lack of preparation or inactivity.
- Planning does not rule out faith. A prepared servant PRAYERFULLY PLANS in FAITH and PRAYERFULLY WALKS by FAITH.
- *Scripture: Psalms 33:11*

"Yet another way of working is to begin with God;
to ask His plans, and to offer ourselves to Him to carry out His purposes."

(Hudson Taylor, Missionary to China)

Conclusion:

*The hero does not set out to be one.
He is probably more surprised than others by such recognition.
He was there when the crisis occurred...
and he responded as he always had in any situation.
He was simply doing what had to be done!
Faithful where he was in his duty there...
he was ready when the crisis arose.
Being where he was supposed to be...
doing what he was supposed to do...
responding as was his custom...
to circumstances as they developed...
devoted to duty- he did the heroic!*

(Richard C. Halverson, "Perspective," October 26, 1977)

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In the man Nehemiah we find the attitude and aptitude of the servant of the sovereign King of Kings:

I. The _____ of the Sovereign King's Servant

- A. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates _____, not _____.
(1:1; 2:1)

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not in the sickbed but in the street."
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- B. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates _____, not _____.
(2:1-2)

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- God does NOT _____ and our grand plan, WE _____ at his good pleasure.

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- C. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates _____, not _____.
(2:4)

- Scripture: Hebrews 4:16

*"Men may spurn our appeals, reject our message,
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- D. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates _____, not _____.**
(2:8)
- Paul's Example (*Galatians 2:20; 1 Corinthians 15:10*)
 - God loves to work through His _____ to accomplish His _____. (*Isaiah 52:7*)

II. The _____ of the Sovereign King's Servant

- A. The Sovereign King's Servant demonstrates _____, not _____.**
(2:3-7)
- Manipulation attempts to take in hand what only _____.
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- Faith is no excuse for lack of _____ or _____.
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