the TAKE HOME 05.01.16

Today's Scripture Passage: Nehemiah 5:1-19 page 345 Pew Bible

Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their fellow Jews.
2 Some were saying, "We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in
order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain." 3 Others were saying,
"We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain
during the famine."
4 Still others were saying, "We have had to borrow money to pay the king's
tax on our fields and vineyards. 5 Although we are of the same flesh and
blood as our fellow Jews and though our children are as good as theirs, yet
we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our
daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our
fields and our vineyards belong to others." 6 When I heard their outcry and
these charges, I was very angry. 7 I pondered them in my mind and then
accused the nobles and officials. I told them, "You are charging your own
people interest!" So I called together a large meeting to deal with them 8 and
said: "As far as possible, we have bought back our fellow Jews who were
sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your own people, only for them to
be sold back to us!" They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.
9 So I continued, "What you are doing is not right. Shouldn't you walk in the
fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies? 10 I and my
brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. But let
us stop charging interest! 11 Give back to them immediately their fields,
vineyards, olive groves and houses, and also the interest you are charging
them—one percent of the money, grain, new wine and olive oil." 12 "We will
give it back," they said. "And we will not demand anything more from them.
We will do as you say." Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles
and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. 13 I also shook out
the folds of my robe and said, "In this way may God shake out of their house
and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may such a
person be shaken out and emptied!" At this the whole assembly said,
"Amen," and praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.
14 Moreover, from the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when I was
appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, until his thirty-second
year—twelve years—neither I nor my brothers ate the food allotted to the
governor. 15 But the earlier governors—those preceding me—placed a
heavy burden on the people and took forty shekels[a] of silver from them in
addition to food and wine. Their assistants also lorded it over the people.
But out of reverence for God I did not act like that. 16 Instead, I devoted
myself to the work on this wall. All my men were assembled there for the
work; we[b] did not acquire any land. 17 Furthermore, a hundred and fifty
Jews and officials ate at my table, as well as those who came to us from the
surrounding nations. 18 Each day one ox, six choice sheep and some poultry
were prepared for me, and every ten days an abundant supply of wine of all
kinds. In spite of all this, I never demanded the food allotted to the governor,
because the demands were heavy on these people. 19 Remember me with
favor, my God, for all I have done for these people.

Our Fallen Condition: We are a church family but sometimes we do not act like it. We treat one another poorly and we often do so in quiet and clever ways. We don't always even know we are doing anything wrong.

The Big Idea of Today's Scripture: God calls us to treat one another right.

When we don't treat one another right…

- It is a matter of life and death v.2
- People feel enslaved v.5
- People feel powerless v.5
- God gets very angry v.6
- It stops God's rebuilding projects v.7
- It doesn't make sense v.8

Treating One Another Right…

- Recognize what you are doing is not right v.9
  - Am I walking in the fear of the Lord with this person?
  - If unbelievers see what I am doing will it bring reproach to God's name?
  - Is this playing into the hands of the enemy?
- Stop doing it v.10
- Give back v.11
- Make it public v.12
- Follow through v.13-16
- Leave things in God's hands v. 19