



## RE:BUILDING

### White Hot

Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026

Nehemiah 5:1-8

1

You are the product of God's workmanship to do good things. Paul said so in **Ephesians 2:10**,

For we are his workmanship, created in Christ Jesus for good works, which God prepared beforehand, that we should walk in them.

2

There are good works that you should be walking in. **Has your calling made you deaf and blind to the outcries of the hopeless in our society?**

3

We all know Nehemiah's vision, but that was never going to be played out in a vacuum, and neither is yours. Jesus said this to His disciples in **Matthew 10:16**,

Behold, I am sending you out as sheep in the midst of wolves, so be wise as serpents and innocent as doves.

4

So let us return to **Nehemiah 5:1-2**,

Now there arose a great outcry of the people and of their wives against their Jewish brothers. <sup>2</sup> For there were those who said, "With our sons and our daughters, we are many. So let us get grain, that we may eat and keep alive."

5

There was clearly a famine, and families were having to use every resource just to stay alive. It goes on in **verses 3-4**,

There were also those who said, "We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards, and our houses to get grain because of the famine." <sup>4</sup> And there were those who said, "We have borrowed money for the king's tax on our fields and our vineyards."

6

But it gets worse, in **verse 5**,

Now our flesh is as the flesh of our brothers, our children are as their children. Yet we are forcing our sons and our daughters to be slaves, and some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but it is not in our power to help it, for other men have our fields and our vineyards."

7

Debt, slavery, unbearable economic policies. Our world is little different. So how did Nehemiah react. It says in **5:6**,

I was very angry when I heard their outcry and these words.

What's your reaction to the wrongs in God's world?

8

**Option 1** – we excuse ourselves. “It's not my business to get into.” (I have a different calling).

**Option 2** – we compare. We say, “Oh I've seen this before, it's really bad isn't it? But I know nothing changes”. This is to shrink the sense of what is wrong today and minimise the feeling that something needs doing by thinking about things that are just as bad that have passed by, unchanged.

**Option 3** – we respond directly to what we have seen and heard that is so very wrong.

I am confident you do not need me to explain the first two options. But how did Nehemiah react in a way that changed the outcome people trapped in an economy built on unfairness?

9

Before we look at Nehemiah, come with me to see how Paul presents the Christian mandate in **Ephesians 4:25-28**,

Therefore, having put away falsehood, let each one of you speak the truth with his neighbour, for we are members one of another. <sup>26</sup> Be angry and do not sin; do not let the sun go down on your anger, <sup>27</sup> and give no opportunity to the devil. <sup>28</sup> Let the thief no longer steal, but rather let him labour, doing honest work with his own hands, so that he may have something to share with anyone in need.

10

Paul is saying the **transformation of the gospel first happens IN you, and it then happens OUT OF you**. If your faith does not change the world outside of you, then ask yourself, what exactly has happened in me?

11

Verse 26 is sandwiched between two great guiding Christian principles. In verse 25 – **speak truth to your neighbour. Stop convenient agreement.**

12

And then in verse 28, – **act honestly. Do what should rightly be done.**

13

Then the filling in **verses 26-27** – sin, anger, the devil. Firstly Paul writes,

Be angry and do not sin

14 Get white hot but do not destroy. **A match burns at between 600-800°C. You can light a candle and bring light to a whole room. Or you can set the room on fire.** The difference is not how hot the match is but what it touches. It is not a Christian virtue to avoid being angry, but to be angry and not sin in the process. To feel a white-hot anger at injustice but to touch it with spoken truth and honest actions.

15 Then again in **verse 26**,  
do not let the sun go down on your anger

16 Unattended anger will destroy. It will destroy you and those close to you. The principle is this: **white hot anger must become spoken truth and honest action**  
17 – **TODAY!** Otherwise this will happen (**verse 27**),

and give no opportunity to the devil.

Anger that burns too long will bring opportunity to the devil. And so back to **Nehemiah 5:7a**,

18 I took counsel with myself

This phrase carries the idea of ruling oneself and one's thoughts as a king or queen. Take full responsibility and full control of every thought. It's what Paul later said in **2 Corinthians 10:5**,

19 We destroy arguments and every lofty opinion raised against the knowledge of God, and take every thought captive to obey Christ,

When we see people acting in a way contrary to God, get angry (white hot!) and then capture those angry thoughts and use them to move your mouths and hands and feet – to speak truth and act honestly. And **Nehemiah 5:7b-8** describes it like this,

20 and I brought charges against the nobles and the officials. I said to them, "You are exacting interest, each from his brother." And I held a great assembly against them<sup>8</sup> and said to them, "We, as far as we are able, have bought back our Jewish brothers who have been sold to the nations, but you even sell your brothers that they may be sold to us!" They were silent and could not find a word to say.

Do you wish the cruel injustices of this world and those who create them would be silenced? You know what to do.