

*Keepers of the Gospel*  
*Reflections on Nehemiah*  
**Nehemiah 5.1-13**

As if being surrounded by opponents isn't enough, here Nehemiah learns that there is trouble within the walls too. I encourage you to dig deep into Nehemiah 5 to uncover what is happening and imagine how precarious their project has now become. What happens in chapter 5 could undo all their good work if the people do not respond to this sudden crisis. But don't just zip right through the questions, dig deep into your own heart too.

Pastor Eric

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**Understanding the Passage**

In Nehemiah 5, the threat does not come from outside enemies but from conflict within. What is the nature of these people's outcry? Do you think internal opposition can be more damaging than external opposition?

Nehemiah became "very angry" when he heard the people's outcry. What does righteous anger look like, and how is it different from selfish anger? Nehemiah called the people to restitution, not just apology. Why is repentance incomplete without action?

The illustration of the barbershop quartet emphasized harmony over sameness. What does healthy unity look like in a church without demanding uniformity?

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**The Enemy Within**

The enemy within is the "Imperial Self." In what ways do selfish ambition or personal preferences tend to rise in your own heart?

Read Philippians 2.3-4 again. Which phrase personally challenges you the most? Why?

"Do nothing out of selfish ambition"

"In humility value others above yourselves"

"Do not look to your own interests"

"Look to the interests of others"

Why do you think humility and unity are so difficult to maintain in Christian community? How does that understanding reshape the way we think about humility? What role does the Holy Spirit play in cultivating humility? In general terms, how does the work of the Spirit happen?

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**Christlike Community**

Philippians 2 emphasizes having the same "mindset" as Christ. What do you think Paul meant by mindset rather than mere agreement? "Looking to Jesus leads to looking to the interests of others." How have you seen closeness with Christ increase love and concern for people?

Personal: Is there a relationship, tension, or unresolved conflict in your life where God may be calling you to respond with humility, repentance, gracious acceptance, or reconciliation? Consider praying this prayer: "Lord, reveal where selfish ambition or pride may be disrupting unity in my relationships."

How can we help protect our church community from "opposition within"?