The Crying Cupbearer

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[0:00] Amen. Tonight we're starting a new series through the book of Nehemiah.

! Through his experiences, Nehemiah will show us what to do when we face difficult times. We'll see the tagline a lot as we go through this book, but praying, planning, and persevering are good actions for any believer in any church, and we'll see them as we work through Nehemiah several times.
Tonight we're only going to cover the first four verses of chapter one, along with the last sentence of the chapter. We're going to be introduced to the crying cupbearer, so let's go ahead and read the verses, then we'll work our way through the text.
Nehemiah 1, 1-4 say this, The words of Nehemiah, the son of Hakaliah, It came to pass in the month of Kislev, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan, the citadel, that Hanani, one of my brethren, came with men from Judah, and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.
And they said to me, The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress, and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.
[1:37] So it was when I heard these words that I sat down and wept, and mourned for many days. I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. Now skip to the very end of the chapter and look at the final sentence of verse 11.

Nehemiah says, For I was the king's cupbearer. We're going to break the passage tonight into five sections. First, we're going to see the person.
And we learn about the person at the beginning and the end of the chapter. It's okay to take the verses out of order every once in a while. The beginning of verse 1 says, The words of Nehemiah, the son of Hakaliah.
And in the end of verse 11 that we just read says, For I was the king's cupbearer. Nehemiah's name means, The Lord comforts. We're going to see as we look at this study that Nehemiah is going to need a lot of comforting from the Lord, so it's appropriate that his name does mean, The Lord comforts.
Nothing is known about Nehemiah's childhood, his youth, or his family background, except his father's name, and that he had a brother named Hanani. Nehemiah's occupation, though, gives us an early clue about his character.
[2:57] Verse 11 tells us that Nehemiah was the king's cupbearer, and that job was much more important than it initially sounds. The office of cupbearer came about in ancient societies because of the danger that the emperor or king might be poisoned by some rival.

The cupbearer was a trusted person who was appointed to care for and taste the wine to make sure it was safe before it was served to the king. Besides testing the king's wine, the cupbearer also was responsible for guarding the king's sleeping quarters.
You can tell from those duties that the cupbearer was obviously highly esteemed and trusted to begin with, and you can imagine that as he gets more acquainted with his king, because he has regular and constant access to him, that he is going to acquire influence far beyond that of all but a few military leaders and other nobles.
We can infer from that that high character gave Nehemiah the opportunity to gain the high post of cupbearer to the king, even though he was lowly in society.
He never would have had the opportunity to rise from insignificance to a cupbearer position if he'd been shoddy, lazy, or a good-for-nothing person. So to get this job, he had to be just the opposite.

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[4:16] Life under the Persian king had its advantages for Nehemiah. Much like Joseph, Esther, and Daniel, he'd attained a significant role in the palace, which that palace, of course, then ruled the ancient world.

And in that position, we're going to see God use Nehemiah mightily. So we've looked at the person. Now we're going to look at the place. And we find the place at the end of verse 1.
Nehemiah says, Before we look at the place, let's set the time a little bit.
Kislev corresponds to our November-December time frame. The 20th year refers to the 20th year of the rule of Artaxerxes I Longamanus.
So that's approximately 444 B.C. Artaxerxes was the same Persian king who had commissioned Ezra to return to Jerusalem. And Shushan, the place, was about 150 miles north of the Persian Gulf in present-day Iran.
[5:29] And that city served as a winter residence for the monarchs of Persia. We know from Israel's history that God had promised Israel that if they obeyed him, he would bless them as a nation.

If they disobeyed him, though, he would judge them and cause them to be taken into captivity. Deuteronomy talks about the promises of blessings for obedience and the promises of punishment for disobedience.
For a taste of the disobedience section, just listen to Deuteronomy 28, 45-52. Deuteronomy 28, 45-52 say, Moreover, all these curses shall come upon you and pursue you and overtake you until you are destroyed, because you did not obey the voice of the Lord your God to keep his commandments and his statutes which he commanded you.
And they shall be on you for a sign and a wonder and on your descendants forever. Because you did not serve the Lord your God with joy and gladness of heart for the abundance of everything, therefore you shall serve your enemies whom the Lord will send against you in hunger, in thirst, in nakedness, and in need of everything.
And he will put a yoke of iron on your neck until he has destroyed you. The Lord will bring a nation against you from afar, from the end of the earth, as swift as the eagle flies, a nation whose language you will not understand, a nation of fierce countenance, which does not respect the elderly nor show favor to the young.
[7:02] And they shall eat the increase of your livestock and the produce of your land until you are destroyed. They shall not leave you grain or new wine or oil or the increase of your cattle or the offspring of your flocks until they have destroyed you.

They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land. And they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land, which the Lord your God has given you.
Pay particular attention to that last verse. Here's Deuteronomy 28, 52 again. It says, They shall besiege you at all your gates until your high and fortified walls, in which you trust, come down throughout all your land.
And they shall besiege you at all your gates throughout all your land, which the Lord your God has given you. So we see a warning there for Israel if they trust walls rather than trust God.
And true to God's promise of judgment, he brought the Assyrians and Babylonians to deliver his chastisement on wayward Judah and Israel. In 722 B.C., the Assyrians deported the ten northern tribes and scattered them all throughout the then known world.
[8:21] Several centuries later, from about 605 B.C. to 586 B.C., God used the Babylonians to sack, destroy, and nearly depopulate all of Jerusalem.

And that was because Judah had persisted in her unfaithfulness to the covenant. We know that God chastised his people with 70 years of captivity in Babylon.
We learned about that in Jeremiah. So possibly Nehemiah's great-grandparents were taken into captivity when Jerusalem fell to the Babylonians. Nehemiah himself was probably born in Persia sometime during or soon after Zerubbabel's ministry in Jerusalem.
During the Jews' captivity, the world empire changed hands from the Babylonians to the Persians. And for just some biblical history, we can look at the book of Ezra, I mean, and it begins with the decree of Cyrus, a Persian king, to return God's people to Jerusalem to rebuild God's house.
And it also tells about the reestablishment of Judah's calendar of feasts and sacrifices. Zerubbabel and Joshua led the first return and rebuilt the temple.

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[9:33] And then moving on to Esther, we get a glimpse of the Jews that are left in Persia. And, of course, that was when Haman attempted to eliminate all the Jewish race that was still living in Persia.

Then Ezra 7.10 recounts the second return led by Ezra in 458 B.C. And what we'll see here in Nehemiah is the third return to rebuild the wall around Jerusalem, and that's around 445 B.C.
Here's some more information about the place. And the palace in Shushan is a very famous structure whose ruins are visible today because of some work of the archaeologist.
The place was built by King Darius I, and it was a huge castle. Some translations refer to it as a fortress or a citadel because in ancient times, the king's palaces were always fortified.
It had a great central hall that's reported to be nearly 350 feet long and about 250 feet wide. So it was longer than a football field and nearly twice as wide.
[10:38] And that was just the hall. So this place is famous for several significant biblical events, and they include Daniel's vision in which he saw the ram with the two horns in Daniel chapter 8.

It's also the place for the great feast that Ahasuerus held for all his princes and servants when he was getting ready to find a new queen. And of course, that's what led to Esther becoming queen.
And some events, starting with one that we'll look at tonight in the book of Nehemiah, are recorded from this hall as well. And the one we'll look at tonight is the conversation that Nehemiah has with his brother and some other men from Judah about the conditions in Israel.
So we'll move on to the next section of the lesson now. And in the next section, that is where we're going to learn about the conversation between Nehemiah and the delegation from Judah.
The delegation tells Nehemiah about the predicament, the predicament of the people in Jerusalem.
In verses 2 and 3, Nehemiah says that Hanani, one of my brethren, came with men from Judah, and I asked them concerning the Jews who had escaped, who had survived the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.
[11:59] And they said to me, The survivors who are left from the captivity in the province are there in great distress and reproach. The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down, and its gates are burned with fire.

Hanani was either a real brother, a kinsman, or a fellow Jew. All are possible ways of interpreting the text. But in Nehemiah 7-2, Nehemiah calls him my brother when he appoints them to a high office.
So most people believe that Hanani actually was a real brother of Nehemiah. So you see that Nehemiah asked the delegation about several things.
He asked about the Jews who had escaped. He asked about the Jews who had survived the captivity. And he asked about the city of Jerusalem itself. From the beginning, we see then that Nehemiah's interest was about more than himself or his immediate family.
His vision included God's people, even though they were far away. We need to have that today, too. Christian leaders today must also have a global concern for God's work.
[13:09] We talked earlier about how Jerusalem had been destroyed by the Babylonians in 586 B.C. And during that period since then, several attempts had been made to rebuild the wall, but the city was still in ruins.

And four things are said about the Jews who were living in the land of Israel, which show the bad condition that they faced. These things also show the great reproach that was upon them in Nehemiah's day.
And the four things concern the size, the status, the scorn, and the sadness. So again, those are size, status, scorn, and sadness.
We'll go through each of them one by one in case you missed one of them there. The first one that we'll look at is the size. And the small numerical size of the Jews in Nehemiah's day is the first bad condition.
Centuries earlier, Israel had been a mighty nation with millions in population in the land. Now they're but a remnant in the land. The population was estimated to be as low as 50,000 men in number, and that comes from cross-references in Nehemiah 7, 66, and 67.
[14:32] So the smallness of the Jewish population added to their reproach. The nation, which was once of considerable population, is now embarrassingly small.

It's just a remnant of what it used to be. The main cause of the decreased Jewish population in Israel was sin. Israel had turned to God for many years in their prior history in the land, and then

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they had turned away from him.
And just as how God had warned through Moses, they were facing the consequences of turning away from him. We read from Deuteronomy 28 earlier.
Listen to one more verse from that chapter. In Deuteronomy 28, 62, God said through Moses, You shall be left few in number, whereas you were as the stars of heaven in multitude, because you would not obey the voice of the Lord your God.
So you can see that verse came true for the population that was still living in Jerusalem. So we've talked about their size. Another aspect of their bad condition was their status.
[15:41] And it was their status in their world. In our text, they're called a province. So no longer are they a great and independent nation like what they used to be.

Now they're simply just another of the many provinces of Persia. So think about how humiliating that would be to go from being an independent nation to being just a few people who are now a province of another nation who conquered the people who conquered you.
And of course, we know even today it would be a great reproach to any nation to be so reduced in size that it's only a small part of another nation. During the time of the book of Esther, which was about 40 to 50 years before the time of Nehemiah, Persia had 127 provinces.
That comes from Esther 1-1. So Israel, of course, had once been a strong, independent nation. And now because of the sin we talked about earlier, Israel had been reduced in stature to just one out of 127 provinces for another nation.
The next bad condition of the Jews in Nehemiah's time also involved their being under great reproach. And we could also translate that scorn. So scorn is the third bad condition that we'll look at.
[17:03] Not only were the size of the population and the status of the province a reproach to the Jews, but the scorn from the people around them was also a reproach. Our text says that the reproach was great.

So we can tell from that that it definitely wasn't trivial. The Jews were greatly looked down upon. They were mistreated. They were suppressed. And they were opposed. And we'll see that repeatedly as we go through the book of Nehemiah.
Nehemiah himself will also experience great scorn for trying to help the Jews when he's in the land of Israel. But we know that God's people are habitually scorned by the world.
Someone who dedicates himself to the service and honor of God will, as Nehemiah did, often know much about experiencing scorn in this world. Because those who would promote God's rule and worship, as the remnant in Israel was trying to do, and as Nehemiah would later do, will always be subjected to much scorn from the ungodly.
Think about this, though. It's much better to experience the scorn of the world than the scorn of God. So think about the significance of that last statement. It is better to experience the scorn of the world than the scorn of God.
[18:20] For one thing, the scorn of the world will be a lot shorter than the scorn of God, potentially. The last aspect of the bad condition of the Jews in Nehemiah's time is that they were in great distress.

And this description comes before reproach in our text, but we're going to talk about it last because it talks about the feelings of the Jews regarding all of the bad conditions in Israel. The Hebrew word translated distress in the verses we looked at tonight is also translated sad in Nehemiah 2.1 and 2.2.
So that's why we've said that sadness is the other thing. With great sadness being before the Word and great being before the Word itself, we learn of the great sorrow and distress that the Jews were in because of the conditions that they faced.
They were only a small remnant and they were only a small province of another nation and they were being scorned by those around them. Of course, that would be enough to make anybody to be greatly sad.
As we'll see next, the walls of their revered city were in utter ruin and all of these things had to be very discouraging. So it's easy to see then why Nehemiah said their sadness was great.
[19:37] Nehemiah also is going to be very sad coming up in verse 1.4 when he hears about these bad conditions. Remember how Deuteronomy 28.52 promised that if Israel disobeyed, the walls would come down throughout the land and the gates would be besieged.

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Look again at the end of Nehemiah 1.3. The end of Nehemiah 1.3 says, The wall of Jerusalem is also broken down and its gates are burned with fire.
So once again, something that God said would happen if they disobeyed had come true for them. And the bad condition of the walls of Jerusalem is the bad condition that our text tonight especially notes and emphasizes about the city itself.
The bad condition of the walls really increased the problem of reproach for the Jews in Israel and it symbolized and represented that reproach upon the Jews.
We can say two things about this condition of the walls in Jerusalem. It was a perilous condition and it was a prolonged condition. So it was a perilous condition and a prolonged condition.
[20:53] Let's talk about the perilous condition first. In ancient times, the walls around the city were very important for protection of the city.

The walls had to be very big and substantial structures. Heavy and strong gates also punctuated the walls periodically to allow access into the city and they were generally open during the day but closed at night.
Jerusalem had been well walled until the Babylonians in their defeat of Jerusalem had broken down the walls and left Jerusalem unprotected and virtually destroyed. The remnant that returned to Israel and Jerusalem after the captivity were in great peril living in Jerusalem without walls because without walls they were without protection from the enemy who could easily come into the city at any time and wreak havoc upon the inhabitants.
So the lack of walls was a very serious problem and it became the great project of Nehemiah to remedy this wall problem in Jerusalem by leading the rebuilding effort.
The walls of Jerusalem were broken down many years before the time of our Nehemiah text so that's why we say it's also a prolonged condition. The Babylonian army destroyed the temple and broke down the walls around 586 BC and it's now approximately 150 years after that.
[22:17] Still the walls of Jerusalem had not been repaired and rebuilt. During the 20 years before our Nehemiah text some attempt had been made to repair the walls but opposition thwarted that.

The enemies of the Jews had reported this work on the walls in a complaint to King Artaxerxes and Artaxerxes ordered the rebuilding effort of the city to stop. So this action obviously resulted in destroying whatever work had been accomplished in repairing the walls at that time.
And that's why some people think Nehemiah was so sad when he heard the words because of course they didn't have cell phones and CNN back in that day so the last news Nehemiah might have had was that the walls were being rebuilt and he hadn't heard about the opposition stopping them potentially.
The opposition of the enemy though was not the only reason for the prolonged time that the condition of the walls no longer existed. the people's lack of dedication was also a major problem. Obviously they did face great opposition from the world but it wasn't the major problem that they had in God's work. Their biggest problem generally was their lack of dedication. And we'll see that when Nehemiah actually got a dedicated group together they rebuilt the walls very fast.
[23:38] So Nehemiah is going to accomplish in a few months what they haven't been able to do in 150 years. So people often make an excuse for not doing much for God and they often say that opposition is the reason for that.

And of course we all know that opposition can hinder our work at times but the real problem generally is lack of dedication. So the lesson for us is to commit ourselves wholeheartedly to God's service and when we do that we won't be lacking accomplishments for God's glory regardless of how great the opposition is.
And we'll see as we go through Nehemiah that Nehemiah's life is proof of that truth. So we're going to move to verse 4 now.
We've learned about the person of Nehemiah the place of Nehemiah and the predicament of Nehemiah's people. Next we'll see the passion of Nehemiah.
We read about that passion in verse 4 so here is verse 4 again. Remember that Nehemiah is speaking here. He says, So it was when I heard these words that I sat down and wept and mourned for many days I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven.
[24:57] We get a glimpse of Nehemiah's passion from that verse as we see both his compassion and his persistence. Verse 4 says that he wept, mourned, fasted, and prayed.

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So mourning reveals the great compassion that Nehemiah had for God's people and God's work. True compassion knows about tears and true compassion mourns over the misery of others. Think about Jesus when he was at Lazarus' grave. Even Jesus himself wept when he knew that he was about to raise Lazarus from the dead. The inquiry about the conditions in Israel hinted at Nehemiah's compassion but the wept and mourn reveals clearly his compassion for God's people and work.
The anguish of his heart was associated with prayer and that's not surprising because true compassion will be associated with prayer because true compassion should accompany all our petitions.
Nehemiah mourned about the great reproachful conditions which have come upon the Jews in Jerusalem. These conditions reflected negatively on the honor of God.
[26:12] God's people and God's work were being shamed. Whenever the honor of God is denigrated it should be time to mourn. Mourning about dishonor for God is mourning that's justified.

It's a mark of spirituality. Nehemiah's mourning wasn't a temporary performance done for show and his sorrow wasn't just a passing mood of sympathy.
His mourning was great and genuine. Verse 4 says that Nehemiah mourned for days. Scripture doesn't specify exactly how many days but days is enough to indicate that the mourning was over an extended period of time.
It was real heartfelt mourning and if we compare the dates given in Nehemiah we can conclude that the mourning may have lasted for as much as four months. That's because Nehemiah 1.1 mentions Kislev and Kislev is the ninth month.
Nisan mentioned in 2.1 is the first month. So there's a four month gap between those and if Nehemiah mourned that whole time that's why we can say it could have lasted as long as four months.
[27:22] When you think about Nehemiah's position such grieving mourning over the conditions in Israel surely was unexpected from somebody in the position of Nehemiah.

After all he had a really cushy job and when people are living in good situations themselves and are far removed from the troubles of others it's hard for them to have a great deal of pain in their heart for those who are suffering.
But this also shows how Nehemiah was a man of high character and spirituality because when he was informed about the bad conditions of God's people he was greatly affected even though he was doing really well himself.
We can see from the verse that fasting also accompanied Nehemiah's praying. Fasting generally was done to permit the doing of other things instead of eating.
And of course here in our text Nehemiah prays instead of eats. fasting manifest dedication to a cause and it showed earnestness in whatever somebody did instead of eating.
[28:30] So Nehemiah's fasting showed the high priority he was giving to his praying and it showed the great and genuine earnestness of his concern about the conditions in Israel. I put this quote in your notes.

Fasting speaks of noble self-denial to excel in spiritual matters. Self-denial is hardly known among professing Christians today in our land. Few are willing to deny themselves much of anything in order to be in church every Sunday.
Church members will spend lavishly on themselves but the idea of sacrificing for the work of the Lord at church is foreign theology to them. That's kind of an indictment isn't it on Christians today? It should be a challenge for us to be different than the norm. But according to verse 4 Nehemiah did even more than weep, mourn, and fast.
He also prayed. We've talked about that some already but let's look at it in a little more detail. Prayer was a habit for Nehemiah. We'll see that as we go through the book.
[29:35] In this case at least though Nehemiah prayed for the simple reason that no one but God could accomplish what needed to be accomplished if the walls of the city were going to be rebuilt.

That's an important thing to remember isn't it? When nobody but God can accomplish what needs to be accomplished that's when we need to pray even more. Nehemiah was an important man even before his success in rebuilding the walls.
Many important people are pretty arrogant. They're arrogant with others and even arrogant before God. Think about the man in the temple who thanked God that he wasn't like the other people.

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Nehemiah though didn't show this spirit. He was a man of courage and bold actions. We'll see that later on in the story. But here at the very beginning he humbles himself before God even to the point of tears and fasting.
Nehemiah is not presumptuous but he knows that God can do what Nehemiah asked God to do. Therefore he comes submissively and seriously. Here's a quote from Cyril Barber about why most people skip prayer.
[30:45] It's also in your handout. Cyril Barber said the self sufficient do not pray. They merely talk to themselves. The self satisfied will not pray.

They have no knowledge of their need. The self righteous cannot pray. They have no basis on which to approach God. Consider that quote one more time.
The self sufficient do not pray. They merely talk to themselves. The self satisfied will not pray. They have no knowledge of their need. The self righteous cannot pray.
They have no basis on which to approach God. Unfortunately even we as believers tend to undervalue prayer. It's so secret and so silent that we often overlook it as being unimportant.
But here's a quote from the late J. Edgar Hoover. I bet you didn't think you would hear from J. Edgar Hoover tonight, did you? But J. Edgar Hoover said this. He said, The force of prayer is greater than any possible combination of man-controlled powers because prayer is man's greatest means of tapping the infinite resources of God.
[31:58] Other leaders throughout biblical and secular history have said similar things. Here's a quote from Abraham Lincoln. He said, I have been driven many times to my knees by the overwhelming conviction that I had nowhere else to go.

My own wisdom and that of those about me seemed insufficient for the day. That may be something he learned from Nehemiah because Nehemiah certainly showed those same characteristics.
I told you though that we would have five things about this text and we've already hit the verses that I said we would cover tonight. But we need to look at something else.
In the introduction we discussed about how this book will show us the importance of prayer, planning, and perseverance. We need to look at the verses tonight from one more perspective and we've hinted at that perspective already but let's talk about it directly.
In the first four verses and actually all the way throughout the book of Nehemiah we see the providence of God. The providence of God is that fifth thing that we'll cover tonight.
[33:06] And here's one definition of providence. Providence is the eternal, most free, immutable, wise, just, and good counsel of God according to which he affects all good things in his creatures, permits also evil things to to be done and directs all, both good and evil, to his own glory and the salvation of his people.

The last clause is perhaps the most important part of the definition. That's the one that says, God directs all, both good and evil, to his own glory and the salvation of his people.
Don't you wish sometimes that evil part wasn't part of God's providence? God's God's God's perfect plan. God's perfect plan.
God's perfect plan. God has exhaustive knowledge of the past, present, and future, and he exercises his power to ensure that every event that occurs is part of his perfect plan.
Let that really sink in. Every event that occurs is part of God's perfect plan. So here's something just to think about. How would our view of life change if we could fully master that truth?
[34:24] If we really could fully master that everything that happens is part of God's perfect plan, even though those individual things may not be good in themselves? So let's look at some instances where we see providence in our verses tonight.

We see providence because Nehemiah, a descendant of Jewish captives, is now in a position of influence over King Artaxerxes. Think of all of the circumstances that God had to orchestrate to put Nehemiah in that position.
And here's just one of those circumstances that we haven't yet mentioned. Esther was Artaxerxes' stepmother, and of course we know that Esther was Jewish, and she easily could have influenced Artaxerxes to look favorably upon the Jews, especially Nehemiah.
And Artaxerxes' behavior itself, and that behavior specifically toward Nehemiah and the Jews, is another example of God's providence.
We'll see from Nehemiah that from Nehemiah's perspective, Artaxerxes was very positive toward him, and he treated him very well. But despite the positive portrayal in Nehemiah, history itself, the

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entire scope of history, shows that Artaxerxes was far from just.
[35:41] He killed those who opposed him, including his own older brother, who was the rightful heir to the throne. In the early years of Artaxerxes' reign, the king also suppressed at least two major rebellions, but somehow we see the same rebellion repressing killer move to favorably treat Nehemiah.

Another example of God's providence in our verses tonight is how the news of Jerusalem's condition and the people's predicament affected Nehemiah himself.
The information about the bad conditions of the Jews in Jerusalem changed his entire life and set him on a great work for God. Do you really think that the people who came to talk to Nehemiah that day realized how significant their conversation would become?
That conversation resulted in a great and dramatic work which would be recorded down through the centuries in the word of God. Here's another quote that I put in your handout.
It's a quote from Matthew Henry about the providence of God at work in the events of Nehemiah's time. Matthew Henry said, In the providences of God concerning Nehemiah, we may observe four things to our comfort.
[36:58] One, that when God has work to do, he will never want instruments to do it with. In other words, he will never lack instruments to do it with. Two, that those whom God designs to employ in his service, he will find out proper ways both to fit for it and to call for it.

You probably heard the old saying, God doesn't call the equipped, he equips the called. And that's really what Matthew Henry is saying there. Three, that God has his remnant in all places.
We read of Obadiah in the house of Ahab, saints in Caesar's household, and here, a devout Nehemiah in Shushan, the palace. And four, that God can make the courts of princes, sometimes nurseries, and sometimes sanctuaries to the friends and patrons of the church's cause.
Here's what we can learn from God's providence. We must not discredit nor be discouraged about events and circumstances in our lives which seem at the time to be insignificant.
In God's plan, they may be very important for us. Keep your eyes upon God and his word, and you will perceive to your encouragement his blessed providential leading in even the mundane matters of life.
[38:18] So that's pretty good advice, isn't it? Keep your eyes upon God and his word, and you will perceive to your encouragement his blessed providential leading in even the mundane matters of life.

Remember what we've said several times already. Every event that occurs is part of God's perfect plan. Tonight, we met Nehemiah, and as we go through the rest of the book, we'll see how Nehemiah was a leader.
A leader sees the needs of others and grieves over them. Nehemiah saw the need and wept, and that's why we called him the crying cupbearer. Even more important than that, though, was the fact that Nehemiah prayed.
More important than his friendship with people was his friendship with God. God alone is able to change hearts, move kingdoms, and provide for our many needs.
When we go through change as individuals, and when we go through change as a church, we need to remember that last sentence. God alone is able to change hearts, move kingdoms, and provide for our many needs.
[39:32] After we pray, plan, and persevere, then we should be comforted by God's providence. So next week, we will see Nehemiah's prayer life in action.

He'll go from the crying cupbearer to the praying cupbearer. And verses 5 through 11 have his first recorded prayer. And chapters 2 and beyond will show us how God answered that prayer and other prayers of Nehemiah.
And throughout this study, we'll see that Nehemiah was a living illustration of Psalm 5015. In Psalm 5015, God said this. He said, Call upon me in the day of trouble.
I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me. So we need to pray, we need to plan, and we need to persevere. Then we need to rely on God's providence to show us the results.
Remember what we said. God alone is able to change hearts, move kingdoms, and provide for our many needs, and every event that occurs is part of God's perfect plan.
[40:39] So here's Psalm 5015 one more time. Call upon me in the day of trouble. I will deliver you, and you shall glorify me. Thank you.

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