

Moved or Unmoved? (Nehemiah 1)

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[0 : 0 0] nehemiah chapter one if you can't find it it's right after israel so thank you nehemiah one the words of nehemiah son of hakaliah in the month of kislev in the 20th year while i was in the citadel of susa hanani one of my brothers came from judah with some other men and i questioned them about the jewish remnant that had survived the exile and also about jerusalem they said to me those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace the wall of jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire when i heard these things i sat down and wept for some days i mourned and fasted and prayed before the god of heaven then i said lord the god of heaven the great and awesome god who keeps his command covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants the people of israel i confess the sins we israelites including myself and my father's family have committed against you we have acted very wickedly towards you we have not obeyed the commands decrees and laws you gave your servant moyses remember the instruction you gave your servant moyses saying if you are unfaithful i will scatter you among the nations but if you return to me and obey my commands then even if you are exiled people that are at the farthest horizon i will gather them from there and bring them to the place i have chosen as a dwelling for my name they are your servants and your people whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand lord let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name give your servants success today by grounding him favor in the presence of this man i was cut bearer to the king does anyone want to share something when you kind of share to one another and pray anything do you think um stood out for you anything um stood out for you anything anyone always normally silent julian i won't ask you because you can't speak you lost your voice but i'm sure if you open your heart jesus can still speak to you even though you cannot speak right don't have anything special in your conversations anything stood out josh josh no oh sorry yeah anyone anything anything that stood out no great prayer you want to share yeah sure there's a great prayer great prayer great prayer but how does how does this what is it how does it apply to you i shall follow such well they're very generic guys anyway um i think first six first six um really hits the heart um because at the start of it says um let your ear be attentive and let your eyes be open and sometimes even as um a christian um you sometimes forget um to actually um know that you're serving god you're trusting god with god's plan for your life and um sometimes you have hardened hearts close their um

um closed eyes um but then after that a really good reminder is to confess your sins um confess your struggles to god and to really trust and acknowledge him in your struggles yes thank you thank you we need to uh who maria come come come come in front so everybody can see you oh wow god speak to the little children right okay come on maria um so nehemiah felt for those people even though he had a comfortable job and was actually quite safe and was trusted by the king but instead of just flicking past to look at something happier um he actually felt for them and did something about it whoa whoa okay yeah that's you know we expect god to speak to us in any circumstances you know look we're in big time all right we don't look at the when you watch tv or scroll your phones when you see these these pictures what comes to mind how do you react ah these happen all the time you know i mean i can't fix everything i'm really down down deep down south we're too far away from the from the main scenes right what can i do and the next minute especially when we during dinner time i mean you lost them i mean and then the next program comes up and then you just forget everything and then you talk about what's the what's what's for dessert all right but i think i think i agree we cannot fix everything and we're very limited in a sense right but if god somehow would speak to me to do something and we if we allow god to do that we

allow god to move us and willing to be moved i believe god can god can use us right to do something may not be everything you know even i mean this open door the uh eon came in and and shared a saturday and sunday to us i mean persecuted church one in every seven christians being persecuted in this world what can you do you and i deep down down south the southern most southern nation in in in the pacific what can we do it's too far away from the rest of the world but if we're willing to listen and we allow god to move our hearts i believe we can do something we can so this this nehemiah will start the first page with long-awaited passage now and and now the next few months we're going to uh go dig into it and great great book right israel was good i believe nehemiah was even better right i had i got a privilege to start the first chapter and i was just thought it was a great introduction okay nehemiah nehemiah was deeply moved i mean how could why why would he be moved when he heard this news in jerusalem things happen in jerusalem you know if we understand where what circumstances he was in and where he was we ask why on earth would he be moved you know he was not in jerusalem at all he probably wouldn't even know i mean there was that the things that happened in jerusalem then it was about 100 years ago how on earth was he willing to be moved and and but when he heard he did not just only got moved by god but he he grabs hold of the promise of god and he prayed for god's favor to him now i think this passage to us it might seem foreign it must have been a long time ago and it's not chinese culture not kiwi culture but god's words speak to us today just the same i believe we need to be sensitive okay sensitive to god's inspiration just like what um ding ding has shared he was being he was willing to listen he was willing to to see sense what's god's will for her to to be a good mom all right it might not it might not be a great and spectacular thing that god's calling us to do but maybe something in our daily life that we need to hear what he wants us to do and this responsibilities are things that just even a very practical very uh ordinary thing god wants us to do and literally we knew we are achieving great things for the kingdom of god okay and we are available and you know we we hear the word the inspiration but are we available to his calling to us the word the inspiration so give the refresh ourselves okay if you've seen all this in the book of nehemiah i need book of ezra right so we all remember that's the nehemiah uh ezra's ministry he went back from ezra 7 he went back from um persia and back to jerusalem okay to start um reforming the people now the the the temple has been rebuilt but the people were not so he went back to teach the law all right the law of israel so he went back there and actually he was a contemporary of nehemiah about 12 years later nehemiah was that was the passage we just read oh he heard about the things happened all right the temple was rebuilt but the the city walls was was was ruined now we we probably won't understand uh war well the temple was all right but what was the problem with it with the war um being ruled and ruined we we can't compare you have a house but don't have the fence we would probably that's not the good illustration right i have a house but the defense is ruined but i can still live in the house but during those times without city walls it's very risky very dangerous anyone's here walk through walk into your your your your your city and grab things and steal things and rob things and and and you know just yeah it's just not safe at all and has been lying ruined for a whole century now we must ask why would nehemiah feel so devastated okay verse 3 he said to me those who survived the exile and are back in province are in great trouble and disgrace the wall of jerusalem is broken down and his gates have been burned with fire and this happened about a hundred years before him him when he heard that we've read the passages before i mean he was so destroyed why so we look into this passage with two things one nehemiah was moved he was moved to pray and then he moved to plan pastor william helped me with this i i was stuck in somehow what was the best thing to to address and he said oh they moved to pray move to plan so we can work together okay so firstly he was moved to pray but we asked we must ask why was he moved why was he willing to be moved in this verses 1 to 2 now nehemiah was son of hak what how do you spell hakaliah in the month of kislif in his 20th years now that was a very detailed description because he wrote it himself it was kind of a record book all right and he was in the citadel of susa hanani one of my brothers he came all the way from jerusalem to susa that was about 1400 now it was a 1400 yeah the same thing right 1400 kilometers how far is that that is from here from here to daniden he traveled all the way on his donkey's or horse not by plane you know wow and he and and he told him about these things that happened i mean to a lot of jews i mean we've seen it all it's 20 40 50 60 100 years now what's what's what's what's the new about it what's the big deal but for nehemiah when he heard he was really really he really felt for the people there now we must ask he was he was he was he was not born in jerusalem he would be second or third generation like you guys you know second

generation at least you were brought up here in new zealand and maybe your children in the future and isaac your children you were told go my son go to china remote village of china and see and this is got something let's go and do something about it and he will tell you dad what's my business it's your business and not my business what has got to do with me you know it's something like that and maybe maybe his parents with godly people that goes with you too gary and and vicky right yeah you just i just saw you right there right i mean yeah and me he might have godly parents told him about this not just um jewish affairs but about the affairs of god so he always had that in mind just imagine you know today god has given us this privilege of having great opportunity for education achievement with the things that we you know we have compared to the a lot of other people was in a lot of places you know we have very much privileged what are we going to do with these things these things that god has given to us us if god calls me about his kingdom about things of this of his of of of god of for the gospel am i willing to be moved or just i'll just let it go i mean there's too much in life what can i do i'm i'm i'm saying this again yes we can't do any everything but but there must be something that we can do all right and that that's the distance man that's susah and going to jerusalem 1400 case what has it got to do what's it got to do with him and he would travel all the way back to jerusalem and do something building and that's the amazing thing about god in inspiring his people all right and the response from hearing that for his friend told him about this things happened

in jerusalem and he said to me are those who survive exile in a great trouble and then in verse 4 i sat down and wept and for some days i mourned and fasted and prayed before the god of heaven now would we would we have this kind of um willingness to for the kingdom of god are we willing to let ourselves being moved by god i mean if we not allow god to move us god will move around us he can still achieve his stuff his his purpose but i'll be bypassed what i'm saying that if things that happen it's good that i think i um friend told us to think about the passage pray about the passage and if we do pray about it and we're honest enough to god i'm sure god will speak to us i don't know he may use the ways different he can use you different from the way that he uses me because you have the giftings and you have the talents you have the experiences that might different be different from me okay for the kingdom of god are we willing to respond according to his according to his will all right let's move on and and he respond he responded with a prayer he was you know he was really passionate but he prayed first he prayed first and his prayer fell into two parts one part it was he confessed all right in verse 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer of your servant before you day and night for your servants now i'm your servant israel your people are your servants i'm praying for your servants i'm praying for myself as well all right i confess my sins we israel israelites including myself and my father's family have committed against you and we have acted very wickedly now this is i i believe it's a test of spirituality if we are truly passionate for god and we are truly after god's heart my first respond to things that let go really bad i would confess my sin i will not just point finger at other people this is his problem the church is going everything going wrong it must be pastor's problem it must be deacon's problem it must be department leaders problems no we are all one i'm church right me and my father's family we as the whole people of israel we have sinned against you it's not finger pointing it's not him it's not her it's not who who is i have committed sin myself and i have wicked acted very wickedly i mean we can always say this guy has acted very wickedly god push him out but i am the one that's responsible as well right i believe really believe that if this guy who is really godly he he or she will have no problem admitting his or her own sins do you know anyone that who who never never kind of admit his him or her herself has has faults do you know always i'm the right i'm doing the right thing it's always you that do wrong all the time i will teach you what to do to do right

[20 : 23] do you know these guys you know people around you brothers and sisters am i the one are you the one he confessed and god can use people like these great to hear ting ting he confessed it's quite a bit of courage to confess herself in front of her children wow it's a bit of courage and then she and and you will say mom you said that on that sunday morning afternoon and what are you going to do about it it's going to be a challenge right great thing thinking yeah we confess but we don't only confess we also profess we proclaim faithfulness god of god you know god yes yes um you said that you said that we're being unfaithful you'll punish us yes you'll drive us out to the nations but you said that too in verse 9 if you return to me and obey my commands no matter how far we you drove us away you'll bring us back you said that god you said that i'm claiming i'm professing your faithfulness and then he said too they are your servants your servants your people whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand now i mean if we

stand on god's promises and we're not we're not telling god what to do but we're reminding god god you said that you said you never you never abandoned us totally even though how bad we went but if we were willing to repent you said that god you bring us back i think this confession and profession is a good balance for us no we're not perfect church are just sinners but forgiven so we we don't know do not expect perfection in church tell me about it i've been been pastoring in in hong kong here and here 30 something years now if i was looking for a perfect church i wouldn't i wouldn't i'll be very disappointed right um we confess our sins but we also profess god's faithfulness to his people to his church this this is exactly you know the the cross of christ it being so supreme and forgiving our sins and doing god god's justice in in in punishing sin but we can't we can't bear the consequences of sin and jesus bore all for us that's the perfect the perfect manifestation of god's justice and mercy and we praise god for that praise jesus for it and we as church nothing to boast man nothing absolutely nothing like i i mean i've been i've been in this community i'm a church community one in hong kong one here not too many experiences but you i mean i at times i really want to god yeah after sunday i'm not going to be a pastor anymore the next week no but then for the 30 for the 22 years now in this church you know i'm still here you know this book um this book from um um eugene peterson and this famous guy you know the one who translated message the bible message bible and he said something like this i paraphrased him okay the church is not kingdom of god all right so it's natural that the church is chaotic and messy so don't ever look for perfection we're not here to fix all the problems in church we are

to do the will of god and serving the lord together with loyalty and unity in midst of chaos and messiness amen to that yes there are something we need to fix but we're not here to fix problems we're here in midst of problems to proclaim jesus and to make disciples for him so if you ever find a perfect church leave it alone because you ruin it if you would join the so-called perfect church pcbc is never perfect it will net will never be perfect but we're here to serve the lord we confess and we profess this is our prayer okay all right he did not only he was not only moved to pray he also moved to plan now in verse 11 very interesting lord let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant to the prayer of your servant who delight in referring your name give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man who who is this man the king i was the cup bearer to the king now he while he was praying while he was confessing while he was professing he had something in mind i am going to talk to the king but he was only planning he did not go directly to the king now remember the first verse of first chapter it was the month of kiss lift what is that we don't know there's it's not chinese calendar it's not kiwi calendar it's about the ninth month in the george calendar it's about december uh equivalent to our western calendar and in chapter 2 verse 1 if you have your bible with you he said he went to talk to the king in the month of nisan nisan not not not nisan not that car as n-i-s-a-n-i-s-a-n n-i-s-a-n n-i-s-a-n when was that that's about four months later okay so he will he had something in mind but he did not take action until four months later and and listen to what he was praying um and in the verse uh let me see do i have it with me and in the previous verse it says something like listen to the prayer listen to my prayer and also ah yes it said to the prayer of your servants who delight in referring your name now this is a great prayer don't just listen to me i'm praying yes but also i'm acknowledging there are others who are praying as well humility is to beware that other godly people in amongst us as well the moment i think i'm the only one left who's who's who's who's zealous for the lord the moment i'll be arrogant and prideful and then again god cannot use us right elijah fell into that trap god i'm the only one who's verving for you no everybody dead everybody left you right and he went to his hole and couldn't do anything for god

but god kindly gently to remind him hey you're not the only one i've got how many seven thousand who haven't bowed to the bow idol you're not the only one i think what's great about this prayer is that i'm praying god but also i'm aware that there are others in church others in your servants are praying as well and then we won't be as arrogant and then when he prayed and he asked god yeah give me this this favor you know granting him granting favor as i go into this man he knew because it's a great obstacle you know you're going to ask for for the king to grant you something it's quite impossible after success was the king who actually banned the rebuilding of the temple and now you're going to ask him for the permission to rebuild the wall you know in chinese there's a phrase called asking the tiger for his skin asking the tiger for his skin come on tiger oh look can i have a bit of your skin wow you know yeah yeah have your skin first yeah he could see there's a huge obstacle it's quite impossible if it was not from god it was not of god it was not by the power of god

can't achieve that's why he need to pray and he it was planned he need to plan but ultimately he need to know has to be god's timing and god's power right and that's that's the whoa how come i got four here all right um there's something wrong with the powerpoint but never mind no so we never trust human it all right so that is the month of kiss kiss live kiss live that's about november december and the month of this sand was yeah there's in the sand that's the first month so one two three that's four months later so it took four months to pray to consider to plan when's the right moment when is the godly time you know inspiration being willing to be moved doesn't mean that we act on impulsion we need to be mature and wait and to talk to people there are counsel within the whole church of god you know we don't we don't act on ourselves that's how god can work amongst you but are we willing to be moved if god speaks to you this afternoon something if we allow he will stick that into my mind into our hearts keep praying hey it for for us it might oh i can't do that we can't do that we as a church can't do that ah it's too much the mountain is too too high and the river is too wide if if we can do it just according to what we know that's not that's not godly inspiration you can you can inspire yourself but it's something something far greater and wider and more difficult that could be from god because we don't rely on our own strengths imagine esther in a book before a time the king before nehemiah ezra and nehemiah right even though she had the position of the queen but the huge obstacle would be if the king would ever want to talk to her right but she took the courage to approach the king and in that way he saved she saved the whole race of the jewish people all right um if one day god will call you let's let's ask ourselves how you're going to use me you heard about this um chimney sweeping we still have chimney sweepers here today but it originated in the middle age all right but sweeping in those times was a lot more harsh and difficult chimneys um they did not have machines or whatever and they used children children child labor was really really horrible during those times because children are small enough to hang her from the top to down through the narrow chimney and use those brushes to clean and by the time to finish you know i mean the the dirt and and the coals and the marks will be on her on on his face and then whole body i mean it were hard to to clean but children were having like that for centuries imagine not just asia that the children child labor was that bad it was actually in europe as well okay and because it was it was it was in new york it was king a new united kingdom it was in other places in europe but particularly in in uk um when this child these child labor was so so bad but but at the same time because uk was a christian country so all six days these children had to work days and nights long hours but on sunday they did not have to work right but because they had they didn't they they were illiterate they didn't know they had no no chance to study they wouldn't know how to read and write so on sunday when they were free they just roamed the streets and this is just making trouble causing troubles and they fight and they fought and they stole and they and they just making a lot of havoc causing a lot of having in the community in the societies there was this guy robert rakes he he was not a minister he was not nothing he was just a christian and he just saw this wait hey this is this is so bad and he was always trying his effort with his friend to convince the the the vicars and and the clergy's at those times why don't we start something on sunday to teach them to read and write to teach them to learn the bible to teach them about the catechism about that book of common prayer that's you know anglican all right they have the book of common prayer and it took you know quite an effort but it really stuck in his mind so he he he tried he tried and tried to convince and he campaigned all this stuff and eventually one three one seven three oh i believe no no one seven three one seven eight oh anyway he convinced the church and that was the birth of the sunday school movement one two now what is god trying to say to you today something that might be out beyond my cap capacity my ability are we willing to be moved as the 4 14 said if you remain silent in this big moments god may be using you and and and i mean god has other ways he will move around you he will still achieve his purpose right but you and your father you won't you won't perish but that was for esther at that time but god will somehow will miss will miss to to participate in the great work of god you know and god is just prepared you equipped you for a time like this with the abilities with the experiences with the achievements god has allowed you he's going to use you in particular ways may not be really globally you know affect the whole of a spectacular kind of events maybe even just in your family maybe maybe just to church to make something different to bless the kingdom are we willing shall we pray father i just want to thank you for your word thank you for this great servant of god yeah he admitted his sin and he admitted he cannot do it and that's why he rely upon you and indeed christ you are enough for me and help me help us to really focus on you and speak to us lord speak to us

in jesus name amen