

One Child of God Can Make a Difference
(Philippians 4:13)

Introduction:

1. In our lesson we are showing from the Bible how "one child of God can make a difference."
2. This is an important principle for us to understand because many people feel that one person cannot accomplish very much by himself.
3. According to Philippians 4:13, each child of God "*can do all things*" when he depends upon the Lord for strength.
4. The Bible tells about many individuals who accomplished much as they served God.
 - a. Moses overcame his self-doubts and excuses to become Israel's greatest leader.
 - b. David defeated Goliath with the Lord's help.
 - c. Gideon led his small army to victory over the Midianites.
 - d. Esther became the queen of Persia and kept her people from being destroyed.
 - e. Daniel became a leader in the Babylonian and Persian governments and protected God's people.
5. While all of these great people illustrate the point we are making, today we are concentrating on a man named Nehemiah.
 - a. We will allow him to show us how one child of God can make a difference.
 - b. We will also consider several of his characteristics that led him to make a difference.
 - c. Let us begin our study by pointing out . . .

Discussion:

I. THE SETTING FOR THE EVENTS RECORDED IN NEHEMIAH

- A. In 536 BC, the Israelites were released from Babylonian captivity.
- B. At that time Zerubbabel led about 50,000 Israelites to Jerusalem.
- C. In about 20 years the temple was rebuilt.
- D. Ezra led a group to Jerusalem in 458 BC.
- E. The events recorded in Nehemiah began in 445 BC.
- F. About 90 years had passed since the Israelites returned to Jerusalem.
- G. We are especially interested in . . .

II. THE EVENTS RECORDED IN NEHEMIAH 1-6

- A. Nehemiah 1
 1. (vs.1-3) Nehemiah learned about the condition of Jerusalem.
 2. (vs.4) Nehemiah was affected by the news he learned.
 3. (vs.11) As he prayed, Nehemiah asked God to help him.
- B. Nehemiah 2
 1. (vs.1-8) Nehemiah received permission from the king to go to Jerusalem.
 2. (vs.10) The enemies of the Israelites are introduced.
 3. (vs.11-16) Nehemiah inspected the wall of Jerusalem.
 4. (vs.17-18a) Nehemiah challenged the people to build the wall.
 5. (vs.18b) The people accepted Nehemiah's challenge.
- C. (Nehemiah 3) The various groups who built the wall are listed.
- D. Nehemiah 4
 1. Opposition from the enemies increased.
 2. (vs.6) In a short time half the wall was built.
- E. (Nehemiah 5) Nehemiah settled an internal problem that developed.
- F. Nehemiah 6
 1. (vs.1-13) The enemies tried to intimidate the Jews, and they tried to isolate Nehemiah from the people.
 2. (vs.15) The wall was completed in 52 days.
- G. From the information we have covered, can one child of God make a difference?
- H. Let us turn our attention to . . .

III. NEHEMIAH'S CHARACTERISTICS THAT LED HIM TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

- A. Nehemiah had a heart of compassion, as demonstrated in 1:4.
 - 1. His compassion led him to do something about the situation in Jerusalem.
 - 2. (Matthew 9:36) The Lord's compassion led Him to do something about another situation.
 - 3. (1 Peter 3:8) Christians are to have "*compassion one of another.*"
 - 4. A heart of compassion can lead a child of God to make a difference.
- B. Nehemiah had a sense of purpose.
 - 1. Nehemiah revealed his purpose to the king (2:5), and he maintained it.
 - 2. The Lord had a sense of purpose (Luke 19:10).
 - 3. Christians are to have a sense of purpose (Galatians 6:10).
 - 4. Having a sense of purpose can lead a child of God to make a difference.
- C. Nehemiah trusted in God completely.
 - 1. This is reflected in:
 - a. his prayers (1:4; 2:4)
 - b. his responses to the enemies (2:20; 4:4; 6:9b).
 - 2. The Lord trusted His Father (John 8:28-29).
 - 3. Christians are to trust in God (1 Timothy 4:10).
 - 4. Trust in God can lead a child of God to make a difference.
- D. Nehemiah faced and overcame obstacles.
 - 1. He faced and overcame obstacles from the enemies and the Jews.
 - 2. The Lord overcame obstacles throughout His ministry (John 16:33).
 - 3. Christians are to imitate Nehemiah and Jesus (Romans 12:21).
 - 4. The ability to overcome obstacles can lead a child of God to make a difference.

Conclusion:

- 1. At the end of his life, Nehemiah knew that he had made a difference.
- 2. By building the wall around Jerusalem, he played an important role in preserving God's people until Christ came.
- 3. As each child of God does what he is able to do, a difference will be made.
- 4. We actually have an advantage over Nehemiah (Philippians 4:13).
- 5. Let us think seriously on these things as we look forward to a new year.