

Bloodshot Eyes and Blistered Hands¹

Nehemiah 1:1-4; 2:1-5

INTRODUCTION:

1. Nehemiah was the cupbearer for King Artaxerxes (1:11).
 - a. Being a cupbearer meant being in a prestigious position.
 - b. Yet, Nehemiah did not let his position or his comfortable surroundings influence his commitment to God.
2. Nehemiah's practice illustrates what is necessary to get God's work done.

DISCUSSION:

I. Burden

- A. "I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying" (1:4).
- B. Before we can accomplish God's work we must have a burden for the work.
- C. The burden will drive us to our knees. There must be prayer involved.
- D. As Nehemiah wept before God (for days), he received bloodshot eyes.

II. Vision

- A. "Send me to Judah...that I may rebuild it" (2:5).
- B. Nehemiah had a vision, a goal to see the walls of Jerusalem rebuilt (2:17, 18).
- C. The people shared the vision (2:17, 18; 4:6).
- D. Because the vision was so real, the goal was reached in fifty-two days (6:15).
- E. We must have a vision to strive for, a goal to work toward.

III. Sacrifice

- A. Nehemiah had a comfortable job. He was with the king and not exposed to physical labor. His hands got soft.
- B. Yet Nehemiah went to Jerusalem and put his hands to the task. Consequently, he made blisters on those soft, unexercised hands.

CONCLUSION:

1. If we, as Nehemiah, have these three elements, God's work will be done.
2. Such an attitude moves mountains, grows congregations, and accomplishes great things.

¹ From "Bloodshot Eyes and Blisters" by Gary Heiney in *Pulpit Helps*, October 1986.