



Nehemiah: The Cupbearer

THE FOUR MARKS OF A DIFFERENCE MAKER

I. Divine discontent

“Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.” Neh. 2:2b (NIV)

- A. Before you receive the vision, the calling, the plan or the cause, you will likely know the burden of discontent.
- B. “That’s all I can stanz, I can’t stanz no more”

II. Courage to Act

“I was very much afraid,³ but I said to the king, ‘May the king live forever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?’ ” Neh. 2:2b-3 (NIV)

- A. All people are generally either activists or contemplatives. *“I rebuked them and called curses down on them. I beat some of the men and pulled out their hair. I made them take an oath in God’s name...” Neh. 13:25 (NIV)*
- B. Taking action is a dynamic event. (ref. Neh. 2:2b-8)
- C. Nehemiah grew in boldness as the king responded.

III. Welcome Difficulty

“When Sanballat the Horonite and Tobiah the Ammonite official heard about this, they were very much disturbed that someone had come to promote the welfare of the Israelites.” Neh. 2:10 (NIV)

- A. Tested resolve is compelling!

IV. Persistence (ref. Neh. 2:11-6:15)

Conclusion: God is looking for “difference makers” throughout His kingdom. This is not a “one time” experience, but something that we must refresh on a regular basis!

Small Group Questions

1. In previous studies, we discovered that Nehemiah spent four months in agonizing prayer before God before taking action on his plan. What was happening during that season of prayer?
2. Most people feel conviction about issues, but few act on them. Why do you believe that is? Which are you inclined to be?
3. What gave Nehemiah the boldness to ask for so much from King Artaxerxes? Where did he get the faith and courage to leave his security and trust God with such a difficult mission?
4. Why do we find people who are sold out for a great cause so compelling?
5. Why does it take persistence to see a difference in the world? Can you give an illustration of that quality in something you’ve undertaken?