CROSSROADS COMMUNITY CHURCH

"CAN'T WE ALL JUST GET ALONG?"

"RENEWAL" – PT. 5

Mark Hardacre

THE TROUBLE FROM WITHIN

1. THE _____

Neh 5:1-5 (NLT) About this time some of the men and their wives raised a cry of protest against their fellow Jews. They were saying, "We have such large families. We need more money just so we can buy the food we need to survive." Others said, "We have mortgaged our fields, vineyards, and homes to get food during the famine." And others said, "We have already borrowed to the limit on our fields and vineyards to pay our taxes. We belong to the same family, and our children are just like theirs. Yet we must sell our children into slavery just to get enough money to live. We have already sold some of our daughters, and we are helpless to do anything about it, for our fields and vineyards are already mortgaged to others."

2. THE _____

Neh 5:6-10 (NLT) When I (Nehemiah) heard their complaints, I was very angry. After thinking about the situation, I spoke out against these nobles and officials. I told them, "You are oppressing your own relatives by charging them interest when they borrow money!"

Then I called a public meeting to deal with the problem. At the meeting I said to them, "The rest of us are doing all we can to redeem our Jewish relatives who have had to sell themselves to pagan foreigners, but you are selling them back into slavery again. How often must we redeem them?" And they had nothing to say in their defense.

Then I pressed further, "What you are doing is not right! Should you not walk in the fear of our God in order to avoid being mocked by enemy nations? I myself, as well as my brothers and my workers, have been lending the people money and grain, but now let us stop this business of loans."

3. THE _____

Neh 5:12-13 (NLT) Then they replied, "We will give back everything and demand nothing more from the people. We will do as you say." Then I called the priests and made the nobles and officials formally vow to do what they had promised…the whole assembly responded, "Amen," and they praised the LORD. And the people did as they had promised.

4. THE _____

Neh 5:14-18 (NLT) I would like to mention that for the entire twelve years that I was governor of Judah…neither I nor my officials drew on our official food allowance. This was quite a contrast to the former governors who had laid heavy burdens on the people, demanding a daily ration of food and wine, besides a pound of silver. Even their assistants took advantage of the people. ***But because of my fear of God, I did not act that way****. I devoted myself to working on the wall and refused to acquire any land. And I required all my officials to spend time working on the wall. I asked for nothing, even though I regularly fed 150 Jewish officials at my table, besides all the visitors from other lands! The provisions required at my expense for each day were one ox, six fat sheep, and a large number of domestic fowl. And every ten days we needed a large supply of all kinds of wine. Yet I refused to claim the governor's food allowance because the* ***people were already having a difficult time****.*

DEFUSING THE BOMB

1. _____ **FOR INPUT**

2. _____ **THE SITUATION**

3. _____ **THE REAL ISSUE**

4. _____ **PERSONAL RESPONSIBILITY**

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Digging Deeper: Small Group Questions …

1. What's the best explosion or crash you've ever seen in a movie?
2. Have you ever been part of work or sports team where people struggled to get along? How did it affect the team?
3. Share a time when you've had to confront someone either at work or at home? How did it make you feel?
4. Why do you think we resist asking for other people's input?
5. Think about a potentially volatile situation you may be in right now – what can you do to defuse that situation?
6. In what ways do you need to improve in the area of personal responsibility?