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## ***CULTIVATING A SERVANT'S HEART***

*(Nehemiah 1:1-11)*

We are saved to serve the Lord (Deuteronomy 10:12; Hebrews 9:14). When the Lord uses a word to describe who would be great in the kingdom of God, He elevates the word **servant** to a place of immense significance. As our Lord Jesus said, the one who desires to be first and great in the kingdom of God is the one willing to serve (Matthew 20:20-28; John 12:26). **Our greatness as God's people begins with cultivating a servant's heart.** As we reflect on Nehemiah's life and ministry, we will consider two portraits of a servant's heart.

### ***1. A heart that is burdened by the*** \_\_\_\_\_

When Nehemiah learned that his brother Hanani and his companions returned from their visit in Jerusalem, the first thing he did was to inquire about the condition of his fellow Jews and their beloved city (Nehemiah 1:1-2; Jeremiah 15:5). Nehemiah's own heart was broken as he received the devastating news concerning the remnants, ruins and reproach of the Jewish people (Nehemiah 1:3). He was so burdened in his heart that he prayed, grieved, wept and fasted for the people of Jerusalem (Nehemiah 1:4).

Nehemiah's tears for the afflictions of his fellow Jews should remind us of the heart of our Lord Jesus (Luke 19:41). Cultivating a servant's heart begins with the prayer, *"Lord, give me a heart that is burdened by the brokenness of the hurting people around me who need the touch of Your saving grace."*

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### ***2. A heart that is consumed by a*** \_\_\_\_\_

The prayer of Nehemiah depicts his compassionate love for God and the city of God (Nehemiah 1:5-11). Nehemiah pleaded before the LORD and essentially said, *"LORD, remember Your promise to restore Your city. Remember Your commitment to bless Your people once again."* Nehemiah not only prayed but also volunteered himself to go to Jerusalem to supervise the rebuilding of the city walls which represented the ravaged lives of his fellow Jews.

As Nehemiah served and reached out to the afflicted people of the city of Jerusalem, our Lord Jesus calls us to be the light of the gospel in our own city. In Matthew 5:14-16, Jesus gives this command: *"You are a city on a hill that cannot be hidden. Let your light shine before men, that they may see your good works and give glory to your Father in heaven."*

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