

Nehemiah 5:1-13

Help for the Hurting

Nehemiah 5:1-5

Now the men and their wives raised a great outcry against their fellow Jews. ² Some were saying, “We and our sons and daughters are numerous; in order for us to eat and stay alive, we must get grain.”

³ Others were saying, “We are mortgaging our fields, our vineyards and our homes to get grain during the famine.” ⁴ Still others were saying, “We have had to borrow money to pay the king’s tax on our fields and vineyards. ⁵ Although we are of the same flesh and blood as our fellow Jews and though our children are as good as theirs, yet we have to subject our sons and daughters to slavery. Some of our daughters have already been enslaved, but we are powerless, because our fields and our vineyards belong to others.”

Nehemiah 5:6-8

⁶ When I heard their outcry and these charges, I was very angry. ⁷ I pondered them in my mind and then accused the nobles and officials. I told them, “You are charging your own people interest!” So I called together a large meeting to deal with them ⁸ and said: “As far as possible, we have bought back our fellow Jews who were sold to the Gentiles. Now you are selling your own people, only for them to be sold back to us!” They kept quiet, because they could find nothing to say.

Leviticus 25:35-43

³⁵ “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and are unable to support themselves among you, help them as you would a foreigner and stranger, so they can continue to live among you. ³⁶ Do not take interest or any profit from them, but fear your God, so that they may continue to live among you. ³⁷ You must not lend them money at interest or sell them food at a profit. ³⁸ I am the Lord your God, who brought you out of Egypt to give you the land of Canaan and to be your God.

³⁹ “If any of your fellow Israelites become poor and sell themselves to you, do not make them work as slaves. ⁴⁰ They are to be treated as hired workers or temporary residents among you; they are to work for you until the Year of Jubilee. ⁴¹ Then they and their children are to be released, and they will go back to their own clans and to the property of their ancestors. ⁴² Because the Israelites are my servants, whom I brought out of Egypt, they must not be sold as slaves. ⁴³ Do not rule over them ruthlessly, but fear your God.

Nehemiah 5:9-11

⁹ So I continued, “What you are doing is not right. Shouldn’t you walk in the fear of our God to avoid the reproach of our Gentile enemies? ¹⁰ I and my brothers and my men are also lending the people money and grain. But let us stop charging interest! ¹¹ Give back to them immediately their fields, vineyards, olive groves and houses, and also the interest you are charging them—one percent of the money, grain, new wine and olive oil.”

Nehemiah 5:12-13

¹² “We will give it back,” they said. “And we will not demand anything more from them. We will do as you say.

Then I summoned the priests and made the nobles and officials take an oath to do what they had promised. ¹³ I also shook out the folds of my robe and said, “In this way may God shake out of their house and possessions anyone who does not keep this promise. So may such a person be shaken out and emptied!”

At this the whole assembly said, “Amen,” and praised the Lord. And the people did as they had promised.

Acts 4:32-35

³² All the believers were one in heart and mind. No one claimed that any of their possessions was their own, but they shared everything they had.³³ With great power the apostles continued to testify to the resurrection of the Lord Jesus. And God's grace was so powerfully at work in them all³⁴ that there were no needy persons among them. For from time to time those who owned land or houses sold them, brought the money from the sales³⁵ and put it at the apostles' feet, and it was distributed to anyone who had need.