

# Summary

This sermon concludes the book of Nehemiah with a sobering look at spiritual drift and compromise. After the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt and the people made firm promises to God, Nehemiah had to return to Babylon. In his absence, the people broke every covenant they had made - they neglected God's house, broke the Sabbath, and intermarried with idol worshipers. Even the high priest Eliashib allowed an enemy of God to live in the temple. The sermon warns that Christians are prone to wander from God when they become comfortable with worldly compromise and spiritual complacency.

The message emphasizes that maintaining our relationship with God requires daily attention, like tending a fire that naturally goes out without care. The pastor challenges believers to examine whether they are walking closely with the Lord or have drifted into comfortable compromise with the world around them.

## Intro Prayer

Lord, we thank You for bringing us together today to study Your Word. As we open our hearts and minds to what You want to teach us through the book of Nehemiah, we ask that You would help us be honest about where we are in our walk with You. Give us ears to hear what You are saying to us personally and as a group. Help us to be open to Your conviction and Your call to faithfulness. We pray that Your Holy Spirit would work in our hearts today and that we would leave this time more committed to walking closely with You. In Jesus' name, Amen.

## Ice Breaker

What is one habit or routine in your life that you have to work at maintaining (like exercise, eating healthy, keeping your house clean, etc.)? What happens when you stop paying attention to it?

## Key Verses

1. Nehemiah 10:39
2. Nehemiah 13:1-3
3. Nehemiah 13:4-5
4. Nehemiah 13:6-9

## Questions

1. What surprises you most about how quickly God's people broke their promises after making such firm commitments in Nehemiah 10?
2. Why do you think the people were able to obey God's command to separate from foreign influences, but their leader Eliashib failed to do so? What does this teach us about leadership?
3. The sermon mentions that spiritual compromise leads to spiritual complacency. Can you think of examples of how small compromises can lead to bigger problems in our spiritual lives?

4. What role did Nehemiah's absence play in the people's spiritual decline? How does this relate to the importance of spiritual leadership and accountability in our lives?
5. The pastor admits he skipped this chapter ten years ago because it was a 'downer.' Why do you think it's important to study difficult passages like this one?
6. The sermon uses the analogy of fire needing to be tended or it will go out. What are some practical ways we can 'tend the fire' of our relationship with God?
7. How can we guard against becoming comfortable with compromise in our own lives? What warning signs should we watch for?
8. Nehemiah didn't give up on the people even after they broke their promises. What does this teach us about God's faithfulness to us when we fail?

## Life Application

This week, honestly evaluate your spiritual life. Are you walking closely with the Lord or have you drifted into comfortable compromise? Choose one of the three daily habits mentioned in the sermon (reading God's Word, prayer, or confessing sin) that you need to strengthen or restart. Commit to practicing this habit every day this week, asking God to rekindle the fire of His love in your heart.

## Key Takeaways

1. Christians are prone to spiritual drift and compromise, especially when spiritual leadership is absent or weak
2. Comfortable compromise with the world leads to spiritual complacency and broken promises to God
3. Maintaining our relationship with God requires daily attention - like tending a fire that naturally goes out
4. God remains faithful to His people even when they fail and break their promises to Him
5. Three essential daily habits for spiritual health are: reading God's Word, prayer, and confessing sin

## Ending Prayer

Heavenly Father, thank You for Your patience with us when we drift and for Your faithfulness even when we are unfaithful. We don't want to be like the people in Nehemiah 13 who broke their promises to You. Help us to be honest about areas where we may have compromised or grown complacent. Give us the strength and discipline to daily tend the fire of our relationship with You through Your Word, prayer, and confession. We surrender our hearts to You afresh today and ask You to seal them for Your service. Keep us from wandering and help us to walk faithfully with You all the days of our lives. In Jesus' name, Amen.