

# Weekly Cell Guide

Leader's Copy

**Series** - Nehemiah 5  
**Topic** - Awakened in Troubled Times

**Date** - 07 June 2020  
**Speaker** - Pastor Joachim

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## WELCOME [15 min]

You may want to look up the following websites for *icebreakers* suitable for your cell.

[Ice Breakers 1](#)

[Ice Breakers 2](#)

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## WORSHIP [15 min]

You may select songs like

1. Spirit Touch Your Church
  2. One Voice
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## WORD [45 min]

### Spiritual Objectives

At the end of the sermon discussion, cell members will:

1. Awaken our ears to the cries around us, awaken our hearts towards the fear of God, and awaken our lives to a lifestyle of good deeds.
2. Commit to invest and participate in #RiverLifeCares initiatives when it is launched in July

### Sermon Summary

The following are the key points of the sermon:

1. After dealing with external threats (in chapter 4), Nehemiah faced internal challenges from his own people.
2. Chapter 5 reveals how Nehemiah responded to the despair and difficulties around him.
3. As a church, we can respond in the same way Nehemiah did in our current situation.

### Sermon Recap (Full Summary)

Loud outcries as a result of extreme poverty, destitution and helplessness caused by a famine came to Nehemiah. Also, the wealthy exploited the situation and forced the poor into slavery. Just as how Nehemiah was awakened to the desperate cries of the people, may we also be awakened to the crisis and the challenges around us during this Covid-19 situation. Nehemiah showed us three ways we can respond in light of these troubled times:

#### **1. Awaken our ears to the cries (v 6)**

Even though Nehemiah had many other issues on his plate, he still had compassion for his people. Likewise, while we may have our own challenges to deal with, we must not forget the cries of suffering around us, because "God will never forget the needy; the hope of the afflicted will never perish" (Psalm 9:18). To promote the welfare of the poor

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is to promote the cause of God.

## 2. Awaken our hearts towards the fear of God (v 9a)

While we enjoy the love and presence of God, we must not overlook the weight, the value and the benefit of carrying the fear of God in our hearts, as “He will be the sure foundation for your times, a rich store of salvation and wisdom and knowledge; the fear of the LORD is the key to this treasure” (Isaiah 33:6). Godly fear awakens us to the righteousness and justice of God and arouses us to the poor and needy around us, “for the LORD is righteous, He loves justice; the upright will see His face” (Psalm 11:7). When we help the poor and the less fortunate, we revere God, and “whoever mistreats the poor insults their Maker, but whoever is kind to the needy honours God” (Proverbs 14:31).

## 3. Awaken our lives to a lifestyle of good deeds (v9b)

Let us aspire to a legacy and heritage of good works, and “let your light shine before others, that they may see your good deeds and glorify your Father in heaven” (Matthew 5:16). What do our neighbours, colleagues, friends and family members say about Christians during and after this pandemic? Is Christ revealed through our word and action? Have we lived simply so that others might simply live?

There are three tangible ways we can apply the above principles that Nehemiah laid out:

- a. Be involved in looking out for needs in our neighbourhood, our workplaces, and our cell groups
- b. Be involved in giving to missions
- c. Be involved in #RiverLifeCares initiatives

### Discussion Questions

1. **Read Nehemiah 5:1-19. What character qualities can we see in Nehemiah that are different from the governors before him?** [15 min]

#### Leader's Notes:

*A recap question. The secret to Nehemiah's leadership was a close relationship with God (vv 14-19). Here he reflects on 12 years' experience as governor of Judah. This was the highest position of authority in the nation at that time. He was a man of integrity. He did not take advantage of the “perks” that come with the job and leads the “good life” at the expense of the people. He stayed within his own means and used his personal wealth to feed the less fortunate. “The fear of God” was the motive of Nehemiah's service. Verse 15 sets the contrast clearly between Nehemiah's fear of God and “the former governors” who were “business as usual.” The bottom line for Nehemiah was “the fear of God” which is equivalent to the “the love of Christ” for the Christian.*

#### Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving to the Next Question)

“For Christ's love compels us, because we are convinced that one died for all, and therefore all died.” (2 Corinthians 5:14) When His love compels and guides us, everything else finds its rightful place in our lives.

2. **Ps Joachim quoted a line from Timothy Keller's book *Center Church*: “The righteous will disadvantage themselves to advantage the community.” Do you agree with this statement? Do you consider yourself “righteous” and if so, what does “disadvantage yourself to advantage others” mean to you?** [15 min]

**Leader's Notes:**

*A reflect question. For more context to Ps Joachim's quote, the whole paragraph in the book from where it was taken merits a discussion: "So what does the Bible mean by doing justice? Old Testament scholar Bruce Waltke defines justice in this startling way: "The righteous are willing to disadvantage themselves to advantage the community; the wicked are willing to disadvantage the community to advantage themselves." Most people think of "wickedness" as disobeying the Ten Commandments, as actively breaking the law by lying or committing adultery. And those things are, of course, wicked! But lying and adultery are best understood as the visible tip of the iceberg of wickedness. Below the surface, less visible but no less wicked, are things like not feeding the poor when we have the power to do so or taking so much income out of the business we own that our employees are paid poorly. In all these ways we disadvantage others by advantaging ourselves." (Center Church: Doing Balanced, Gospel-Centered Ministry in Your City by Timothy Keller)*

**Transition (Wrapping Up & Moving To The Next Question)**

Jesus "disadvantaged himself" by sacrificing his life that others might be "advantaged" – eternally. We are called to be like Jesus in our discipleship – daring to love beyond ourselves.

- 3. Ps Joachim asked every RiverLifer two important questions: (i) If I have the fear of the Lord in me, what will I do for the poor in times of famine and crisis? (ii) If the fear of the Lord is in me, how will the cries of the broken and the poor affect me today? [15 min]**

**Leader's Notes:**

*A respond question. Have someone read Deuteronomy 10:12 "And now, Israel, what does the Lord your God require of you, but to fear the Lord your God, to walk in all His ways, to love him, to serve the Lord your God with all your heart and with all your soul." A reverent fear of the Lord and a passionate love for God undergird the gospel of Jesus Christ. Timothy Keller again reminds us, "Ministry to the poor is a crucial sign that we believe the gospel. Many people make a distinction between justice and charity. They say that if we give to the poor voluntarily, it's just compassion and charity. But Job says that if I'm not generous with my money, I'm offending God, which means it's not an option and it is unjust by definition to not share with the poor. (Job 3:13-23) It's biblical that we owe the poor as much of our money as we can possibly give away. The gospel is such that even though you're not saved by good works, you are saved by grace and faith – and it will change your life and lead to good works. According to the Bible, if you really have been changed by the grace of God, it will move you toward the poor." (What We Owe the Poor, Christianity Today, 6 December 2010)*

**Transition (Wrapping Up, Vision Casting to Cell & Closing The Discussion)**

Ps Joachim has outlined three practical ways we can work out our fear of the Lord and our love for God to help the poor and the needy (*see sermon summary above*). What steps will we take this week to look out for needs in our neighbourhood, our work places and our cell group? How much will we commit in giving to missions? Will we actively participate in the #RiverLifeCares initiatives when it is launched next month?

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## WORKS [10 min]

Let's pray for the following pointers:

1. Thank God for the end to the Circuit Breaker this week and pray for situations to improve for those still in hospital and those in financial difficulties.
2. Pray for a smooth transition for schools, businesses and churches during this time.
3. Pray for the foreign workers who are still quarantined in dormitories.

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## ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. **Bible Reading Plan.** You can access the latest Bible Reading Plan by visiting [www.riverlifeorg.sg/brp](http://www.riverlifeorg.sg/brp).
2. **RiverLife Weekly | Issue 8 – Under Control.** Read the full note at [rlc.sg/wkly](http://rlc.sg/wkly)
3. **Pastoral Address (3 Jun)** Read the full address here: [rlc.sg/3jun-sp-address](http://rlc.sg/3jun-sp-address)



"HONOUR GOD WITH EVERYTHING YOU OWN;  
GIVE HIM THE FIRST AND THE BEST."  
PROVERBS 3:9 (MSG)

# Give Digitally

Here are two cashless ways to give your tithes and offering.

## 1. PayNow

Log in to your bank's existing mobile banking app.  
Scan this QR code on the right.

**SCAN ME**



## 2. Interbank Transfer

RiverLife Church Bank Account:  
DBS Autosave 029-902431-0  
Bank Code: 7171  
Branch Code: 029



### Church Vision

"A radiant disciple-making church catalysing Kingdom transformation in our communities and the nations."

### Mission

We exist to make disciples who behold Christ and reveal Him.

