

Speaker : Associate Pastor David Seah
Title : Divine Distraction
Scripture : Nehemiah 2:5

Introduction

Distraction has both positive and negative effects on our lives.
We need to identify its source and determine our response.

Divine Distraction

An eventful day in the life of a cupbearer, Nehemiah.
God interrupted his life through an unexpected news.

Nehemiah 1: 1-4:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa,
2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.
3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."
4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.

Similarly, these individuals encountered divine distraction:

An eventful day in the life of a shepherd, Moses – Exodus 3: 2- 3

² There the angel of the LORD appeared to him in flames of fire from within a bush. Moses saw that though the bush was on fire it did not burn up.
³ So Moses thought, "I will go over and see this strange sight—why the bush does not burn up."

An eventful day in the life of a fisherman, Peter – John 21:3-5

³"I'm going out to fish," Simon Peter told them, and they said, "We'll go with you." So they went out and got into the boat, but that night they caught nothing. ⁴Early in the morning, Jesus stood on the shore, but the disciples did not realize that it was Jesus. ⁵He called out to them, "Friends, haven't you any fish?"

An eventful day in the life of a persecutor of the faith, Saul – Acts 9: 3-4

³As he neared Damascus on his journey, suddenly a light from heaven flashed around him.
⁴He fell to the ground and heard a voice say to him, "Saul, Saul, why do you persecute me?"

a. Divine distraction seeks to get our attention.

What do we do when God interrupts?
What do we do when the unexpected takes place?

Do what Nehemiah did – Pray (Nehemiah 1: 5-9)

"O LORD, God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and obey his commands,

⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's house, have committed against you.

⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸ "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations,

⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

b. Divine distraction demands our response

Nehemiah asked for leave to rebuild the walls – Nehemiah 2:5

"If it pleases the king and if your servant has found favor in his sight, let him send me to the city in Judah where my fathers are buried so that I can rebuild it."

Moses returned to his homeland – Exodus 4:20

"So Moses took his wife and sons, put them on a donkey and started back to Egypt. And he took the staff of God in his hand."

Peter received restoration – John 21:17

The third time he said to him, "Simon son of John, do you love me?" Peter was hurt because Jesus asked him the third time, "Do you love me?" He said, "Lord, you know all things; you know that I love you." Jesus said, "Feed my sheep."

Saul repented – Acts 9: 18

"Immediately, something like scales fell from Saul's eyes, and he could see again. He got up and was baptized."

Conclusion

The walls around Jerusalem went up in just 52 days.

"When our enemies and the surrounding nations heard about it," Nehemiah reports, "they were frightened and humiliated. They realized that this work had been done with the help of our God" (Nehemiah 6:16).

Social & political system was established. Spiritual reformation took place.

God was glorified!