

CALLING THE COURAGEOUS...

to mobilize.

“Nehemiah: Courageous Leadership”

A sermon structural outline challenging soldiers to mobilize with courage and conviction:

Provided by Major Ray Harris.

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Use and adapt the following structural outline to build your sermon on courageous leadership, challenging your soldiers and congregation to be ready to answer the call to courageously mobilize in your corps and community.

INTRODUCTION

- Israel’s people returning from exile; face a daunting task
- The city of Jerusalem is in ruin, including its protective wall – Note: It’s important to distinguish this wall from the “wall” talked about between the USA and Mexico
- Nehemiah still in exile hears about the difficult situation and is disheartened, but finds favour with the Persian King, Artaxerxes.
- He returns to Jerusalem and sets about the task of rebuilding.
- Despite ridicule [2:19] and intimidation [Ch 4] they work at the task.
- The problem in Ch 5 is internal, and internal complaints can be more difficult.

COURAGEOUS CONVICTIONS

- “A great outcry against their Jewish brothers...” [v 1]
- Mortgaging fields and selling children into slavery in order to get food
- On top of this the powerful were practising “usury” – ie the lending of money at high interest
- cf NL fishermen who had to get supplies on credit from merchants in town, always on the edge of bankruptcy. Early NL built at the expense of outports.
- The practice of usury forbidden in OT in order to protect the vulnerable – [Exo 22:20-26; Ezk 18:5-17; Ps 15:5]
- “What you are doing is not right. Shouldn’t you walk in the fear of God...? [v 9]
- Nehemiah understands Israel’s torah; he is convinced about its role in guiding economics
- This is what it means to be a “holy nation” - Exo 19:6



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- And speaks to the courage of his convictions.
- What injustices might be felt in the Christian community today?
- Look at the ISJC's document, "Go and Do Something" to see how we might courageously "mobilize for justice."
- What might it mean for us to "do justice" [Micah 6:8]

THE COURAGE OF EXAMPLE

- Nehemiah is in the role of Governor with all of the advantages this brings
- He is aware that previous Governors "lorded it over" the people.
- Nehemiah courageously limits his privileges in order to be an example [v 15]
- Cf the mind of Christ – [Phil 2:8]
- Example of runners who could run a fast marathon, but choose to limit their pace in order to accompany a disabled runner
- Salvationists students who limit their study time by taking Christmas kettle shifts
- In what ways might we as a corps, as a Territory, be an example of the kind of Christian community God seeks?

CONCLUSION

- Each Salvationist congregation is in a building project – Christian community
- We face questions from without, and cries from within
- This moment calls for leadership that knows its deep convictions and expresses them; and leadership willing to set the example of integrity.
- These are risky and call for courage.
- SB 814 God of grace and God of glory

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