

Where's Your Chair?

Nehemiah 5 1-8



Blessed are those who consider the poor and needy;
the Lord will deliver them in the time of trouble.

Psalm 41:1

Praising:

Would you walk by on the other side,
when someone called for aid?
Would you walk by on the other side,
and would you be afraid?
Cross over the road, my friend,
ask the Lord his strength to lend,
his compassion has no end,
cross over the road.

Reading:

Nehemiah 5:1-8
An economic crisis for the builders

Worried about their children, the Jewish wives protest. Having borrowed money from their fellow Jews in the past, it would appear that because the builders are now working and getting paid, the lenders are starting to call in their

debts. The king's tax would have been a normal annual burden, but in addition to the other repayments it is an expense the builders cannot meet. As the debtors see it, they are labouring and risking their lives for the benefit of their fellow Jewish overlords. But Nehemiah is not expecting the poor to starve while they work on a project which will chiefly benefit their Jewish 'superiors'. The thought of Jews bankrupting other Jews enrages Nehemiah. He confronts the nobles and officials with the injustice and stupidity of what they are doing, and silences them.

Listening:

Praying:

We remember before you Lord the poor

- the unemployed and those whose work is repetitive, unrewarding and underpaid
- those living on benefits or on credit, awaiting the next handout or managing their debt
- the chronically ill and those unable to work, struggling constantly with pain and with worry

Father: stir up in me the righteous anger that cries out when people are taken advantage of, and that reaches out with love when they find themselves in need – much the way Jesus did. Amen

Doing:

Thursday, 15 September 2016