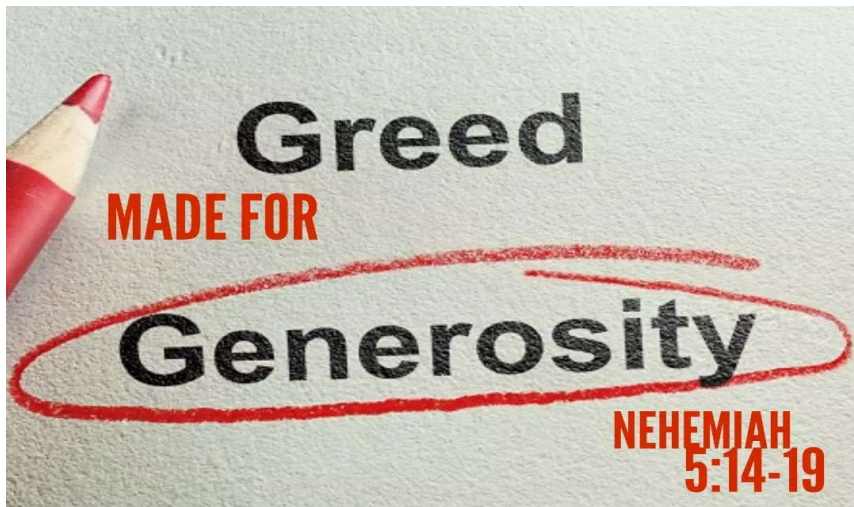




Nehemiah 5:14-19 New Revised Standard Version

¹⁴Moreover from the time that I was appointed to be their governor in the land of Judah, from the twentieth year to the thirty-second year of King Artaxerxes, twelve years, neither I nor my brothers ate the food allowance of the governor. ¹⁵The former governors who were before me laid heavy burdens on the people, and took food and wine from them, besides forty shekels of silver. Even their servants lorded it over the people. But I did not do so, because of the fear of God. ¹⁶Indeed, I devoted myself to the work on this wall, and acquired no land; and all my servants were gathered there for the work. ¹⁷Moreover there were at my table one hundred fifty people, Jews and officials, besides those who came to us from the nations around us. ¹⁸Now that which was prepared for one day was one ox and six choice sheep; also fowls were prepared for me, and every ten days skins of wine in abundance; yet with all this I did not demand the food allowance of the governor, because of the heavy burden of labor on the people. ¹⁹Remember for my good, O my God, all that I have done for this people.



How would you like for others to remember you? For Kathryn Andrews, it was in the form of her recipe for fudge. Now, we have all had family recipes to be passed from one generation to the next, but I will bet none of us has requested for one to be left upon our headstone after our passing. However, if you visit the cemetery in Logan, Utah, you will find that very thing etched into Kathryn's. Fudge. It seems like such a simple, maybe even trivial sort of thing, but it was special to Kathryn Andrews and those who knew her well.

One day, you and I will leave this life and people will assemble to celebrate who we were and what we did with our years. What will be said of us? He was the life of the party? She was a really good dancer? As meaningful as those memories might be, what will be said about our willingness to give? How does what we have in this life find itself being used for the blessing of others?

That was important for Nehemiah when he reflected upon his time leading God's people following their return from captivity. For twelve years, Nehemiah used what he had not to make for himself a comfortable living, but rather to see to it that others were taken care of. He was through his example what we call generous.

To look at Nehemiah's means, we might think to ourselves, "What would you expect? He had it to give!" However, such an attitude misses what it means to be generous people. We do not have to be well-to-do families or individuals before we decide to be a blessing to others. It is all a matter of perspective. When we look at what we have and feel as though "we deserve it" or "we will be without if we do give," we have missed the point of our blessings.

We are blessed in order that we might be a blessing for others. God's nature includes generosity and, since we are created in the divine image, shouldn't that be indicative of who we are and how we function? We all have the ability to make a difference in someone else's life, but we must allow God to help us to see things in the right manner.

John Wesley, the founder of Methodism, once said of our ambition in life: "Do all the good you can, in all the ways you can, to all the souls you can, in every place you can, at all the times you can, with all the zeal you can, as long as ever you can." May this be true of us!

Prayer Pebble: Lord, use what I have for the good of others.