

Nehemiah's Prayer of Supplication (Part 2 of #2)

Nehemiah 1: 5-11

Last week we began to consider the prayer that Nehemiah prayed concerning the state of affairs in Jerusalem. He is serving as the cupbearer of King Artaxerxes of Persia, a prominent position of influence, and yet he is burdened for the needs of Jerusalem. Clearly we need those in our day who are burdened for the state of affairs within our society as Nehemiah was.

Since this is the second of a two-part message, I want to take a moment to review the aspects of Nehemiah's prayer that we discussed last week.

I. A Prayer of Recognition (5)

A. The Supremacy of God – LORD God of heaven. (Jehovah)

B. The Sufficiency of God – the God who inhabits the heavens.

C. The Sanctity of God – great and terrible God. *To be feared and stood in awe of.*

D. The Security of God – the God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments.

E. The Stipulations of God – for them that love him and observe his commandments.

II. A Prayer of Resignation (6a)

A. The Plea – Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open.

B. The Passion – that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant.

C. The Persistence – which I pray before thee now, day and night.

D. The Perception – Nehemiah realized he was totally dependent on God.

III. A Prayer of Repentance (6b-7)

A. The Confession (6b) – for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

B. The Admission (6b) – which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.

C. The Corruption (7) – We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.

So, let's continue to consider the aspects of prayer as we think on: [Nehemiah's Prayer of Supplication](#).

IV. A Prayer for Restoration (8-9)

A. A Reminder of the Word (8a) – Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: Nehemiah was certainly mindful of the Word of God. He knew God's Word and he sought to live by it and apply its teaching to the current situation. He humbly pleads the promises of God's Word to the Lord as he prays to Him.

- This was not a prayer of arrogance, demanding anything of the Lord or accusing Him of being unfaithful. In fact, it is quite the contrary. As Nehemiah prays, he finds comfort and strength from the Word. He knew the promises of God concerning His people and Nehemiah was claiming those promises before God.
- We are not under the old covenant made with Israel. We are under the new covenant made through the atonement of Jesus Christ our Lord, and yet we have many precious promises that we can claim and find comfort in. As we pray, we need to be reminded of the security that we have in the Lord revealed in the pages of His precious Word! [Ps.119:89 – For ever, O Lord, thy word is settled in heaven.](#) [1 Pet.1:25 – But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.](#)

B. A Rehearsal of the Warning (8b) – [saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations:](#) Nehemiah was well aware of the holiness of God and His intolerance of sin and idolatry. He confesses his belief that God will judge sin in the lives of men. God had so declared in His Word and Nehemiah, as well as many in his generation, had experienced the judgment of God for sin.

- Many in our day need to be reminded of the holiness of God and His judgment of sin. In fact, it would do us well to be reminded of that as well. We need to rehearse that to our children. We need to be reminded of His holiness and of His expectation of righteousness for the church.

C. A Restoration of the Wayward (9) – It seems unnatural that one could find comfort in judgment, but Nehemiah did. He was able to find comfort in bondage because of the promises of God. After judgment God offers restoration. Let's see what is involved in restoration.

1. It Involves Repentance (9a) – [But if ye turn unto me](#). Nehemiah knew the Word of God and he knew the concept of repentance. The people had turned away from the Lord to follow idols and the pleasures of the flesh. They had strayed from the path that God had chosen for them. If they were to enjoy God's blessing and provision in Jerusalem once again, they must be willing to turn from the sin and unto God.

- That is the simplest and most accurate definition of repentance that we can find. Genuine repentance consists of making a full 180 degree turn. It involves turning from our sin and unto the Lord. It means we must abandon the lusts and desires of the flesh and seek the ways of God. We do not walk according to the world, but according to His Word.

2. It Involves Responsibility (9b) – [But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them](#); The people knew what they need to do, but it was up to them to fulfill that responsibility to God. They must decide to turn from their sin unto the Lord and honor the Word of God by following and keeping His commandments.

- You and I know what to do; we know what is expected of us according to the Word. We are responsible to live lives that honor the Lord and follow His direction. If we do not follow the Lord and receive His blessing, we have no one to blame but ourselves!

3. It Involves Renewal (9c) – [though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there](#). God promised renewal and restoration for those who turned from sin and sought to follow Him. Even though they endured chastisement and were scattered, He would once again restore them to the homeland.

- Our covenant does not include a geographic location, but God does promise to restore those who come, in repentance, to fellowship with Him. He no longer dwells in a temple made of man, but within the hearts of the redeemed. We can have our fellowship and unity restored through repentance and commitment to Him. [1 Jn.1:9 – If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.](#)

V. A Prayer of Remembrance (10) – Here we discover Nehemiah rehearsing the heritage of Israel before the Lord. He finds comfort in knowing that God has chosen them and promised to sustain them. Consider what Nehemiah spoke of.

A. The People (10a) – [Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.](#) As he prays, Nehemiah rejoices that they are the people of God. He sought them out and chose a relationship with them. They were not an average or ordinary group; they were the servants and people of Jehovah, the true and living God.

- We too can rejoice that we are His people. We are not of the lineage of Abraham, but we are His through our relationship with Christ. All men are God's creation, but all cannot claim the promises or benefits of a personal relationship with Christ.

B. The Pardon (10b) – [whom thou hast redeemed.](#) What a statement and what comfort that surely brought to Nehemiah. Even though they found themselves in bondage, chastised of the Lord, they were of His chosen people, those whom He redeemed unto Himself. The Lord had brought Abraham out of idolatry. He brought Israel out of Egypt and He would lead them out of captivity. They were His!

- The world can't claim the promise of redemption or take comfort in it, but the saved by grace can! We have been bought with a price. We have been cleansed of our unrighteousness through the shed blood of Jesus. We belong to Him, the redeemed! [Rom.8:1 – There is therefore now no condemnation to them which are in Christ Jesus, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit.](#)

C. The Power (10c) – [Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.](#) The report that Nehemiah received from Jerusalem was discouraging, but he took comfort in the Lord. The task was great, impossible within human ability, but he rested in the God of redemption, the One who possesses great power and a mighty strong hand!

- The task we face is overwhelming at times. I realize that our world grows darker and more sinful each day. There are fewer today than ever before who are concerned with the ways of God. It may seem a monumental task, but take courage because we do not walk alone. We have not been asked to stand within our own strength. We serve the God of heaven, One of great power and a strong hand. There is nothing that we can't accomplish with the help of the Lord. When the world says we can't, God says I can! [Phil.4:13 – I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me.](#) [Eph.3:19-20 – And to know the love of Christ, which passeth knowledge, that ye might be filled with all the fulness of God.](#) [20] [Now unto him that is able to do exceeding abundantly above all that we ask or think, according to the power that worketh in us,](#) We are more than conquerors in Christ!

VI. A Prayer of Reliance (11) – Here we discover that Nehemiah realized his need for the Lord and revealed His desire for His help. Notice:

A. Their Devotion (11a) – O Lord, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: Keep in mind that Nehemiah had a position of prosperity with the king. Many of the Jews had made a decent living for themselves even in bondage. Many had grown comfortable among the world. Nehemiah reveals that even in the midst of momentary prosperity, their hearts were still devoted to the Lord. They still longed for home and the worship of the Lord.

- What a challenge that presents to us as well. We need to renew our commitment and devotion to the Lord. Who has done for us what He has? Who has offered the abundance and security that He has? Surely we are obligated to seek and serve Him.

B. Their Desire (11b) – who desire to fear thy name: Even though many may have enjoyed a measure of success and comfort in a foreign land, their hearts still desired the Lord. They longed to worship Him and enjoy the land that He had for them. Some had decided that nothing the world offers compares to that which the Lord gives.

- Could that be honestly said of us this evening? Do we genuinely desire the Lord? Is He the passion of our hearts? I fear that many give Him of their leftovers: leftover time, leftover energy, and leftover devotion. I pray that we will make Him the priority rather than the leftover.

C. Their Dependence (11c) – and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer. Nehemiah enjoyed a position of prominence, but it was one that the king would likely not desire to lose. The task in Jerusalem was overwhelming. The desire to go and rebuild the wall was a noble one, but it would require the provision and help of God. Nehemiah knew that if he was to be successful, God would have to make a way.

- We may not realize it or want to admit it, but we are totally dependent upon the Lord. We do not live of ourselves. All that we need and enjoy is given of Him. The task that we are engaged in is beyond our ability to perform. We need the Lord's guidance and strength. I hope that we realize apart from Him we are nothing and will achieve nothing of lasting value. We need the Lord!

As I considered the prayer of Nehemiah I was greatly challenged. I was reminded of the responsibility I have to live for the Lord and follow Him. I also was challenged regarding the work that needs to be done in our day. There are many walls in a state of disrepair. We need those who will rise to the challenge and be used of the Lord. We cannot do it alone, but with His help we will accomplish that which He desires.

Is there a need in your life? Are there areas that you need to improve? Are there things that you need to get right with Him? Maybe you don't have the assurance of being part of the redeemed. Maybe you don't enjoy that personal relationship with the Lord. He wants you to know Him and have a personal relationship with Him. Are you willing to lay aside the desires of this life for the abundance that only Christ can give?

