

Nehemiah

Building the Church One Person at a time

(Jer. 25:3-12; Dt. 29:22-28; Nehemiah 1:1-11)

“God’s Leaders PRAY”

- Theme: Leadership;** God’s leaders see real needs; they LEAD others to help them meet those needs; serve, share, glory
- God’s leaders have a burden to build His Kingdom and accomplish His plan, God’s Ways
 - God’s leaders have a burden to protect the innocent & hurting; to RUN to the wounded for their defense & aid
 - God’s leaders have a burden to render to God all the glory, through right worship, right action, & dev. to Word

Context: 1-2 Chronicles Ezra-Nehemiah (all written in the same period during exile).

- God gave His Presence, Promise, Provision, & Power (protect); God gave ‘em Land, Law, Levitical Worship = Israel had everything they could every need . . . **they still chose Idols over God’s love** = they still **Rebelled** against God & **REJECTED** His Presence and blessings – **Are you the same way? Is this your life**

-Israel’s Warning (12 prophets) – **Jeremiah 25:3-12** “these twenty-three years the word of the Lord has come to me, and I have spoken to you again and again, but you have not listened. ⁴ And the Lord has sent to you all His servants the prophets again and again, but you have not listened nor inclined your ear to hear, ⁵ saying, ‘Turn now, everyone from his evil way and from the evil of your deeds, and live on the land which the Lord has given to you and your forefathers forever and ever; ⁶ and do not follow other gods to [Ⓜ]serve them and to [Ⓜ]worship them, and do not provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands, then I will do you no harm.’ ⁷ Yet you have not listened to Me,” declares the Lord, “in order to provoke Me to anger with the work of your hands to your own harm. ⁸ “Therefore this is what the Lord of armies says: ‘Because you have not obeyed My words, ⁹ behold, I will send and take all the families of the north,’ declares the Lord, ‘and *I will send* to Nebuchadnezzar king of Babylon, My servant, and will bring them against this land and against its inhabitants and against all these surrounding nations; and I will [Ⓜ]completely destroy them and make them an object of horror and [Ⓜ]hissing, and an everlasting place of ruins. ¹⁰ Moreover, I will eliminate from them the voice of jubilation and the voice of joy, the voice of the groom and the voice of the bride, the sound of the millstones and the light of the lamp. ¹¹ **This entire land will be a place of ruins and an object of horror, and these nations will serve the king of Babylon for seventy years.** ¹² ‘Then it will be when seventy years are completed I will punish the king of Babylon and that nation,’ declares the Lord, ‘for their wrongdoing, and the land of the Chaldeans; and I will make it an everlasting desolation.’”

-God’s Punishment READ **Deut. 29:22-28** “Now the future generation, your sons who rise up after you and the foreigner who comes from a distant land, when they see the plagues of that land and the diseases with which the Lord has afflicted it, will say, ²³ ‘All its land is brimstone and salt, burned debris, [Ⓜ]unsown and unproductive, and no grass grows on it, like the overthrow of Sodom and Gomorrah, Admah and Zeboiim, which the Lord overthrew in His anger and in His wrath.’ ²⁴ All the nations will say, ‘Why has the Lord done *all* this to this land? Why this great [Ⓜ]outburst of anger?’ ²⁵ Then *people* will say, ‘*It is* because they abandoned the covenant of the Lord, the God of their fathers, which He made with them when He brought them out of the land of Egypt. ²⁶ And they went and served other gods and worshiped them, gods that they have not known and whom He had not [Ⓜ]assigned to them. ²⁷ Therefore, the anger of the Lord burned against that land, to bring upon it every curse which is written in this book; ²⁸ and the Lord uprooted them from their land in anger, fury, and in great wrath, and hurled them into another land, as *it is* this day.’”

-**EXILE** to Babylon 70yrs. (Babylon eventually defeated by Persia). After 70 years (as prophesized), the new Persian ruler Cyrus allowed Jews to return to Israel. 50,000 went home, rebuilt the altar, then a year later they began to rebuild the Temple.

Nehemiah’s Memoirs: (his perspective in history = **Historical Narrative**) . **as a first-born generation in Babyl.**

Vs. 11: “Now I was the cupbearer to the king” – whether by birth, or own ambition, Neh. Gained a trusted position to affect the outcome of his people. (He was favored by God in a favored position). = Influence! He wanted to lever

Nehemiah 1:1-11 “The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachabiah. Now it happened in the month Chislew, *in* the twentieth year, while I was in Susa the capitol, ² that Hanani, one of my brothers, and some men from Judah came; and I asked them about the Jews who had escaped [Ⓜ]and had survived the captivity, and about Jerusalem. ³ And they said to me, “The remnant there in the province who survived the captivity are in great distress and disgrace, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates have been burned with fire.” ⁴ Now when I heard these

words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. ⁵ I said, "Please, Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps the covenant and faithfulness for those who love Him and keep His commandments: ⁶ let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open, to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have committed against You; I and my father's house have sinned. ⁷ We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. ⁸ Remember, please, the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; ⁹ but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I have chosen to have My name dwell.' ¹⁰ They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand. ¹¹ Please, Lord, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and please make Your servant successful today and grant him mercy before this man." Now I was the cupbearer to the king."

MAIN POINT: Before any spiritual action is taken in your life, PRAY! Prayer is the source of spiritual power in your life. Without prayer, you are powerless to accomplish God's WILL for your life, help others, or glorify God. So PRAY!!!

Prayer is the life-source of your relationship with God. It is vital. It is the air in your lungs (critical) It is not to be complicated or religious, = simple communication = listening; talking; enjoying relationship!

"Our praying needs to be pressed and pursued with an energy that never tires, a persistency which will not be denied, and a courage that never fails." E. M. Bounds

Prayer Principles:

- A. In prayer, the motivation of our heart should be Relationship.** Mt. 6:33 **Seek = delight vs duty**
- B. In prayer, God wants to remind us that He alone is God & we are ever dependent on Him for Everything**
- C. In prayer, God answers in His timing, & for that which will bring Him the most glory in us (pain/suff.)**

Notice the content of Nehemiah's Prayer:

1. Nehemiah made a habit of prayer: He took his hurts, anxiety, needs before the Lord. He was serious/^{fasted}

⁴ Now when I heard these words, I sat down and wept and mourned for days; and I was fasting and praying before the God of heaven. (Nehemiah's relationship with God meant that God was the safest person to take his pain to, God was his automatic safeplace). – **Is that true for you? Friends first?? Spouse? Habits/Idols?**

- Nehemiah's posture of prayer was often and intentional. He didn't just pray once and expect an answer.

- Jesus taught in Lk 18:7 "And will not God bring about justice for his chosen ones, who cry out to him day and night? Will he keep putting them off? ⁸ I tell you, he will see that they get justice, and quickly. **However, when the Son of Man comes, will he find faith on the earth?**" Do YOU have the HABIT of prayer (not just in emergencies)

2. Nehemiah began with Praise and Adoration

⁵ I said, "Please, Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps the covenant and faithfulness for those who love Him and keep His commandments: ⁶ let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open, to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, - It is important to remember that God is the source of all life, all worth, all power = HE alone deserves our praise, worship, honor, adoration. **We need to remind ourselves**, humble ourselves = worship

-Mt. 6:9 Jesus taught the form of prayer to His disciples (our Father, in heaven, HOLY is your Name) King./will

-**If you were to write a love letter to your spouse: what would you say? Prayer is our daily love letter to God**

3. Nehemiah Confessed his sin and the sins of his family, country

⁶ let Your ear now be attentive and Your eyes open, to hear the prayer of Your servant which I am praying before You now, day and night, on behalf of the sons of Israel Your servants, confessing the sins of the sons of Israel which we have committed against You; I and my father's house have sinned. ⁷ We have acted very corruptly against You and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the ordinances which You commanded Your servant Moses. – He sinned specifically = he confessed specifically. 1 John 1:9

4. Nehemiah prayed Scripture and remembered the Promises of God

⁸ Remember, please, the word which You commanded Your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples; ⁹ but if you return to Me and keep My commandments and do them, though those

of you who have been scattered were in the most remote part of the heavens, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place where I have chosen to have My name dwell.¹⁰ They are Your servants and Your people whom You redeemed by Your great power and by Your strong hand.” Neh. quoting Deuteronomy 30 . . .

Deut. 30: 1-5 “So it will be when all of these things have come upon you, the blessing and the curse which I have placed before you, and you ^(a)call *them* to mind in all the nations where the Lord your God has scattered you, ² and you return to the Lord your God and ^(b)obey Him with all your heart and soul in accordance with everything that I am commanding you today, you and your sons, ³ then the Lord your God will restore ^(c)you from captivity, and have compassion on you, and will gather you again from all the peoples where the Lord your God has scattered you. ⁴ If any of your scattered *countrymen* are at the ^(d)ends of the earth, from there the Lord your God will gather you, and from there He will ^(e)bring you back. ⁵ The Lord your God will bring you into the land which your fathers possessed, and you shall possess it; and He will be good to you and make you more numerous than your fathers.”

-Remember, the prayer that gets to heaven is the one that starts in heaven: Holy Scripture is God’s heart

5. Nehemiah Asked the Lord for specific requests because he trusted God’s heart for him

¹¹ Please, Lord, may Your ear be attentive to the prayer of Your servant and the prayer of Your servants who delight to revere Your name, and please make Your servant successful today and grant him mercy before this man.” Because Neh. trusted the Lord, trusted in His goodness & power, and trusted that God has his best interest in heart, Nehemiah was unafraid to ask specifically for God’s favor and blessing **FOR GOD’S GLORY first!!!!**

Do you see a prayer pattern:

- Adoration**
- Confession**
- Thanksgiving**
- Supplication**

APPLICATION:

- God is calling out leaders to lead their lives, their families, the church, & reach this community – YOU?**
- We cannot lead anyone or anything and expect a spiritual result or God’s blessing w/o PRAYER and His power**
- Will you begin today to evaluate your prayer life? Seek the Lord’s presence. LISTEN to Him. Read His love letter to you and learn how to pray back Scripture to Him.**