

Nehemiah: Take it to the Lord in Prayer
Nehemiah 1:5-11

I. Nehemiah's prayer outlines the attitudes of a servant God will use to restore His glory among His people.

A. A godly man acknowledges the primacy of God in all things.

1. Does not begin with national right to exist or other self-interest.
2. Nehemiah starts with God and who God is and goes from there
 - a. Nehemiah calls God by name because God is personal
 - b. Nehemiah acknowledges the Lord is "God in heaven."
 - (1) Heaven is where God is praised as unique and holy
 - (2) Heaven is where God's will is cherished and obeyed without hesitation
 - (3) Heaven is where God's glory is fully realized and adored
 - (4) Heaven is what we long for earth to be like!
 - (a) No jealousy
 - (b) No rage
 - (c) No anxiety
 - (d) No conflict
 - (e) No sorrow
 - (f) No ruined wall; no broken people
 - (5) Nehemiah sets the glory of heaven as his desire people
3. Nehemiah describes God as great and awesome
 - a. God's perfections and abilities surpass definition
 - (1) "What we can define we can destroy or dismiss."
 - b. God's person deserves genuine awe, respect, honor, and trust
4. Where do your prayers reveal God fits in your life and expectations?
 - a. Is God personal and do your prayers demonstrate you have a personal relationship with Him?
 - b. Do your prayers reveal awe at God's greatness and power, wonder at His majesty, admiration of His glory?
 - c. Is the spread of God's glory your first priority in prayer and in life?
 - d. **A godly man or woman acknowledges the primacy of God in all things.**

B. A godly man acknowledges the reality of personal sin and embraces the privilege of confession and repentance.

1. True confession makes no excuses, rationalizations, no self-justification.
2. "We have not obeyed the commands, decrees, and laws" you gave us.
 - a. The OT law, given to Moses, was the revelation of the mind and heart and love of God in that day
 - b. Jesus is the revelation of God's love in our day.
 - (1) **John 14:15 (NIV) *If you love me, you will obey what I command.***
 - (2) **John 13:34 (NIV) *A new command I give you: Love one another. As I have loved you, so you must love one***

another.

- c. Jesus makes three promises in John 14 for those who love him:
 - (1) He will send the Comforter
 - (2) The Father with love the one who loves Jesus
 - (3) Jesus will show himself to the one who loves him
- d. If these promises are not being fulfilled in your life experience, perhaps it is because there is sin and disobedience you need to confess.
- e. **A godly man acknowledges the reality of personal sin and embraces the privilege of confession and repentance.**

C. A godly man whom God will use to restore His glory among His people acknowledges the justice and the mercy of a righteous and holy God.

- 1. **Deuteronomy 4:25-31 (ESV)** ²⁵ *“When you father children and children’s children, and have grown old in the land, if you act corruptly by making a carved image in the form of anything, and by doing what is evil in the sight of the LORD your God, so as to provoke him to anger,* ²⁶ *I call heaven and earth to witness against you today, that you will soon utterly perish from the land that you are going over the Jordan to possess. You will not live long in it, but will be utterly destroyed.* ²⁷ *And the LORD will scatter you among the peoples, and you will be left few in number among the nations where the LORD will drive you.* ²⁸ *And there you will serve gods of wood and stone, the work of human hands, that neither see, nor hear, nor eat, nor smell.* ²⁹ *But from there you will seek the LORD your God and you will find him, if you search after him with all your heart and with all your soul.* ³⁰ *When you are in tribulation, and all these things come upon you in the latter days, you will return to the LORD your God and obey his voice.* ³¹ *For the LORD your God is a merciful God. He will not leave you or destroy you or forget the covenant with your fathers that he swore to them.*
- 2. God is a merciful God whose heart desire is for you to return to him with all your heart and find in him all you need for life and godliness, for joy and comfort, for strength and peace, all of which manifest His glory in the world.
- 3. Nehemiah demonstrates that He knows full well that God has revealed Himself as holy and worthy of wholehearted commitment.
 - a. God did not hide what would happen if the people rejected Him
 - b. God did promise to forgive and restore those who return to Him
 - c. **A godly man whom God will use to restore His glory among His people acknowledges the justice and the mercy of a righteous and holy God.**

D. A godly man acknowledges the need for God to act if His glory is to be restored in the lives of His people.

- 1. Nehemiah makes no effort to convince God of his ability to deliver God’s people and build a wall.
- 2. Nehemiah calls on God who delivers people by His own strength to deliver His people again and use Nehemiah if God wants to.

3. Nehemiah's confidence is not in himself or his ability to perform the task.
4. Nehemiah's confidence is in God
 - a. Because God rescued His people from slavery in Egypt (and it was awesome)
 - b. Because God led His people through the wilderness (and it was incredible)
 - c. Because God opened the way through Jordan into the land of promise (and it was amazing)
 - d. Because not one single thing of all God said or did failed (and it was glorious)
5. The God
 - a. who parted the seas and the rivers,
 - b. who changed Pharaoh's mind,
 - c. who took a single family and turned them into a nation, who sets the stars in places and the limits on the oceans,
 - d. this God who gives life and holds life together
 - e. reaches out to you in love
 - f. and invites you to know Him so that He can send you to spread the knowledge of His glory throughout the whole earth
6. God desires to change your life and change the lives of others through you to reflect the glory of His person
7. **A godly man acknowledges the need for God to act if His glory is to be restored in the lives of His people.**

II. The need is great. How great is our prayer in relation to the greatness of the need?

A. Questions

1. About our prayers
 - a. Do our prayers reveal the heart of a godly man whom God can use to restore His glory among His people?
 - b. Do our prayers reveal small, stingy, selfish hearts that seldom rise above the sense of our own petty needs?
2. About our sin
 - a. Do we confess our sins and repent in humility, accepting God's love and grace in His terms?
 - b. Do we ignore and dismiss our sin and expect God to honor our privacy and treat our sins as inconsequential as we do?
3. About God's justice and mercy
 - a. Do we hold up God's justice and mercy as the reason we are in the state we are in as people, as a church, as a community, as a nation, as the world?
 - b. Do we see that God sovereignly acts in human history to bring people to Himself so that through their life interactions with Him the whole world will see and love the character of God?
 - c. Do we see God as distant, unconcerned, a liar who said He loves us but does little for us that deserves our devotion?
4. About God's potential

- a. Do we cry out to God to act as only He can, waiting and trusting Him to do so, then acting in faith upon what He directs?
- b. Do we give God a set of instructions and a time line and set out to solve our own need ourselves when disappointment sets in?

B. Conclusion

- 1. Godly men and women whom God uses to restore His glory among His people are men and women wholly devoted to God in love and obedience, and their prayer lives demonstrate their convictions.
- 2. What does your prayer life reveal about your heart attitudes?
 - a. Whatever the answer to that question is, God's love leads you to a deeper conviction of His adequacy and a deeper contentment with Him
 - b. Give Him your life today;
 - (1) commit yourself to Him;
 - (2) hold nothing back;
 - (3) watch God make the impossible possible