

Nehemiah's Prayer in a Time of Crisis Nehemiah 1:1-11 for April 1, 2020

1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

3 They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. 5 Then I said:

"Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. 7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

8 "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, 9 but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

10 "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. 11 Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."

I was cupbearer to the king.

Icebreaker:

- Where is "home" for you?
- How long (or what is the longest time) that you have been away from home?
- What unfinished (or unstarted) projects at home most disturb you now that you spend more time at home?

Nehemiah's prayer was born out of a crisis, but what is impressive is that it is also a declaration of his faith in God.

Nehemiah's Concern 1:1-4

1. Why is Nehemiah so concerned about Jerusalem?

2. What does he learn about Jerusalem's condition from Hanani and others in v 2-4?

3. Background (extra): How do the events in 2 Kings 25:9-21 and Ezra 4:7-24 relate to Nehemiah's concern?

4. How grieved are you about the physical and spiritual state of God's people during this COVID-19 Crisis? Enough to pray or to fast or to act?

Nehemiah responds with fasting and prayer 1:4-11

5. What are some of the attributes of God in Nehemiah's prayer?

6. How does Nehemiah rest or place his plan in the attributes of God?

7. In which attribute of God can you rest in your current circumstances?

8. What does Nehemiah's prayer reveal about His relationship with God? What do your prayers reveal about your relationship with God?

9. Nehemiah moves from worship to confession in v6-7.
Re-state his personal and national confession in your own words.

10. When you focus on the attributes of God in this prayer, how do you begin to see yourself in light of who God is?

- Spend time right now in confession as you agree with God about the sin in your own life.

11. What warnings does Nehemiah remind the people of Israel to remember? Why?

12. A repeated phrase in this prayer is "let your ear be attentive", what does Nehemiah want God to see and hear?

13. Nehemiah interceded for the nation. How can you intercede for our church, community, nation or world? What do you want God to see or hear?

14. By the end of the prayer, Nehemiah-the king's cupbearer discerned a plan. In our present time of crisis, how is God speaking to you? How is he calling you to leave your comfort zone for the sake of the gospel?