

Let's Worship God

10th-15th June 2019
Nehemiah



NEHEMIAH

pray | plan | build

Monday - Jeremiah 25:1-11; 29:10-14 - God is Faithful

We are going to be looking at the book of Nehemiah using notes by Rev Tim Donachie. The prophet Jeremiah had not only predicted the destruction of Jerusalem and its temple, but he had also predicted that there would be a return. The return of Nehemiah in 444 B.C. was the final act in the rebuilding of both Temple and city in fulfilment of the promise of God. This long process of restoration and rehabilitation has some important lessons to teach the people of God today:

1. God is always faithful to what He has promised. The promise given through Jeremiah must have seemed foolish and wildly optimistic to those who had seen city and Temple destroyed and all the people carried off into exile, and yet God was faithful. We can believe all that God has promised in His Word for He is ever faithful.

2. Sometimes the fulfilment comes gradually. It was more than a hundred years from the first of the exiles returning until the walls of the city were rebuilt in the time of Nehemiah. God does not always carry out His purposes to fit in with our human time scale - He works as pleases Him and in accordance with His own plan. The responsibility of the believer is to follow obediently the revealed will of God in each circumstance.

3. God uses more than one person to carry out His plan. There are many pieces in the jigsaw of God's plan and just as in a jigsaw there are different shapes and sizes, so in the fulfilment of God's plan there are people with differing gifts and abilities and for the finished picture to be complete, each one must faithfully fulfil his part.

Questions

1. What did God promise to do in Jeremiah?
2. Did this happen right away?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that God always keeps His promises.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.” Nehemiah 1:10

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 17 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Tuesday - Nehemiah 1:1-4 - Taking It to Heart

The book opens by identifying the author as Nehemiah the son of Hacaliah. Nehemiah had grown up in exile and had risen to a position of authority within the king's household. He was serving in the city of Susa, the winter palace of the king of Persia - the same place where Esther had lived as queen.

As so often in the Scriptures it seems that the initial contact that Nehemiah had with the returned exiles came about by accident 'Now it happened', but that is just another illustration of the work of the God who plans according to his own will (Eph.1:5). It may be that the men from Judah had gone back to Susa to visit family who had not returned but whatever the reason that took them there, God purposed that they would meet with Nehemiah. Amongst the men was one of Nehemiah's brothers called Hanani (7:2).

Nehemiah asked about the welfare of the Jews who had returned to Judah from captivity - he was informed that the people were in great distress and reproach, the city wall was broken down and the gates burned with fire. (2 Kings 25:8-10; 2 Chron. 36:19; Jer. 52:12-14). It was not the fact of the destruction caused by Nebuchadnezzar in 586 that caused Nehemiah to weep and to mourn for days on end, it was the fact that ninety years after the return from exile, the situation remained the same.

Nehemiah's reaction is a challenge to the church today. The walls of the professing church in our land have been and are being destroyed by false doctrine, complacency, accommodation with the world and failure to reach out to a fallen world, and yet we do not take it to heart.

Questions

1. Who planned the meeting between Nehemiah and the returned exiles?
2. What did Nehemiah take to heart?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that the Lord would work in the churches in our land.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.” Nehemiah 1:10

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 18 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Wednesday - Nehemiah 1:5-11 - Prayer and Willingness

Nehemiah does not simply moan and complain and criticise those in Jerusalem for not getting on with the work, as we might well do. The sorry condition of the Lord's people not only moves him to tears, it also galvanises him into action. The first thing that he does is to seek God's face in prayer, and there are certain features that should be noticed with regard to his prayer:

1. It is serious and genuine - he continued for a period of days without even seeking to satisfy his normal physical needs - 'fasting and praying', 'day and night'.
2. It is based on the character of God - he recognised God as the almighty and sovereign God who had entered into covenant with His own people. v.5
3. He confessed his own and his people's sin vs 6-7
4. He pleaded the promises that God had made to his people in the past and the way that He had delivered them throughout their history.

The second thing that Nehemiah did was to make himself available to go to Jerusalem to do something about the situation. It is clear from what happens later that Nehemiah was already planning to go to Jerusalem, and so he prays for God to soften the heart of the heathen king and make him amenable to his request. What is especially significant is that Nehemiah began his praying in December (Chislew) but only made his request to the king in April (Nisan).

Should we not confess our people's sin, our rebellion and covenant breaking? Should we not pray for mercy in the terms that Nehemiah did and should we not be willing to say, 'Here am I, send me'?

Questions

1. What does Nehemiah do when he hears the news?
2. What does he pray for?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would be willing to serve our Lord.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand." Nehemiah 1:10

Praise: Psalm 119: Part 19 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Thursday - Daniel 1:1-14 - Placed in Position

In an almost 'throw-away' line at the end of the first chapter Nehemiah states 'Now I was the cupbearer to the king'. This seemingly insignificant statement has a great deal to teach, not only in the context of the story of Nehemiah but also for the life of the child of God as he lives in an increasingly godless world.

Because there were constant plots against kings the cupbearer had to be thoroughly trustworthy. Because of his reliability he often became a confidant of the king which gave him a position of great influence.

It is quite astonishing to see how God was placing his servants into positions of influence during the time of the exile: Esther, Shadrach, Meshach, Abednego, Daniel, and now Nehemiah:

1. God is sovereign over the affairs of men and of nations, a truth that king Nebuchadnezzar was brought to understand. Dan. 4:35
2. Everything that God does he does for the good of his people. Rom. 8:28
3. It is possible to be faithful to the Word and will of God in even the most heathen situations and under the most extreme pressure. Dan. 1:1 - 9; 3:16 - 18.
4. When God places his people in positions of responsibility in heathen surroundings, He expects them to honour Him. Esther 4:13 - 14

Most Christians will never be in the kind of situations in which Esther, Daniel and his friends and Nehemiah found themselves, but every Christian lives in a hostile world, and it is important to consider why God has placed you in your particular circumstances, and how you can serve and honour Him there.

Questions

1. Why was the cupbearer important?
2. Who had placed Nehemiah in this position?

Prayer Points

1. Pray that we would glorify God in all circumstances.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

“They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand.” Nehemiah 1:10

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 20 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

NEHEMIAH

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Friday - Nehemiah 2:1-4; Psalm 137 - A Sad Heart

We can safely assume that for four or five months the situation in Jerusalem was at the forefront of Nehemiah's thoughts and prayers. It seems clear that the burden upon his heart became more and more overwhelming as time went on, so much so, that he could no longer maintain a facade of cheerfulness as he went about his duties in the presence of the king. When the king noticed that his trusted advisor was so distressed that he was not able to hide it, he rightly diagnosed that Nehemiah's problem was not physical, but was due to sadness of heart.

Nehemiah was not able to put the distressed state of the people of God out of his mind, as we do so easily when we hear of the low condition of much of the professing church of Christ. How often would our employers or friends or neighbours know by our faces how much we took to heart the decline and apostasy so evident in the church?

When the king enquired the reason for his sadness, Nehemiah was quite naturally afraid, for Eastern rulers of that period had an absolute power of life and death. Nehemiah's fear however, did not prevent him from telling the king exactly what was in his heart. His reply is a model of respect and conciseness and left the king in no doubt about the problem that was weighing so heavily upon him. The way the king responded to Nehemiah's concerns gives an indication of the regard that the king had for him. He could simply have treated the matter as something of no interest or importance, relating as it did to a foreign city and a strange religion, but instead he asks Nehemiah what it is that he wants the king to do.

What a great example of the truth of the Scripture that states, 'The king's heart is like channels of water in the hand of the Lord; He turns it wherever He wishes'.

Questions

1. Why was Nehemiah sad?
2. What did the king say to him?

Prayer Points

1. Give thanks that God controls the hearts of men.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand." Nehemiah 1:10

Praise: Psalm 119: Part 21 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.



Saturday - Nehemiah 2:1-8 - A Quick Prayer

It is clear from the response that Nehemiah made to the king that he had given much thought to what was needed to be done to resolve the situation in Jerusalem. As he had wept and prayed during the months since he had received the sad news he had evidently sought wisdom from God and had employed his mind to the task. However, when the opportunity arose to tell the king what was in his mind, the very first thing that he did was to pray.

This is an example of what has been called an 'arrow prayer'. There was no time for Nehemiah to go to a quiet place to seek God's face, right there in the presence of the king and queen, being in a situation of great fear, he quickly and silently asks God for wisdom and courage to present his request to the king. No amount of planning and forethought in the work of God can succeed without prayer, and Nehemiah was well aware of that.

There is one other very significant and vital element in this meeting between Nehemiah and the king. When the king granted his detailed request Nehemiah did not attribute success to the greatness of his plan or the high esteem in which the king held him, but to the fact that the hand of God was on him.

It is the constant teaching of Scripture that work done for God will prosper 'not by might nor by power' but by the Spirit of God. Zechariah 4:6 Even the very best of the servants of God are completely dependent upon the 'good hand of the Lord' being upon them. 1 Cor. 2:34.

Nehemiah here demonstrates the need for planning, prayer, and the presence and power of God in any work that is undertaken for the Lord.

Questions

1. What is an arrow prayer?
2. To whom did Nehemiah give the credit for what happened?

Prayer Points

1. Pray for the preaching and hearing of God's Word tomorrow.
2. Use prayer points from your congregation.
3. Pray for family matters.

Memory Verse

"They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand." Nehemiah 1:10

Praise: Psalm 119:Part 22 - See www.rpglobalalliance.org for Psalm tune helps.

The goal of Let's Worship God is to encourage and help you in your worship of God each day.

**God tells us that
Ezra read from
the book of the Law
day after day
and that
the people of God
were filled with joy!**

Let's Worship God is produced for the RP Global Alliance
by Airdrie Reformed Presbyterian Church of Scotland.

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