

“Re- Centering”

Nehemiah 1:4-11

Scripture for this week

Nehemiah 1:4-11 English Standard Version

Nehemiah's Prayer

⁴As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continued fasting and praying before the God of heaven. ⁵And I said, “O LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁶let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants, confessing the sins of the people of Israel, which we have sinned against you. Even I and my father's house have sinned. ⁷We have acted very corruptly against you and have not kept the commandments, the statutes, and the rules that you commanded your servant Moses. ⁸Remember the word that you commanded your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the peoples, ⁹but if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place that I have chosen, to make my name dwell there.’ ¹⁰They are your servants and your people, whom you have redeemed by your great power and by your strong hand. ¹¹O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man.”

Now I was cupbearer to the king.

Opening Dialogue

Take a few minutes to share with your group how you have been handling the Uncertainty of the times we are living in.

(If you didn't get to read some of the background to Nehemiah you are encouraged to look at last week's lesson and read the background to the story.)

This week we see how Nehemiah grounded himself, calmed his spirit and prepared himself to move ahead in the midst of so much uncertainty. The secret for Nehemiah is found in observing how he prayed and what he prayed for.

Imagine – the key for thriving in this pandemic and anything else life throws at us is found in these verses on prayer.

As a group talk through Nehemiah's prayer and discuss some or all of the following questions together.

- Why do you think that we often neglect consistent time in prayer?
- Share a time when you felt like you really connected with God in prayer? Was it in the midst of a challenging situation or something else?
- In verses 5-6 we see that praise is key for Nehemiah. Discuss the impact praising God for who he is will have in any situation.
- Verses 6b-7 talk about the need to confess our sin. What does confession mean to you – is it necessary and how do you assure yourself that you are forgiven? (Read 1 John 1:9)
- Take a few minutes and discuss how sin had destroyed the Israelites relationship with the Lord what was the consequences for that. Also note how Nehemiah claimed the promises of God for restoration if the people repented. (Leviticus 26:40-42) What does this reveal about the heart of God.
- We are in the midst of a pandemic. Some people are saying it is the judgement of God and others are saying it is a wake up call. How do you view this? What can we learn from Nehemiah in the way we pray and walk through this days of Uncertainty.

