

PRAYER OF DEDICATION: NEHEMIAH

GREAT PRAYERS OF THE BIBLE | PASTOR MATT ERICKSON | JULY 29, 2018 | NEHEMIAH 1:1-11; 2:1-8

"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, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you." (Nehemiah 1:5-6)

Being Moved: Allowing Ourselves to be Impacted by Wrong (Nehemiah 1:1-4)

The report to Nehemiah on the situation of Jerusalem (1:1-3)

Nehemiah's response to the report (1:4)

Moving God in Prayer: Four Pathways of Prayer (Nehemiah 1:5-11)

Recognizing the greatness of God (1:5-6a)

Naming sin before God (1:6b-7)

Calling God to be Faithful (1:8-9)

Asking God to Act (1:10-11)

Being Moved by God: Allowing Ourselves to Become Answers to Prayer (Nehemiah 2:1-8)

Four months of prayer (2:1)

Nehemiah before the king (2:2-3)

The opportunity through prayer (2:4-5)

The answer received (2:6-8)

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS:

1. We continue our series "Great Prayers of the Bible" by looking at a prayer from Nehemiah. After the destruction of Jerusalem and exile, Nehemiah becomes an important figure in the return from exile to the land, including the rebuilding of the city walls and gates. We will focus on Nehemiah's prayer and activity in Nehemiah 1:1-2:8. Before you begin the study, ask God to speak to you through His word and then read that passage aloud.
2. Background: Nehemiah, part of the Hebrew exiled people since Babylon overran Jerusalem in 587 BC, served as a cupbearer (1:11) to King Artaxerxes of Persia, who reigned 464-423 BC. The events of Nehemiah 1-2 take place roughly around 445 BC, likely following the events of the book of Ezra.
3. Read Nehemiah 1:1-3. What is the situation in which Nehemiah finds himself and what is the report that he hears back from his kinsmen about Jerusalem's situation?
4. In verse 4, we get a glimpse of the emotional impact of this news upon Nehemiah. What do you notice about Nehemiah? How does he respond to this news?
5. The prayer of Nehemiah in verses 5-11 has three basic parts. In the first part (verses 5-7), Nehemiah calls out to God in praise and repentance. Why do you think Nehemiah begins in this way?
6. The second part of Nehemiah's prayer (verses 8-9) expresses a call for God to be faithful to His promises. What is the basis of Nehemiah's prayer here? You may want to look at Deuteronomy 30:4; Psalm 106:47; Jeremiah 42:12; and Ezekiel 11:17 for background.
7. The third and final section of Nehemiah's prayer (verses 10-11) is a call for restoration, but with a specific end point. What Nehemiah asking for generally and specifically in his prayer?
8. What is one thing you learn from Nehemiah's approach to prayer here?
9. In Nehemiah 2:1-8 we see the next step both in Nehemiah's prayer (verse 4) and in the answer to Nehemiah's prayer (verses 4-8). Four months have passed between chapter 1 and chapter 2. What does that tell us about Nehemiah's dedication to prayer?
10. What does God do in relation to Nehemiah's prayers and how is he a part of the answer to his prayers?
11. What is one specific thing that God is speaking to you about prayer through this study? Discuss that with your small group or, if you are studying on your own, write it down and share it with someone later. Finish your study in prayer.

TAKE IT FURTHER: Mark your calendars for the City-wide Prayer Walk on August 18. More info here: eastbrook.org/summerofprayer.