

**I. Introduction:**

- A. I am mixing up the logical sequence of these messages from Nehemiah.
1. There lives in my mind the idea that certain messages are more appropriate for Sunday Nights than they are for Sunday Mornings.
  2. The same holds true between messages for Sunday Nights and messages for Prayer Meetings.
  3. I am probably too bound to my own man-made rules, but that is just the nature of my nature.
  4. Hopefully you will be able to arrange or rearrange these lessons as you need them.
- B. When Nehemiah heard the news from his kinsman who had returned from his heart was broken.
1. The temple was in disrepair again; the wall was broken down; the distant Jews were in poverty.
  2. Thus far we have been looking at Nehemiah's prayer in response to that report, but we haven't looked at it directly. We haven't studied it per se.
  3. All we have done is broken it apart just a bit and examined a couple aspects.
  4. Can we agree that basically Nehemiah wanted to hear that God's blessings were once again upon Israel?
  5. Isn't that the substance of his request.
  6. He said, *"Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand."*
  7. Lord you've promised to *"gather them from (the uttermost part of the heaven), and ... bring them unto the place that (you) have chosen to set (your) name there."*
  8. *"Now, Lord, give them physical and spiritual prosperity – peace and tranquility – that they might serve you in the fear of the Lord."*
  9. Isn't that essentially what Nehemiah was asking of God?
- C. Now, let's leave Nehemiah momentarily.
1. Let's go back through **your** recent prayer history – your honest, sincere requests before God.
  2. I can only imagine what some of them might be, so if I come close, I assure you it only because the Holy Spirit put those ideas in my head.
  3. What are some of the requests at the top of your prayer list?
    - a. There is the salvation of that loved one.
    - b. You've been praying for comfort for that friend who is grieving.
    - c. There are the needs of Bro. and Mrs. Nimmo at this time of crisis for them.
    - d. Someone you know has been diagnosed with Covid-19, and you are praying for a miraculous healing.
    - e. The evangelism of the Spokanes is on your prayer list, and the establishment of a mission there.
    - f. Is there the restoration of a backslidden friend?
    - g. Maybe you have been praying that the Lord would send a missionary to Tri-cities or Loveland or to the reservation.
    - h. And then finally, you've had a new pain or weakness in your aging body, and you've been asking the Lord to remove yet another thorn in your flesh.
  4. Usually, we have our public prayer lists and we have our more private ones.
- D. What can we learn from Nehemiah generally about answers those prayers of yours specifically?
1. I admit to walking a tight-rope here tonight.
  2. Some of this message will sound slightly heretical and religiously secular, but hang in with me.
  3. I believe that ultimately the application is entirely scriptural and glorifying to God.

**II. Nehemiah teaches us that we should be willing to be a part of God's answer to our prayer requests.**

- A. Admittedly there are many needs which can be met only by true, divine miracles without any human participation
1. And we may be in the habit of picturing nearly every one of our prayers needing those miracles.
  2. But I remind you that more often not, God uses means, tools and human beings to meet our needs.

- B. How many times did God send flocks of quail to feed Israel?
1. The people thought they were starving, so two or three times in 40 years God supplied.
  2. In addition to the more miraculous manna, there was the less miraculous divine meat market.
  3. Could not God automatically fill Hebrew bellies without the use of food of any kind? Certainly.
  4. But that is not how He works, so he sends quail & manna – miracles, but perhaps mundane miracles.
  5. That teenager with the Coronavirus needs the miraculous intervention of God to save her life.
  6. But that pain of yours may only need the new treatment of a chiropractor.
  7. You may ask God for a miracle, but maybe He will heal you with a regular dose of Glucosamine.
- C. When it comes to tools and means, God has a huge tool chest from which to select just the right one.
1. And you with your limited expertise may think He's not made the right choice.
  2. But if God has chosen, then the choice is obviously the best one.
  3. And here is my point – God may choose to **use even YOU** to answer your own prayer.
- D. Nehemiah was yearning for God's blessing on Judah.
1. That was at the top of his prayer list and the cherry on top was his own broken heart.
    - a. Hanani returned to Shushan in the month Chisleu, and when we come to chapter 2 it is Nisan.
    - b. Four months have passed & this burden has been growing heavier & heavier on the king's cupbearer.
  2. Finally the Artaxerxes asked, *"What's wrong with you Nehemiah?"*
  3. The servant gulped, ejected a short prayer, and then began to blurt out the pain in his heart
  4. And it concluded with *"If it please the king, and if thy servant have found favour in thy sight, that thou wouldest send ME unto Judah, unto the city of my fathers' sepulchres, that I may build it."*
  5. That was not the conclusion – the conclusion came in the next verse – *"So it pleased the king to sent me."*
  6. I have no doubt that both Nehemiah and the Holy Spirit meant Artaxerxes when the wrote *"the king."*
  7. But I also have no doubt that it was the will of the King of kings to send Nehemiah to become the answer to Nehemiah's prayer.
  8. Nehemiah prayed and God answered that prayer using Nehemiah.

### III. From time to time in the Bible, we see the Lord using the **PRAY-ER** to answer the **PRAYER**.

- A. Austin will likely come back to this, but it'll be down the road a few miles, so let me start with **II Samuel 15**.
1. David will be forced to flee from before his son Absalom, and some of his friends will turn against him.
  2. Among them will be one of the wisest men in Israel – the famous **Ahithophel**, David's former counselor.
  3. For whatever reason he will turn on his master and align himself with David's enemy.
  4. This forces David to utter that famous prayer, *"Lord, I pray thee, turn the counsel of Athophel into foolishness."*
  5. It looked like that would require a miracle of God – perhaps a stroke, a fever of 105 or a fall down the stairs
  6. But then David played a role in the answer of his own prayer.
  7. **Verse 32** – *"And it came to pass, that when David was come to the top of the mount, where he worshipped God, behold, Hushai the Archite came to meet him with his coat rent, and earth upon his head."*
  8. Rather than have this old friend go with him into the wilderness, David told him, *"If thou return to the city, and say unto Absalom, I will be thy servant, O king; as I have been thy father's servant hitherto, so will I now also be thy servant: then mayest thou for me defeat the counsel of Ahithophel."*
    - a. And that is exactly what happened. Ahithophel was defeated, and eventually so was Absalom.
    - b. David arranged the answer to his own prayer; or better yet, God answered David's prayer with David's wisdom.

### **B. Jeremiah 29:13** is a very well-known verse.

1. *"And ye shall seek me, and find, me, when ye shall search for me with all your heart."*
2. This is similar to some encouraging words of the Lord Jesus, as in **Luke 11:9** – *"Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened unto you."*

3. Adding a few more of Jesus' statements about **importunate praying**, I think we can conclude even Jeremiah's instruction with the need to **continue searching, asking, seeking** and **knocking**.
  4. Isn't the second, third and fourth time we request the blessing of God part of God's answer?
  5. For four months Nehemiah kept knocking at the Lord's window asking for help for Judah.
  6. That is as much a part of Biblical prayer as making the request in the first place.
- C. **Proverbs 3:6** may be even better known – *“In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths.”*
1. The Lord wants to be acknowledged by His servants, and He want's us to acknowledge him before Artaxerxes, Sanballot and Tobias back in Judah.
  2. Doesn't this verse suggest, make your acknowledgments, and then put your shoes on and get walking?
  3. *“And (then) he shall direct thy paths.”*
  4. Don't ask for direction or blessing unless you are willing to walk over the treasure house to pick them up.
- D. Perhaps my illustration fails just a little bit here, but think about **Matthew 9:37** where the Lord says to his disciples, *“The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; Pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest, that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.”*
1. Those are the **last 2 verses** in **Matthew 9**, and sometimes we focus too much on those chapter divisions.
  2. But do you know what the **next verse** says – the first verse of **chapter 10**?
  3. *“And when he had called unto him his twelve disciples, he gave them power”* and sent them out into the harvest fields.
  4. The lesson is – pray and be prepared to go.
- E. Austin and I have been trying to get people in Kentucky, Virginia, Oklahoma and elsewhere to pray about the need for pastors or missionaries for Tri-cities, and Loveland and Wellpinit.
1. I hope there are a dozen qualified men praying for those needs, but I also hope that they are willing to answer their own prayers.
  2. And by the way, I hope that you are praying as well.
  3. But are you encouraging anyone, even if you aren't called to the work yourself?
- F. Perhaps the most blessed example of being prepared to answer our own prayers comes from the Lord Jesus.
1. Please turn to **John 17:1** – *“These words spake Jesus, and lifted up his eyes to heaven, and said, Father, the hour is come; glorify thy Son, that thy Son also may glorify thee.”*
    - a. Obviously this is prayer – the true **“Lord's Prayer.”**
    - b. And Christ's basic request is **“glory thy Son.”**
  2. **Verse 5** – *“And now, O Father, glorify thou me with thine own self with the glory which I had with thee before the world was.”*
  3. I won't take you through each aspect of this prayer.
  4. But notice **verse 24** – *“Father, I will that they also, whom thou hast given me, be with me where I am; that they may behold my glory, which thou hast given me: for thou lovedst me before the foundation of the world.”*
  5. There was **only one path** to the **glory** of which the Saviour spoke – and at the end of it was **the cross**.
  6. There was **only one way** for God's **elect** to be **with Christ beholding His glory**, and that was through the crucifixion.
  7. The requests of this chapter could not be fulfilled if the Lord Jesus had not willingly taken the steps necessary to fulfil the Father's will.

#### IV. Nehemiah was willing to be the answer to his prayer.

- A. How serious are you about any of the things you lay out before the Lord?
1. You say that you are very serious.
  2. Are you serious enough to do something about your request.
  3. Are you serious enough to prepare for God's answer to your prayers?
  4. Sometimes that means using a little foresight, perhaps like Elijah on the top of Mt. Carmel.
  5. On the other hand preparing for the answer may mean obedience – and even sacrifice.
  6. Moses prayed for the deliverance of Israel, and was willing to give up himself as a substitute if necessary.
  7. What did Nehemiah have to relinquish in order for God's will to be done according to his prayer?
- B. Do you remember that list of prayer requests with which we started this evening?
1. Let's go back to them.
  2. You are praying for the salvation of a loved one.
    - a. We know that only God can save someone; and we know some hearts are harder than others.
    - b. But when was the last time talked to that person about the Lord?
    - c. *"Lord I want junior to be saved, but I wash my hands of him. You save him?"* Is that your prayer?
    - d. Has junior ever seen you weep for his soul while you prayed for him?
  3. You've been praying for God's comfort on that friend who is grieving.
    - a. What have you done to ameliorate or ease that grief?
    - b. Yes, there were a few things you did shortly after the accident, but what have you done lately?
    - c. Isn't there some way that you can help answer your own prayer?
  4. When did you last try to contact Bro. and Mrs. Nimmo, Rosemary or Barbara?
  5. The evangelism of the Spokanes is on your prayer list, and the establishment of a mission there.
    - a. Yes, and what are you prepared to do about it?
    - b. It takes finances, personnel, equipment.
    - c. Would you be willing to take time off and to set up chairs and sweep the floor of the pow-wow grounds in and effort to see your prayers answered?
  6. Are you trying to do anything about the restoration of that backslidden friend?
    - a. It may take your humble apology to him. Are you willing to answer your prayer for him.
  7. Maybe instead of complaining and praying about that thorn in your flesh you should make a doctor's appointment and get a second opinion about what you think is your imminent demise.
- C. I'm not saying that we can fulfil our own prayer requests.
1. But the Lord may intend to use us in His answer to our requests.
  2. Nehemiah was ready to do something about the burden on his heart.
  3. Should we even make our requests known unto God, if we aren't willing to be a part of the answer?