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# Sermon Notes

June 30, 2019

First Congregational Church of Pomfret

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## Pesky Pests

2 Chronicles 6:14-31, 7:14

### Heartbreak

- ❖ For those who farm or garden, it is discouraging and disheartening when plants get off to a promising start but are then attacked and destroyed by pests
- ❖ The OT is filled with references to crop failures that occur because of the devastating destruction that results from disease, drought and devouring insects
- ❖ The threat of "pesky pests" is one of several key concerns that Solomon surfaces as he prays at the Dedication of the Temple

### A Call to Prayer

- ❖ Solomon asks over and over again for God to *hear from heaven and forgive the sin of* [His] *servants*
  - "if we do this, or if we do that, and calamity comes as a consequence, when we repent, please listen, forgive, heal and restore"
  - Solomon anticipates the way God can and does use adversity to accomplish His purposes

- ❖ God allows enemies to triumph, sends pesky pests to damage crops, ordains drought and famine in order to
  - remind His people of the vast difference there is between God and man
  - call His people to repentance and prayer
  - redirect His people's attention and affections
- ❖ No matter what the precipitating cause, the presence of "pesky pests" in our lives can always serve as
  - a call to prayer
  - a means through which our love for and devotion to God may be increased
  - a way in which our faith can be strengthened and our spiritual lives built up
- ❖ Solomon recognizes that God is **NOT** like us
  - God is majestic and worthy, people are lowly and unworthy
  - God keeps His promises, people break their promises
  - God is faithful to forgive His people's sin and full of steadfast love for those who will turn back to Him, serve Him and walk wholeheartedly in His way

### Praying Specifically

- ❖ Solomon has enough foresight to see and pray about the many ways God's people can and will "go off the rails" in the future
  - Solomon shows us how serious and specific our prayers should be

- we need to invest time, effort, careful, thoughtful attention to what we bring the Lord in prayer
- ❖ Though Solomon prays on behalf of his entire nation, his prayer also shows us how his form of praying needs to be personalized and put into practice by God's people (v. 29)
  - God knows what type of affliction will get your attention, drive you to your knees and cause you to declare your dependence on Him
  - the example of Job
    - Job's suffering is **NOT** related to sin
    - but, sometimes, affliction **IS** related to sin
- ❖ The presence of "pesky pests" in the garden of your life may be God's means of bringing something important to your attention
- ❖ The pattern of Solomon's prayer
  - confession = saying the same thing as God, agreeing with God about your sin
  - repentance = turning the other way and doing a "180" from our sin
    - true confession shows itself IN repentance
    - confession and repentance do not lead us to perfection, but they do drive us to the throne of God's grace
  - prayers of confession and repentance are like divine pesticide

### A "Prayer" Promise

- ❖ 2 Chronicles 7:14

- more than a "greeting card" verse!
- what exactly does God promise in this verse?
- ❖ *If my people...*
  - God chooses Israel to be the conduit through which He funnels His blessings to the nations of the world
  - God selects the nation of Israel not as an end in itself but as the means to His ends
- ❖ *Who are called by my name...*
  - God's people are known by God's name
  - God's representatives
    - "if my people go 'off the rails' and reject Me"
    - "if my people come to their senses, humble themselves, confess AND repent"
- ❖ *I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sin and heal their land*
- ❖ According to Paul in Ephesians 3:6, anyone who belongs to God's family through faith in Jesus is a fellow heir and partaker of God's promises through the gospel

### Personal Reflection

1. Is there anything happening in your life right now that God may have put there in order to call you closer to Him?
2. Is there any obvious sin in your life which you need to confess and turn away from?
3. In what ways do you need to humble yourself and seek the Lord in prayer at this particular season of life?