

Discussion Questions for sermon given on 9/06/2015

Opening Question: When you receive bad news about someone or something you care deeply about, is your first response like Nehemiah's? Why or why not?

Read Nehemiah 1:1-11 and answer the following questions.

1. What is the purpose of the opening verses? What important details are we given?
2. Who brings news to Nehemiah about the state of Jerusalem? What news do these men give to Nehemiah?
3. How does Nehemiah respond to the news (1:4)?
4. What does Nehemiah's grief over the state of Jerusalem reveal about his character? His affection for the Lord? His affection for his people?
5. In his great distress, Nehemiah approaches God with an orderly appeal. What do you notice about the structure and content of the prayer (1:5-11)?

Next to each heading below, note the corresponding verse:

Adoration

Opening Petition

Confession (corporate)

Confession (personal)

Petition (corporate)

Petition (personal)

6. When you are deeply sad or frustrated over a difficult situation, how do you begin your prayers to the Lord? How is the opening to Nehemiah's prayer an example to you?
7. What petition does Nehemiah repeat like a bookend to his prayer (1:6, 11)? What do you think this repetition should communicate to us? To God?
8. After calling God "the great and awesome God who keeps covenant...with those who love him," Nehemiah reminds God of His covenant promise. What, specifically, does Nehemiah want God to do for His chosen people (1:9b)?
9. What does Nehemiah want God to do on his own behalf, with regard to the Persian king he serves (1:11b)?
10. In the first 11 verses of this book, what have Nehemiah's actions and words illustrated about his character? List some character traits below. Which ones do you wish described you more?
11. Why does Nehemiah fast as part of seeking the will of the Lord? What does fasting teach us?
12. Nehemiah's prayer indicates a right understanding of the character of God and a working knowledge of the promises of God. Though he lives in exile among people of pagan beliefs, Nehemiah knows and clings to the character and promises of Elohim (a Hebrew word for "God"). How is he an example for us?
13. Nehemiah asks God to remember His promises to His people. Since God does not need to be reminded of His promises, why does Nehemiah remind Him?
14. In the book of Nehemiah, the steadfast love of the Lord God will be shown to His covenant people despite their past, present and future disobedience. How have you witnessed the steadfast love of the Lord in your own life?

** These questions have been adapted from a free study guide produced by The Village Church

<http://www.thevillagechurch.net>