

Responding To Hard Times

Nehemiah 1:1-11

1. Prayer of Mourning vs. 1-3

When Nehemiah found out about the great trouble his people the Jews were facing in Jerusalem, he wrestled with what he heard by fasting and mournfully praying to God over a two-month period of time.

Mourning, although painful, can help us align our hearts with the heart of God: "Blessed are those who mourn, for they will be comforted" (Matthew 5:4). (Psalm 126:5-6)

2. Prayer of Confession vs. 5-7

Nehemiah recognizes the sorrow that he is experiencing is because of Israel's sinful choices and chooses to reconcile to God who keeps His covenant of love to those who love Him with prayers of repentance for himself, his family, and for the people of Israel; making an appeal to God's mercy.

When we recognize our sorrow is because of sin personally or corporately, we need to respond to God with a heart of reconciliation, as our repentance for ourselves, our family, and as a church brings restoration in our relationship with God(1 John 1:9); making an appeal to God's mercy.

3. Prayer of Appeals vs. 8-11

Nehemiah who knew the word of God, and the wisdom to apply those specific truths to the specific situations, made an appeal to God to remember the promise of return that God revealed to the Israelites in Deuteronomy 30:1-5. He then appealed specifically about the opportunity of when being the cupbearer to the king, that God would allow success for Nehemiah when asking the King for help.

We can confidently make a prayer appeal to God when we know the promises and truths from God's Word and have gained the wisdom to apply those specific truths to the specific situations that we are facing.

Questions:

- In what ways can prayer change a person's attitude towards life's difficulties?

- When one laments, they not only express their difficulties to God, but they call upon him to hear them in their moment of need—knowing that he alone is our source of comfort, hope and help. Are you facing a hard time? Have you made time to lament to God?
- In what ways does God bless those who continually turn to him in prayer?
- In verse 8, Nehemiah recalls God's promises to Moses. How can we use God's promises in our own prayers?
- What can cause someone to not use God's promises in their prayer time? How can someone overcome those barriers?