

Life Group Study
"Nehemiah 1"
Week of September 19th, 2021
Study by Wayne Arcand

Pastor Sean Morton is starting a series on the book of Nehemiah and this study is the first of a series of studies to further explore the truths of scripture revealed to us in that book. In this first chapter of Nehemiah, I was struck by the heart of Nehemiah. As I was studying chapter 1, I found principles that could be applied to my life and I trust you will find the same. Let's see if we can identify the principles and give a practical application of them to our lives.

Nehemiah's Prayer

1 *The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah:*

In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, ² Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.

³ They said to me, "Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire."

⁴ When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. ⁵ Then I said:

"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, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father's family, have committed against you. ⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses.

⁸ "Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, 'If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, ⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.'

¹⁰ "They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. ¹¹ Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man."

I was cupbearer to the king.

As we start this study, I would ask that you start by going before the Lord in prayer and asking for a spirit of wisdom and discernment, that the Lord would reveal a practical application of the Word to your life.

PART A:

1. In verses 1 to 4, Nehemiah did three things - he showed concern, he identified the problem, he took action.
 - a. How did he show concern?
 - b. What was the problem?
 - c. What action did he take?

2. In verse 4, Nehemiah wrote, *"for some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven"*.
 - a. What do you think Nehemiah was looking for during this period of mourning, fasting and praying?
 - b. Whose guidance was he seeking?

3. Is there a principle in the first four verses that we can apply to our lives? What is it?
 - a. Is there something happening in your life now that you can apply this principle to?
 - b. Are you seeking God's solution to the problem or do you have a solution in mind and you are asking God to bless it?
 - c. Perhaps these questions could be considered:
 - i. Have I gone before the Lord in prayer seeking his solution?
 - ii. Is the glory going to God or to me?
 - iii. Is it encouraging or critical?
 - iv. Does it build up or tear down?
 - v. Does it further the mission God has called us (me, you) to fulfill?

PART B:

4. In verses 5 to 7, is there one verse that suggests how we should approach God with our petitions? Why is this important?

5. In verses 8 to 10:
 - a. Discuss what it means to be “unfaithful” to the Lord?
 - b. In God’s instructions to Moses:
 - i. What was the consequence of unfaithfulness?
 - ii. What did God promise when his people returned to him and obeyed his commands?
 1. How does 1 John 1:9 relate to this promise?
 - c. Read these verses again.
 - i. Why is it important to know the promises of God?
 - ii. What impact does it have on us when we pray the promises of God?
 - d. Consider the philosophy of today where we can overcome or be successful if we work hard enough, if we work enough hours, if we are focused on the goal, if we are in the right place, etc. It is all about our effort and what we can do. Contrast this to verses 10 and 11.
 - i. Where did redemption and success come from?
 - ii. Is there a situation in your life right now where you need to pray these verses from Nehemiah and allow God to do the work? What changes would you have to make?
6. I was particularly struck by Nehemiah’s last comment in this chapter, “I was cupbearer to the king.”
 - a. What do you think the significance of that single statement is?
 - b. What was the importance of this role?
 - c. What does it tell us about his relationship with the king?
 - d. What does this reveal about his heart for his people?
 - i. What was he risking?

For Personal Reflection:

In your quiet time, I encourage you to read through this chapter again and ask the Lord to show you any area of your life where you need His power and strength to overcome. Has he shown you something you need to do? Have you gone to him seeking his guidance and provision?