

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - July 28, 2022

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Ten Steps To Spiritual Renewal - Part 3 - Step 3

Title: "Getting Serious About Sin"

Scripture Reference: Nehemiah 9:1-37

Opening Comments

In this lesson we encounter one of the most beautiful prayers in the Bible - a prayer of brokenness before God.

Every Christian sins, but not every Christian reflects on the fact that God is faithful even when we are not. The consistent story of humanity throughout the Bible is - God's faithfulness and man's failings.

When Scripture revealed their sin, Israel was moved to confess and repent before God.

I. Introduction

A. In this lesson we continue to follow the experiences of the returned remnant of Israelites to Jerusalem from their captivity in Babylon.

B. They have rebuilt the wall around Jerusalem under Nehemiah's leadership, and they have been convicted of their negligence to God's Word under Ezra's leadership.

C. After completing a week of celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles for the first time in Israel in a thousand years, we now find them in a place of repentance (Neh. 9:1-37).

D. Most of this long section of Scripture (Vv 5-37) consists of a beautiful prayer, recounting the grace of God in Israel's history and a time of repentance.

E. This time of repentance may have followed the Day of Atonement, normally celebrated on the tenth day of the seventh

month (Leviticus 16:29-30; Neh. 8:1). This would be in keeping with that occasion of reflecting on their sins.

F. The people moved from a period of celebration beginning on the second day of the month (Neh. 8:13) to a time of deep inner reflection and penitent prayer.

G. Please consider, this was not a casual moment. The people were "fasting, in sackcloth, and with dust on their heads ... and they stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers (Neh. 9:1-2).

H. They read from the Book of the Law for "one-fourth of the day (i.e., six hours); and for another fourth (six hours) they confessed and worshipped the Lord their God." (v 3).

Comments:

- 1) How many of us spend even one hour of a day reading the Word of God?
- 2) I want to encourage you to read and study this great prayer in Nehemiah Chapter 9. During this study session, three principles will be discussed that reflect the spirit of a biblical confession.

III. Discussion [Part I] - They Repented in a Spirit of Brokenness (Vv 1-5)

A. Have you ever witnessed in a Church Service a corporate confession (I mean the entire congregation)?

B. You may have witnessed brokenness in individuals as they confessed their sins to God, but probably not groups of people. This was probably the case in prior generations - especially during the periods of revival that swept various regions of America.

C. True revival and renewal spring forth from ground that is watered by the tears of brokenness, confession, and repentance.

Point: It is sad to say, but confession today seems to arise on the

heels of being caught in sin.

D. The people of Israel appear to have been expressing an historical sense of the nation's separation from God. They seem to be genuinely convicted by their, and their fathers', participation in sin such as comingling with their godless neighbors (v 2).

III. Discussion [Part II] - They Reflected Upon Their Blessings (Nehemiah 9:6-31)

A. It seems rather odd that, in the midst of a lengthy confessional prayer, there would be so much space given to recounting the blessings of God. But there is - beginning in verse 6.

B. Verses 6-8 cover the period from creation to Abraham; Verses 9-15 from the wilderness wanderings to entering the Promised Land; and Verses 26-31 from the judges to the Babylonian Captivity.

C. As you read through Verses 6-31, pay attention to the use of the word "**Thou**" (this will be in reference to God), and also notice the word "**they**" (which is a reference to the people).

Comment: The point of these two terms in the reflective verses can be summarized as the theme of this prayer: "God's faithfulness and man's failure." Two phrases occur to illustrate that theme: "Thou ..." (God's faithfulness) and "They" (man's failure).

D. We may wonder how a nation as blessed as Israel could have sinned against God? But is that not what we do? It is the story of God's saving grace in every generation: We sin, God saves!

E. In Verses 6-15, notice the repetition of the coordinating conjunction "and." It serves to connect all the acts of God on behalf of the people of Israel. As you read these verses, just make note of and, and, and, etc... God's saving acts go on and on throughout Israel's history - and ours.

Comments:

- 1) If you have walked with God for any length of time, you could probably recite the same kind of history like that of Israel of what God has done in your life.
- 2) If you were to attempt to write down just how good God has been, and continues to be in your life, you would probably run out of paper and pen before you ran out of God's blessings in your life.

Suggestion/Recommendation

On your worst days, when things look darkest, reflect on God's faithfulness in your life and this will give you strength and increase your faith to trust God even further in your life.

Point: God's faithfulness makes our worst days better than the best days of those who don't know the Lord Jesus Christ.

//I feel a song coming on right here. "When I think about the goodness of the Lord - and how He has been in my life, all of my good days - outweigh my bad days - therefore Lord, I won't complain."//

F. In this prayer God is noted as the God of Creation (v 6), grace (v 7), answered prayer (v 9), deliverance (vv 10-12), revelation (v 13), and supply (v 15).

G. God is described as merciful, great, mighty, just, and good. But man is described as proud, rebellious, disobedient, evil, sinful, and wicked.

H. The prayer alternates from God's faithfulness to man's sin, back to God, and back to man from Verses 6-31.

I. Every time man sinned, God was faithful to step in and rescue, forgive, reestablish - whatever Israel needed. But in spite of God's faithfulness, Israel would sin again.

J. That is the history of God's dealing with His chosen people - and again, with us. When we sin, God is there, waiting for us to

repent so He can wrap His arms around us, and restore us to Himself. God's faithfulness, man's failure is the theme of this prayer and of our lives as well.

K. Here is another recommendation worthy of our time and attention. Just pause and reflect on your own cycle of "God's faithfulness, your (our) failures." I submit to you that if you seriously do this, you will be moved to pray a prayer of thanks to God, just as the Israelites did that day.

IV. Discussion [Part III] – They Recognized Their Sinfulness

A. The first principle is that the people repented in a spirit of brokenness. Then they reflected upon their blessings. And finally, we find them recognizing their sinfulness. As they confessed their sins to God, they saw their sinfulness even more clearly.

B. Here is their confession (vv 32-33) which came after recounting God's faithfulness in spite of their failures:

"Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the terrible God, who keepest covenant and mercy, let not all the trouble seem little before thee, that hath come upon us, on our kings, on our princes, and on our priests, and on our prophets, and on our fathers, and on all thy people, since the time of the kings of Assyria unto this day. Howbeit thou art just in all that is brought upon us: for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly." (Nehemiah 9:32-33).

C. That is true biblical confession! Biblical confession means something very special: to say the same thing as God says. The New Testament Greek word for confess is *homologeō*, found in 1 John 1:9.

D. This word *homologeō* is comprised of two words: **Homo** (same as) and **logos** (to speak). When we confess our sin, we must say the same thing about our sin as God does.

E. God speaks plainly and does not stutter, and neither should we.

We call our actions mistakes, errors, tendencies, foolishness - anything but sin. Our fleshly nature does not like to admit that it is sinful.

F. However, if we are going to be honest in our confession before God, we must call our actions exactly what God calls them: sin! True confession means to say, "God, you are right and I am wrong. What I did violates Your standards, and I should not have done it. I am sorry for my sinful behavior. I agree with You that my actions were sinful. I confess my sins before You and ask for Your forgiveness."

G. True brokenness comes when we see our actions and words the same way that God sees them. We will not grieve over them until we view them from God's perspective, nor will we appreciate God's faithfulness fully until we have appreciated the darkness of our sin, which only comes from agreeing with God about it.

V. For Your Further Consideration

A. Through my research, I discovered what I believe to be one of the most heart-felt and probing messages from the heart and pen of a famous revivalist and evangelist named Alan Redpath.

B. He was an Englishman who conducted much of his ministry in the United States. This wonderful and humble servant of God, pointed out the necessity of living a life of holiness after being saved.

C. In one of his books in which he talked about an all-night prayer meeting he held - just he and God alone, together. I want to share with you a list of self-examination questions, taken from this man of God, to probe his own heart, to discover the sins he needed to confess to God. Here is the first Category:

What about my relationship with men?

- Am I consciously or unconsciously creating the impression that I am better than I really am?

- Is there the least suspicion of hypocrisy in my life?
- Am I honest in all my words and acts?
- Do I exaggerate?
- Am I reliable?
- Do I grumble and complain in the church?

Then he asked himself ...

- Am I jealous?
- Am I impure?
- Am I irritable, touchy, and distrustful?
- Am I proud?

Then came ... what about my devotion to God?

- Does the Bible live in me?
- Do I give it time to speak to me?
- Am I enjoying my prayer life today?
- When I am involved in a problem in life, do I use my tongue or my knees to solve it?
- Am I disobeying God in anything or insisting upon doing something about which my conscience is very uneasy?
- How do I spend my spare time?

D. Alan Redpath said those questions caused him to search his life at a level so deep, that it took him all night to get through the process.

E. I am convinced that if we would take the time to really come before God in the spirit of Psalm 139:23-24, which says: "Search me, O God, and know my heart; try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way

everlasting."

F. I pray that this lesson has touched and moved your heart, and increased your resolve to live a life that is even more pleasing and acceptable to God.

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the biblical passages that follow by filling in the blank spaces. As always, each passage has been taken from the King James Version of the Bible.

"Have _____ upon me O God, according to thy _____:
according unto the _____ of thy _____ mercies blot out
my _____."

[Psalm 51:1]

"_____ in me a _____ heart, O God; and _____ a right
_____ within me."

[Psalm 51:10]

"I _____ my sin unto thee, and mine _____ have
I not _____. I said I will _____ my _____ unto the
Lord; and thou _____ the _____ of my sin."

[Psalm 32:5]

"For all have _____, and come short of the _____ of God;
Being _____ freely by his _____ through the
_____ that is in Christ Jesus."

[Romans 3:23-24]

"For the _____ of _____ is death; but the _____ of God is
_____ life through _____ our Lord."

[Romans 6:23]

Thank you for sharing in this time of study.

Jude 3

Pastor Austin