

Sermon Notes and Questions 3 July 2022

God's call to fix it (Nehemiah 1-2:8)

Prayer is vital

Introduction

In the Old Testament Nehemiah is placed alongside Ezra. Both books deal with issues facing the community of God's people, who had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon. They were back in the Promised Land, but things were far from easy. Nehemiah is described as the King of Persia's cupbearer, an important position which brought him into the King's presence.

The situation that drove Nehemiah to prayer.

When Nehemiah asked about the Jewish exiles who had returned home, it was not good news.

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.'

What type of situations in the world, the local community, the church and your friends and family drive you to pray?

The nature and content of Nehemiah's prayer.

Nehemiah's prayer for his people is marked by several features.

1. Confession – he confesses the sin of the people.
2. Promise – he reminds God of the promises that he made to Israel, that he would gather his repentant people.
3. God is able, he had redeemed, saved them before and could do it again.
4. Grant success, he asks that his prayer will be answered.

What do we learn about prayer from Nehemiah, are there any similarities to the way that Jesus taught his disciples?

The change that Nehemiah went through due to his prayer.

Nehemiah, had to ask the king for permission to take leave to visit Jerusalem. A request to the king could have invoked an unpleasant response. Nehemiah took a great risk in asking.

so the king asked me, 'Why does your face look so sad when you are not ill? This can be nothing but sadness of heart.' I was very much afraid, but I said to the king, 'May the king live for ever! Why should my face not look sad when the city where my ancestors are buried lies in ruins, and its gates have been destroyed by fire?'

God may look to us to become the answer to our prayers, would this thought make us change the way we pray?

Conclusion

Nehemiah was moved by the plight of his people. His feelings moved him to prayer and his prayer moved him to action.

What is God saying to us through the life and courage of Nehemiah?