

Text: Neh. 2:4

Title: Praying with confidence

I. Confidence comes by knowing the King

II. Confidence comes by seeking the King

III. Confidence comes by trusting the King

Congregation of our Lord

- My desire today is not to tell you that you need to pray or how important it is to pray, because I believe you know this already.
 - Rather, I want to encourage you, so that when you do seek God in pray you will do so with more confidence and assurance. In Christ we have access to the Father and His throne of grace!
 - In God's providence Nehemiah was used by the Lord to rebuild Jerusalem and restore God's people back into the land of Judah.
 - This did not come without difficulty - Nehemiah had to Petition king Artaxerxes and although Nehemiah was the cupbearer he was still a simple servant who had no rights or rank in the sight of the king.
 - All Nehemiah could do was to pray and trust God to prosper his way
 - Nehemiah had confidence in His God = showed in how He prayed, a man who knew God, exalted and magnified Him, and humbly confessing his sins and the sins of the nation while pleading for mercy.
 - Nehemiah shows us a very good pattern in prayer in a proper approach unto God
 - Prayer is never flippant or done thoughtlessly. It is coming into the presence of the One who rules heaven and earth! Thus, it is to be referent and done with respect, acknowledging the majesty and holiness of God.
 - Often times we feel weakness in prayer. There are many distractions, difficulties, we may have a lack of desire to pray, or even just be filled with the busyness of life.
 - No matter how we feel (good or bad) we can be certain God hears us when we pray in Christ our Saviour and advocate.
 - Even in most complicated, hopeless, or tricky situations = God answers
- This is seen in our text – one of the shorts prayers given in the Bible

Key text “So I prayed to the God of heaven.”

Prop: Praying with confidence

How do we pray with confidence?

I. By knowing the King. (Know who you are going to)

Although Neh. knew earthly king = Knew greater King – source of confidence

- motivated = real experience in prayer/ knew God's potential - nothing hard

a. begins with understanding of God's Person

God of heaven – Shows His transcendence /distinct from creation/ “wholly other” not created - eternal/absolute/ self existence/sovereign – by whose will and power all things exist

God – term declares = Omnipotent Creator & Sustainer / Genesis create all things

Neh. 1:5 declares two more terms for God

Nehemiah 1:5 And I said: "I pray, LORD God of heaven, O great and awesome God, You who keep Your covenant and mercy with those who love You and observe Your commandments,

Jehovah Specific covenant name everlasting & unchangeable saviour/people

El - God, mighty one, strength, ability (great = set high value on/magnified)

- For us to be confident means we must know God/understand Him and His immensity & power

- Terrible majesty/ fills heaven & earth/ power to accomplish/ SC #5

b. Knowing him by personal experience

- In chapter 1 throughout Nehemiah's prayer, he shows that he knew the Lord by personal experience

- His praying is not based on a moment of desperation, but his heart was in touch with the king.

Nehemiah Understood the awesomeness of God and saw the depth > sinful heart and his utter helplessness

Calls himself the servant of the Lord (1:6&11) He declares Israel as God's chosen and redeemed people.

Makes confession His need and shows His dependence upon God long before the events of Neh. ch. 2

You must know Christ by personal experience, if you are ever going to go to Him and trust Him with your life

Remember, Christ is faithful to His people and never disappoints or leaves you only in your struggles

- As we know the King, the divine ruler over all things and have a proper relationship with Him. We will be accepted

- He desires to have a people and will have covenant faithfulness to them as He has power to save & scatter

Know Christ - Know His intercession for us - Remember, He has us on His heart & hands

- Know your God! – So you will have confidence come to Him!

How do we pray with confidence?

II. By seeking the King.

Nehemiah desired to pray to the great heavenly King in the time of his need as the Lord is real source of help

It is not enough to know Him or know about Him - you must seek Him and His intercession in your life

a. Nehemiah sought the Lord

Neh. 1:6-11 He asks the Lord to listen to him and see the situation His people had found themselves

- Acknowledges God's person and majesty and then turns his attention on his sin and the sins of the nation

- He knows that only the Lord can forgive and restore the wayward and the lost

- He seeks restoration and mercy from God - looking to the promises that God had made in the past to gather His people and to establish them.

Are you away from God? Have you fallen into sin and feel separated from God?

2 Chronicles 7:14 "if My people who are called by My name will humble themselves, and pray and seek My face, and turn from their wicked ways, then I will hear from heaven, and will forgive their sin and heal their land.

- Look at 1:9 Although the people are scattered, under God's wrath and bearing consequence of sin

- Yet, there is mercy for those who turn to the Lord and who then desire to keep His commands

Return = term for evangelical repentance = repent of sin/backsliding/wickedness

Neh. Shows that God will be faithful to His people even though they fail, He will not give up on them.

HC 116 Q. WHY DO CHRISTIANS NEED TO PRAY?

A. Because prayer is the most important part of the thankfulness God requires of us.1 And also because God gives his grace and Holy Spirit only to those who pray continually and groan inwardly, asking God for these gifts and thanking him for them.

Hebrews 11:6 6 But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.

Jeremiah 29:11-14 11 For I know the thoughts that I think toward you, says the LORD, thoughts of peace and not of evil, to give you a future and a hope. 12 Then you will call upon Me and go and pray to Me, and I will listen to you. 13 And you will seek Me and find Me, when you search for Me with all your heart. 14 I will be found by you, says the LORD, and I will bring you back from your captivity; I will gather you from all the nations and from all the places where I have driven you, says the LORD, and I will bring you to the place from which I cause you to be carried away captive.

b. Sought the Lord for the sake of others.

Neh. Desire to see His people / city restored to Lord = interceded on their behalf

Willing put life on the line/ scope Ch 1 & 2 = comes when he speaks to Hanani

Neh 1:2-3 situation of His people and their conditions are described to Him

Weeps & Fasts = where go first Persian King? No, he goes to the King Of Heaven! Help comes when go right source first because the Lord has a love for His people to lead them and to help them.

- Must have the desire to seek the Lord to help you in your daily needs whether ordinary or extra ordinary.

- To have confidence in prayer is to desire what the King desires = restoration and good of His people = If we do not desire this / (Only self) missing real blessing.

- Neh. Able to do a real work for Lord = interceded on behalf of God's people

- You must have desire to know the Lord and to seek Him with all your heart, if you are going to have confidence in Him.

How do we pray with confidence?

III. By trusting the King. (Neh. 2:4 I prayed to the God of heaven)

Nehemiah trusted in His God much more than King Artaxerxes. When the Persian king asked Nehemiah what his request was, Nehemiah already knew the answer to question = now would the King grant it?

a. Trust gives hope.

The reason why this situation seemed difficult to Nehemiah was because he possessed no power of authority to do anything to help the situation. All he could do was pray!

Notice the difference in Months – 1:1 Chisleu > 2:1 Nisan = 4 months before going to Persian King

He entered expressing great sadness > Did not go like that before > desired mercy from the Lord 1:11

Why was making such effort? Why did He not go right away seek help from Artaxerxes?

Ezra reveals King Artaxerxes halted the building of Jerusalem, because it was a city of rebellion/insurrection against his kingdom. He stopped the building project (Scholars are divided if same king or another Artaxerxes)

Ezra 4:17-24 shows:

- Enemies of Israel seemed to prevail = helped to afflict God's people and keep Jerusalem in ruins

- It was a sad state of affairs = people of God = all seemed hopeless for them

- Wait, not so hopeless! They trust the King of Heaven and He turns the heart of every earthly King

- God gives hope in all situations = relieves suffering of His people

b. Trusts despite difficult circumstances.

Neh. Enters Artaxerxes presence = difficult task because he faced the possibility of a hostile king!
King had authority & power to put him to death, so Nehemiah had to speak very carefully!

- When Nehemiah approached the King with wine / King noticed he was sad = confronted Him
vs. 2 He was very afraid = Why would he be afraid?

Broke etiquette = servants private feelings were to be kept silent/ never give opinion/show feeling/ King's servants waited upon Him = that was their only duty and nothing beyond this.

- However, today was day Nehemiah expressed His feelings as the moment had come to speak to the Persian king.

- If Neh. mishandles the situation = all lost and maybe there would never be another opportunity. He was asking the king to revise policy and change his attitude

Nehemiah expresses His lament vs. 3 and the king asks "What do you want"

Moment of truth = Prays to God of Heaven

Will the Lord bless come through? Will the Lord show himself reliable and trustworthy?

When God Sold His Cattle

Shortly after the Dallas Theological Seminary was founded in 1924, it almost had to close. The creditors were about to foreclose at noon on a certain day. Pres. Lewis S. Chafer met with his faculty at the office, praying fervently that God would provide. Present was Dr. Harry Ironside who prayed in his characteristic style: "Lord, we know that the cattle on a thousand hills are Thine. Please sell some of them and send us the money."

Meanwhile, a tall Texas businessman stepped into the seminary business office, saying: "I just sold two carloads of cattle in Fort Worth, but could not make the deal go through. I feel compelled to give the money to the seminary. I don't care if you need it or not, but here's the check!"

The surprised secretary took the check, and timidly knocked on the door of the prayer meeting. When Dr. Chafer took the check out of her hand, it was for the exact amount of the debt.

Turning to Dr. Ironside, Chafer said: "Harry, God sold the cattle!"

- No matter what our circumstances are, God knows our needs and is willing to supply all our needs according to His riches in glory through Christ our Lord.

c. Trust with simple faith.

Neh made His request = King granted that request = God blessed Him, because he believed God would intercede / God would bless Him = It was faith that gave him confidence!

1 John 5:4-5 4 For whatever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world -- our faith. 5 Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God?

Philippians 4:6-7 6 Be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; 7 and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.

Do you have faith in Christ? Come in prayer and He will answer you! He has promised to answer and will never disappoint.

How do we pray with confidence?

By knowing the King. = Knowing God and being in a right relationship/ faithful

By seeking the King. Desire to go to the source of help and forgiveness - for ourselves and others

By trusting in the King. Gives hope = answers prayer in the best way, but we need to trust by faith

Christian, you can possess confidence = God promises to draw near to those who seek Him with all the heart

Pray despite difficulties and persevere – you will be rewarded in due time from your God

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