

## Life Group Topic #12: Nehemiah 9 and 10

Mar. 20/21

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### **WELCOME:** (15 minutes)

What are some of the most important choices you have made in the last 5 years?

### **WORSHIP:** (15 minutes)

Use whatever means possible to turn the group's attention to the wonder and majesty of our God- including music, prayer, meditation on the Psalms, and other art forms.

**On this week's topic, Psalm 16:5, 6 could be a guide to worship.**

### **WORD:** ( 45 min.)

#### **A HEART BROKEN IN LONGING AS MUCH AS IN SHAME**

We are accustomed to a flexible world... we assume that people will find and use the loophole, abuse the system and benefit themselves. So when we come up against absolutes, things that never change, it is otherworldly.

The people of God have had an encounter with God who never changes. They have been introduced to the His path... understanding, conscience, emotions, and choices.

*They have chosen repentance.*

#### **REPENTANCE EMPOWERS:** Nehemiah 9:1-4

They have been awakened to a new consciousness of Yahweh as their God. They now see their history in the framework of the covenants and the eyes of the prophets. Now they have fasted and separated themselves and now stood and confessed their sins. (v.1, 2) Three hours of reading the Word; three hours of worship – now they are ready for prayer – a really long prayer!!!

We know so little of repentance today! Repentance is a dynamic inrush of the kingdom within modern history.

*“Through repentance we relinquish to God everything that revival must transform.... We identify everything within us and within the church that may be hindering, resisting, counterfeiting, ignoring, diminishing, or undermining God's new work in us to prepare us for revival....It is a heart broken in longing as much as in shame. We long for what God has promised but that is still waiting to appear, rather than just expressing regret...”* Bryant in “Hope at Hand”

#### **PRAYER MOVES THE STATUS QUO:** Nehemiah 9:5-37

The Levites prayer begins with adoration, of His majesty, power and gracious intervention. (v. 5-7) Sometimes we need to bask in who God is and what He is capable of.

**The prayer is divided into 5 parts:**

- **Abraham:** v. 8
  - Because of Abraham's obedience and submission he enjoyed God's blessings

- **From the captivity to the Red Sea** (v. 9-15)
  - God saw their need and directly intervened – His compassion and His power
- **From wandering in the desert** to the possession of the Promised Land (v. 16-25)
  - They were provided for them in the trackless desert. By reminding them of God's incredible ability hope emerges in the people.
- **From Judges to captivity** (v. 26-31)
  - The people lacked gratitude, were rebellious and willfully disregarded God's Law. They took possession of good things, yet their sins of omissions and commissions were repeated. The cycle was – sin, be punished, repent, be restored, sin, be punished...etc.
- **From captivity to Nehemiah's time** (v. 32-37)
  - He keeps his covenant of unfailing love. **Disobedience has always come in prosperity.**

### **A NEW RELATIONSHIP WITH THE COVENANT-KEEPING GOD**

(Nehemiah 10:27-39) People signed off on the promises. The covenant included:

- Decision to **submit to the authority** of Scripture (10:28, 29) – to follow, to obey the Law of God
- Decision to **pursue God's will** (10:30) – abstaining from intermarriage
- Decision to **honor His day** (10:31a) – witness to others that God came first
- Decision to **value His world**: (10:31b) – leave the land fallow on the seventh year, a declaration of their trust in God
- Decision to **reflect God's love** (10:31c) – cancelling debts by the creditors every 7<sup>th</sup> year
- Decision to **support God's work** (10:32-39) – the OT standard was a tithe (10%). The NT expectation is 100%. The question is not how much we are required to give but rather how much it is proper for us to keep for our maintenance.

**REAL TREASURE:** (Matt. 6:19-21, 24)

*“Don't store up treasures here on earth, where moths eat them, and rust destroys them, and where thieves break in and steal. Store your treasures in heaven, where moths and rust cannot destroy, and thieves do not break in and steal. Wherever your treasure is, there **the desires of your heart** will also be.”*

### **Word Application Questions:**

**Please keep in mind that these questions are meant as catalysts designed to get the group talking about life application.**

- Repentance requires some identification of the issues. Bryant mentions things that may be **hindering, resisting, counterfeiting, ignoring, diminishing or undermining** us from God's renewal in us. Which tend to be the major ones in our Christian community?
- What makes unreserved commitment costly and sacrificial unpopular in our day? Are we low on commitment these days? Why or why not? (**Rom.12:1, 2**)
- Do you agree that “for every ninety nine people who can withstand adversity, there is only one who can stand prosperity?” Why or why not?

- People in Nehemiah's time signed off on things that they covenanted before God and with each other. What would our list look like if we were to sign off on commitments before God, the church and each other in the Life Group?

**WITNESS:** (15 minutes)

**This section is a vision-casting time designed to get the group strategizing and making concrete plans towards reaching outward to a lost world. Relational outreach always has the goal of ultimately enfolding those we reach into the Life Group.**