

PRAYER & GIVING

BIG IDEA: The first thing we do in tough times is pray because God is with us!

These trying times reveal a truth to us that should move us to action! **THE TRUTH:** we are not in control, but God is. **THE ACTION:** pray to the God of heaven.

What is prayer? Simply put, prayer is having a conversation with God, but it is also much more than that. Prayer is an act of worship that glorifies God and reinforces our need for Him.

As soon as I heard these words I sat down and wept and mourned for days, and I continue fasting and praying before the God of heaven.

Nehemiah 1:4

Nehemiah 1:5-6 says, "And I said, 'O Lord God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments, let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants,...'"

Verse five illustrates **who God is** (His character). He is a great, awesome, promise-keeping God; He is good and steadfast in love, mercy and grace. Verse six explains **what God does**...He hears our prayers.

PRAY TOGETHER: Spend time now praising God for Who He is and What He does

When we think of God, it lends us to think of ourselves and our shortcomings, so we respond in **confession sins and repentance**.

Nehemiah 1:6-7 illustrates confession of both corporate and personal sins. In verses 8-9, Nehemiah recounts God's covenant and states that God allowed this tragedy because they were unfaithful to Him. But remember, if verse nine Nehemiah also states that if they return to God, then He'll make everything right!

PRAY TOGETHER: Confess sins and put your faith in Jesus.

Because God is compassionate with us as He forgives our sins and cleanses us from unrighteousness, we are able to turn outward with compassion for others and intercede for them.

Nehemiah's response and prayer in our sermon passage is the prayer of God's People destined for God's City. We, as Christians, are GOD'S PEOPLE DESTINED FOR GOD'S CITY, and we should pray in the same way!

PRAY TOGETHER: Let us pray for the following...

- **Pray for the Sick** and their families that God would heal them.
- **Pray for Healthcare Workers**, those on the frontlines treating those who are sick, that the Lord would protect and strengthen them.
- **Pray for Policy Makers and Leaders**, national and local government that they would have wisdom to do what is best for all.
- **Pray for the Unemployed, Students, and Families**, that God would provide everything they need through their families and communities
- **Pray for Renewed Spiritual Rhythms**, may "social distancing" allow us to pursue Christ above everything else
- **Pray for "Fears" to be Faced**, that we would bring our fears to God and find a God who is willing and able to act on our behalf
- **Pray for Growing Faith**, that we would become intercessory prayer warriors that fast and learn to depend upon God through prayer
- **Pray for Great Compassion**, even at the risk of our own comfort, health, and safety; that God's people would exercise a theology of risk for the name and renown of Jesus. May we know how to embody the love of God through incarnational selflessness!
- **Pray for the Increased Realization of the Need for Community**, we long for coming together in worship gatherings, small groups, laying hands on one another in prayer, greeting each other with warm embraces and once again sharing our fears, joys, trials, and lives in community!
- **Pray for One Another**, all that have needs pray for each other.

GIVE: Pray over offering.

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