

The 25th Sunday after Pentecost ~ Sunday, November 15, 2015

“A Time to Build: Lessons From the Book of Nehemiah ~

Confession & Repentance”

Nehemiah 9

The first step in any spiritual renewal or revival is a _____ that we’ve _____ from God, and a desire to _____. Confession and repentance makes this return _____.

“Then if my people who are called by my name will humble themselves and pray and seek my face and turn from their wicked ways, I will hear from heaven and will forgive their sins and restore their land.” (2 Chronicles 7:14)

4 BENEFITS OF CONFESSION

- Confession brings _____.
- Confession makes us _____.
- Confession is the way to _____ and _____.
- Confession restores _____.

2 QUALITIES OF TRUE CONFESSION AND REPENTANCE

#1. True confession and repentance is characterized by:

“On October 31 the people assembled again, and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads. Those of Israelite descent separated themselves from all foreigners as they confessed their own sins and the sins of their ancestors. They remained standing in place for three hours while the Book of the Law of the Lord their God was read aloud to them. Then for three more hours they confessed their sins and worshipped the Lord their God.” (Nehemiah 9:1)

- **They were** _____

“On October 31 the people assembled again...”

They understood the need for repentance and knew that it doesn’t just happen, but can only truly come from a _____ and _____ heart.

“You do not desire a sacrifice, or I would offer one. You do not want a burnt offering. The sacrifice you desire is a broken spirit. You will not reject a broken and repentant heart, O God.” (Psalm 51:16-17)

- **They were** _____

“...and this time they fasted and dressed in burlap and sprinkled dust on their heads.”

Fasting =

Sackcloth and ashes =

“When I weep and fast, they scoff at me. When I dress in burlap to show sorrow, they make fun of me. I am the favourite topic of town gossip, and all the drunks sing about me.” (Psalm 69:11–11)

What trouble do I go to to demonstrate the seriousness of my sin, and the sorrow that I feel over it? What does this look like in your life?

#2. True confession and repentance throws itself on:

“Then the leaders of the Levites called out to the people: ‘Stand up and praise the Lord your God, for he lives from everlasting to everlasting!’ Then they prayed: ‘May your glorious name be praised! May it be exalted above all blessing and praise!’” (Nehemiah 9:5-6)

Before they began confessing, the first thing the people did was _____ the One who alone could hear, pardon, and cleanse them.

Real confession and repentance always acknowledges the _____ and _____ of God.

- **God’s goodness** _____.

Verses 7-18 recount how God formed the nation of Israel.

- **God’s goodness** _____.

“But in your great mercy you did not abandon them to die in the wilderness. The pillar of cloud still led them forward by day, and the pillar of fire showed them the way through the night.” (Nehemiah 9:19)

- **God’s goodness** _____.

“Our ancestors captured fortified cities and fertile land. They took over houses full of good things, with cisterns already dug and vineyards and olive groves and fruit trees in abundance. So they ate until they were full and grew fat and enjoyed themselves in all your blessings...” (Nehemiah 9:25)

God not only provided for them, He gave them _____ than they deserved.

- **God’s goodness** _____.

“But when they were oppressed they cried out to you. From heaven you heard them, and in your great compassion you gave them deliverers, who rescued

them from the hand of their enemies.” (Nehemiah 9:27)

“But as soon as they were at rest, they again did what was evil in your sight. Then you abandoned them to the hand of their enemies so that they ruled over them.” (Nehemiah 9:28)

“But in your great mercy you did not put an end to them or abandon them, for you are a gracious and merciful God. (Nehemiah 9:31)

“Oh, what joy for those whose disobedience is forgiven, whose sin is put out of sight! Yes, what joy for those whose record the Lord has cleared of guilt, whose lives are lived in complete honesty!” (Psalm 32:1-2)

**Have you experienced God’s amazing grace in your life?
How have you responded to it?**

THE PROCESS OF REPENTANCE

Step #1. _____.

“Search me, O God, and know my heart. Test me and know my thoughts. Point out anything in me that offends you. And lead me along the path of everlasting life.” (Psalm 139:23-24)

4 Things to Remember about this Process

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“Let us test and examine our ways.” (Lamentations 3:40)

Is this a step you are prepared to take? Are you willing to risk being vulnerable enough to enter into this kind of a process?

Step #2. _____.

“Now repent of your sins and turn to God, so that your sins may be wiped away.” (Acts 3:19)

Repentance =

“If we say we have no sin we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us.” (1 John 1:8)

“Let us turn again in repentance to the Lord. Let us lift our hearts and hands to God in heaven and say, ‘We have sinned and rebelled.’” (Lamentations 3:40-42)

What are you pretending not to know or feel guilty about?

Step #3. _____.

“What can I do for you? How can I make amends so that you will bless the Lord’s people again?” (2 Samuel 21:3)

“‘If I have cheated anybody out of anything, I will pay back four times the amount.’ And Jesus said to him, ‘Today salvation has come to your house.’” (Luke 19:8-9)

**Is there anyone that you need to make restitution with?
What do you need to make right?**

Step #4. _____.

• **God’s forgiveness is** _____

“If we say we have no sin, we deceive ourselves and the truth is not in us. But if we confess our sins, God is faithful and just and will cleanse us from all unrighteousness.” (1 John 1:8)

• **God’s forgiveness is** _____

“Let us come boldly to the throne of our gracious God and there we will receive his mercy and we will find grace to help us when we need it.” (Hebrews 4:16)

• **God’s forgiveness is** _____

“I’ll wipe the slate clean for each of them. I’ll forget they ever sinned!” (Jer 1:34)

“He has removed our sins as far from us as the east is from the west.” (Ps 103:12)

“No matter how deep the stain of your sin I can take it out. I can make you clean as freshly fallen snow.” (Isaiah 1:18)

Do you need to know God’s forgiveness?

Step #5. _____.

“But this I call to mind, and therefore I have hope. The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness.” (Lamentations 3:21-23)

Where are you in this process of repentance?

“For everyone has sinned; we all fall short of God’s glorious standard.” (Rom 3:23)

“You will never succeed in life if you try to hide your sins. Confess them and give them up and then God will show you mercy.” (Proverbs 28:13)

**Maybe it’s time for you to do a little spiritual house cleaning
and take the garbage out!**