

The Intercessory Prayer of Nehemiah

Nehemiah 1:5-11

INTRODUCTION:

1. There are different kinds of prayer.
 - a. Adoration (1 Chron. 29:10-13; Eph. 3:14-21)
 - b. Confession (Psa. 51:1-13; Luke 18:10-14)
 - c. Thanksgiving (Dan. 6:10; Matt. 11:25)
 - d. Supplication (1 Tim. 5:5).
 - e. Intercession
2. Nehemiah's prayer of Nehemiah 1:5-11 was an intercessory prayer, i.e. a prayer offered to God on behalf of others.
3. We know such a prayer is appropriate for the saint, because...
 - a. It has been often encouraged (cf. Job 42:8; Matt. 5:44; Eph. 6:18; 1 Tim. 2:1; James 5:14).
 - b. It is effective (Gen. 17:18-20; Ex. 32:11-34; Job 42:10; 1 Kings 17:20-23; Acts 9:40; 28:8).

DISCUSSION: Intercessory prayer must be...

- I. Based on a true concept of God's character.**
 - A. Regarding Him as the majestic ruler of the world (v. 5).
 - B. Regarding Him as faithful and compassionate (v. 5).
- II. Untiring in its persistence and unselfish in its benevolence.**
 - A. Unwearied in importunity (v. 6; cf. Luke 18:1-8)
 - B. Unselfish in benevolence (v. 6)
- III. Accompanied by self-abasement and contrition.**
 - A. Confession of personal and family sins (v. 6; cf. Isa. 6:1-4)
 - B. Confession of the sins of all (v. 7)
- IV. Fortified with strong arguments and proper motives.**
 - A. The promise of God is the ground of appeal (v. 8).
 - B. The fulfillment of one promise is reason for expecting that another will also be fulfilled (vv. 8, 9).
 - C. The appeal is based upon the relationship of God to His people (v. 10; cf. Isa. 49:15).
 - D. Past deliverance is the ground for present deliverance (v. 10).
 - E. The motivation of the prayer is a servant-heart that respects (fears) the name of God (v. 11).

CONCLUSION:

1. The most earnest supplication cannot exonerate us from personal effort (“cupbearer,” v. 11).
2. Prayer is a saint’s privilege, but not a substitute for work. Watch for the openings of providence.