



Scripture for the week of August 8: Nehemiah 1:1-11

“ 1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem. 3 They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” 4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven. 5 Then I said: ‘Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, 6 let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you. 7 We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. 8 ‘Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations, 9 but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’ 10 ‘They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand. 11 Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”

Sunday, August 8:

Action: Read above Scripture slowly (even if it is very familiar to you).

Questions to Ponder: What stood out for you as you read this Scripture? What do you hope to be reminded of as you focus on this Scripture this week? Will you be willing to spend time in prayer for our church, our country and our world?

Prayer: Lord God, I have been discouraged by many things that are happening in our world. I am also discouraged by what COVID has been doing to the church. I want to be intentional about crying out to You in prayer. I want to pray for those things that are out of my control and trust that You have only good in mind for Your people. Help me to make this week all about being intentional about lifting those things that discourage me to You.

Monday, August 9:

Action: Read Nehemiah 1:1-2 “ 1 The words of Nehemiah son of Hakaliah: In the month of Kislev in the twentieth year, while I was in the citadel of Susa, 2 Hanani, one of my brothers, came from Judah with some other men, and I questioned them about the Jewish remnant that had survived the exile, and also about Jerusalem.”

Questions to Ponder: Do you see that Nehemiah is concerned for the Jewish remnant that has survived the exile? Don’t you think that we too should be concerned for other believers that are suffering? How about people in our church family that are suffering? What can we do to show our concern?

Prayer: Lord, God, open my eyes to those around me or those in the world that may be suffering. Reveal to me how I can help so that believers can become stronger together to stand up in a world that is not following You.

Tuesday, August 10:

Action: Read Nehemiah 1:3-4: “ 3 They said to me, “Those who survived the exile and are back in the province are in great trouble and disgrace. The wall of Jerusalem is broken down, and its gates have been burned with fire.” 4 When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven.”

Questions to Ponder: Are there things that are happening that cause you to sit down, weep, mourn, fast and pray? If you don't, don't you think we have a better chance of turning things around by being very intense in our prayers to the Lord? Will you make a commitment to be more diligent in your prayers not only for people but for the world and our church?

Prayer: Lord, give me a heart for things that we see that are contrary to Your word. Let those things become so personal that I will spend more time with You discerning what can be changed when Your people are hurting too.

Wednesday, August 11:

Action: Read Nehemiah 1:5-6: “⁵ Then I said: ‘Lord, the God of heaven, the great and awesome God, who keeps his covenant of love with those who love him and keep his commandments, ⁶ let your ear be attentive and your eyes open to hear the prayer your servant is praying before you day and night for your servants, the people of Israel. I confess the sins we Israelites, including myself and my father’s family, have committed against you.’”

Questions to Ponder: Do you see how Nehemiah begins his prayer with Thanksgiving to God for who He is. Do you see then he confesses the sins that the people have made and includes the sins of himself and his family? Can you see here that God keeps His covenant with people who love Him and obey His commands?

Prayer: Lord, I don't want my prayers to be just about asking things of You. I want them to include Thanksgiving for who You are and then to participate in a time of confession. Lead me into a new way of spending time with You.

Thursday, August 12:

Action: Read Nehemiah 1:7-8: “⁷ We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave your servant Moses. ⁸ ‘Remember the instruction you gave your servant Moses, saying, ‘If you are unfaithful, I will scatter you among the nations,’”

Questions to Ponder: How are you at being faithful to God? How about obeying His commands and decrees? What do you need to change in your relationship with God? Are you willing to reflect on that question so that God can reveal what needs to change in your life?

Prayer: Lord, I am sorry if I have been wicked toward you and not obeyed Your commands and decrees. It seems that right now even though people may not be physically scattered, we can see them mentally scattered in their way of thinking. Bring us together Lord and help all believers to stand up for what is right and what is not.

Friday, August 13:

Action: Read Nehemiah 1:9-10: “⁹ but if you return to me and obey my commands, then even if your exiled people are at the farthest horizon, I will gather them from there and bring them to the place I have chosen as a dwelling for my Name.’ ¹⁰ ‘They are your servants and your people, whom you redeemed by your great strength and your mighty hand.’”

Questions to Ponder: Do you see that we only need to turn back to God and obey His commands and then He will bring the scattered people back together? How difficult do you think this is for you and the people of God? Don't you think that this deserves prayer as well?

Prayer: Lord, teach us how to humbler ourselves before You. If ever there was a time for us to do this it is now. There are so many things out of our control that we need to seek You so that we can be in unity with one another.

Saturday, August 14:

Action: Read Nehemiah 1:11: “¹¹ Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of this your servant and to the prayer of your servants who delight in revering your name. Give your servant success today by granting him favor in the presence of this man.”

Questions to Ponder: Did you know that Nehemiah's prayer was answered? Do you see how dedicated he was to God in prayer? What have you learned from Nehemiah's prayer? Will you incorporate it into your life?

Prayer: Lord, make it clear to me what You want me to learn from this prayer I have read this week. I want to become a better person at prayer one that is more devoted to You and wanting to know Your desires.