

Gospel Talk  
"From Prayer to Opportunity"  
Nehemiah 1:4-11; 2:1-5

January 23, 2019

---

*Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. (Nehemiah 2:4)*

**I. Effectual Prayer Leads to Divine Opportunities**

- a. The two words, "effectual" and "fervent," are actually translated from a single Greek word, *energeo*.
  1. It conveys the idea of "energizing" and suggests a type of prayer that is "passionate, heated, and persistent. (James 5:16)
- b. Nehemiah's prayed "effectually." Has God ever given you a burden to pray?
- c. New beginnings require new *energized* prayers that will open old/new doors to a new opportunity, which will require new action.
- d. The word opportunity comes from the Latin term *opportunitas*, which is composed of two other terms: *ob*, meaning "toward", and *portus*, meaning "port".
- e. A ship was in a state of *opportunitas* when its captain had decided where to go and knew how to get there. As God's vessels we must constantly seek God's direction for opportunities and directions.

**II. I Prayed to the God of Heaven (Nehemiah 2:4)**

- a. The text reveals that Nehemiah prayed and fasted for days (four months) while serving King Artaxerxes, but one day the king noticed something had changed.
- b. He took his burden of concern before God in prayer it developed into an open demonstration.
- c. Nehemiah took a risk in responding to the king, but his passion took over. He prayed to God before he responded to the king.
- d. Are you surprised that Nehemiah would have time to pray between a question and an answer?
- e. Now that the opportunity had presented itself, Nehemiah consulted God for direction. Even when the blessing comes, we should ask God how to proceed.
- f. *The man who has prayed much is the man to pray more.* – unknown
- g. Previously, Nehemiah had cried out with tears, but this prayer, in the presence of the king, was done silently and perhaps without moving his lips or closing his eyes, but it was offered to God.
- h. This prayer was presented in a twinkling of an eye, it was done intuitively, instinctively, and spontaneously, because it was connected to four months of previous consistent prayer.

**III. Get Serious, Get Passionate**

- a. While on your disciple journey, you are to model integrity, to show joy in the midst of conflict, to seek solutions while others complain. Is there a cause in your life to pray for where you are?
- b. If you are serious and passionate about your prayer life it will be reflected in your character and you will not give up on it! Nehemiah had faith to wait and to ask.
- c. Nehemiah's example teaches us that our prayers do not have to be long but purposeful and continuous. We are to keep asking, even at point of receiving. Keep asking and seeking.
- d. No altar, no church, no sacred place is needed, but wherever you are, a faithful little prayer will reach the ear of God, and win a blessing.
- e. Jesus reminds us in John 16:26-27, that we have the opportunity and access to ask God directly the desires of our hearts. Jesus is our Mediator, but He expects us to ask the Father, boldly.
- f. It is my deepest prayer that our prayer life burns hot for God's will.
- g. Prayer is not measured by yard, or weighed by the pound. It is the intensity and energy of it.