

## Fasting Part 8

*“1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace, 2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem. 3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. 4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven, 5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments: 6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants, and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned. 7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses. 8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: 9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. 10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand. 11 O LORD, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king's cupbearer.” (Nehemiah 1:1-11 KJV)*

This is another Scripture in the Bible that speaks more about fasting, as we read and meditate on the Word of God in this message then we can learn and apply that in our lives.

*“1 The words of Nehemiah the son of Hachaliah. And it came to pass in the month Chisleu, in the twentieth year, as I was in Shushan the palace,” (Nehemiah 1:1 KJV)* Nehemiah was away from Jerusalem, in exile in the citadel of Susa, he was working as cup bearer to the King of Persia. While he was working there he received visitors who came to him from Jerusalem, *“2 That Hanani, one of my brethren, came, he and certain men of Judah; and I asked them concerning the Jews that had escaped, which were left of the captivity, and concerning Jerusalem.” (Nehemiah 1:2 KJV)* The visitors were Hanani, one of his brothers and other men with him who came from Judah. Thanks God that there was still communication and movement allowed between Judah and those in exiles and through that movement news can be received. Here Nehemiah asked them first about the Jews that had escaped the

captivity and concerning the city of Jerusalem. So here clearly we can see that Nehemiah was really concerned about the things of God. He was concerned about the situation of the people of God which here represented with the Jews, and about the Church of God which here represented with the city of Jerusalem. Now, as we are speaking and concerned about the subject of fasting, all who read and listen to this message have gadgets that through them can communicate through calls, chatting and email with the people in far places. *Now answer this question; when you communicate with people whom you know, are you concerned about the worldly things, gossiping non sense, concerned about your personal gains, concern about having business, concerned about migrating to a better place, or are you concerned about the things of God, about the people of God and about the affairs of His church?*

*Time for you now to use the social media communication facility that you have to reach out people and to help them to come back to God and to be restored to the original plan that God has for them.*

Now this is the answer that Nehemiah received for His question and this is the news that he got: *“3 And they said unto me, The remnant that are left of the captivity there in the province are in great affliction and reproach: the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire.” (Nehemiah 1:3 KJV)* The news that he received about his city Jerusalem and about his people was bad. Sin, rebelliousness and disobedience had brought God's wrath and ruin over the life of the people in Jerusalem and Judah and brought them into troubles and captivity. True that those who are away from the plan of God and away from the will of God they are in troubles and under the attacks of all the forces of the devil; their lives are exposed to hurts and harms as a city without fence exposed to the threats and the attacks of the enemy. *Those who are away from God they have no wall of protection around them, and they have no rules to follow to protect them. Therefore, those who are away from God as we pray and fast we need to have concern and compassion on them in order to reach them out and in order to bring the Word of God, the will of God and His teaching to them.*

*“4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,” (Nehemiah 1:4 KJV)* Nehemiah reaction to weep, mourn, fasting and praying came from the following elements:

**1. Repentance:** Nehemiah realized that all the bad things that had happened to the people of God and the destruction that came upon Jerusalem and Judah was due to sin. *In the same way we need to understand today that all the destruction on the people of God and on the churches of God are due to sin, idol worship, rebelliousness and moving away from God.*

*“5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:” (Nehemiah 1:5 KJV)* Nehemiah wept and cried to God in his prayer. Nehemiah pleaded with the covenant of God, and pleaded with His love and His mercy. In the same way in our prayer and fasting we need to weep and cry to God and appeal to him to bring to us His love, forgiveness and mercy.

*“6 Let thine ear now be attentive, and thine eyes open, that thou mayest hear the prayer of thy servant, which I pray before thee now, day and night, for the children of Israel thy servants,*

***and confess the sins of the children of Israel, which we have sinned against thee: both I and my father's house have sinned.” (Nehemiah 1:6 KJV)*** Nehemiah was praying and pleading with God day and night. As we pray and fast with pain, repentance and compassion in our hearts we need to do that day and night. Nehemiah was pleading with God that He will let His ear to be attentive and His eyes to be open to His prayer and fasting and to the confessing of sin; the sins of the Israelites, and the sins of the Israelites who were serving God, in addition to that his own sin and the sin of his father's house. *In the same way when we pray and fast we need to confess our own sins, the sins of our fathers houses, the sins of our families, and these are the sins of the traditional and cultural practices that are against the Word of God and the will of God, as well as we need to confess the sins of the churches of God and the sins of those who serve God.* The following are brief presentation of the sins of the present churches of God and the sins of the servants of God and the idols that they worship while serving God:

- Lust and immorality; having boyfriend and girlfriend, dating, courting, watching pornography, live-in relationship, divorce and remarriage, adultery, multiple marriages and unlawful marriages in marrying non believers.
- Celebrating feasts of idols; celebrating New Year and Christmas with its Santa Claus, Christmas tree, celebrating birthdays, wedding anniversaries, and death anniversaries, celebrating Father's Day and Mother's Day, Halloween (Harvest), All Saints Day, Valentine's Day, and Pastor's Month. All these celebration should be out of our lives.
- Greed, covetousness, and love of money.
- Wasting and spending too much.
- Gluttony, eating too much, loving food more than God, buying food from restaurants, loving feasts and celebration but refusing to fast.
- Worldliness; wasting time on TV, U-Tube and facebook.
- Slander, malice, envy, jealousy, bitterness, having grudges, anger, hatred and unforgiveness, boasting, showing off, laziness, complacency and lack of commitment to God, and serving the worldly things but not willing to serve God.
- Homosexualities, allowing a relationship between man to man, and woman to woman, condoning transgender and homosexual attitude and actions, and allowing homosexual marriages.

***“5 And said, I beseech thee, O LORD God of heaven, the great and terrible God, that keepeth covenant and mercy for them that love him and observe his commandments:” (Nehemiah 1:5 KJV)*** *You need to understand that when Nehemiah pleaded with God who keep His covenant, that God will keep His covenant with you when you are ready to repent and to renounce all your sins.*

***“7 We have dealt very corruptly against thee, and have not kept the commandments, nor the statutes, nor the judgments, which thou commandedst thy servant Moses.” (Nehemiah 1:7 KJV)*** Nehemiah spoke clearly to God that they did corruptly with God, they broke His commandments and judgments that He sent through Moses.

*Therefore, you need to understand that your prayer and fasting will be effective, when you are in the same mind of God, and God will listen and move to do good and great things if you laid before God and confess all the sins, the idols and the corruption in His Word and ways that you and the churches of God and the people of God had done.*

Nehemiah confessed his sin and the sins of his forefathers; they acted very wickedly toward God. They did not obey the commands, decrees and laws God gave through Moses. Sin had destructive power, and that what will bring troubles on the believers and on the church today. Fasting without repentance it had no effect. If you want to fast then you need to realize your sins and the sins of the believers and the church, and you need to repent of these sins and renounce them, then the Lord would listen to you.

***2. Concern and Compassion:*** The news that those men brought to Nehemiah was very sad news that hurt Nehemiah's feeling and brought sadness and grieve to his soul. ***“4 And it came to pass, when I heard these words, that I sat down and wept, and mourned certain days, and fasted, and prayed before the God of heaven,” (Nehemiah 1:4 KJV)*** Nehemiah wept from the depth of his heart, he was really hurt to the bone for the news he heard. He was in pain after the news that he received about his people, the people of God and about Jerusalem and Judah. Nehemiah was full of compassion. The Word of God instruct us to be clothed with compassion. Jesus was full of compassion toward the crowd that was coming toward Him, as we read here: ***“36 But when he saw the multitudes, he was moved with compassion on them, because they fainted, and were scattered abroad, as sheep having no shepherd.” (Matthew 9:36 KJV)*** ***“14 And Jesus went forth, and saw a great multitude, and was moved with compassion toward them, and he healed their sick.” (Matthew 14:14 KJV)*** The same pain that was in the heart of God for the people situation and suffering, that pain was also the same in the heart of Nehemiah when he heard the bad news. *Therefore, as we pray and fast Jesus wants our hearts to be filled with the compassion of Jesus and have concern to the suffering multitude who are far away from God.*

Nehemiah moved in heart when he heard the bad news, he had concern for the bad situation of the people of God, and he moved with compassion to do something for the welfare of the people of God. *You need to have concern and compassion toward the lost souls and toward those who live in bondage and they need deliverance.*

*We need to have concern and compassion toward the believers and the churches that live in bondages due to their sins and disobedience.*

We need to pray and fast for those people and churches with pain and compassion in our hearts toward them to get delivered. God pleased with Nehemiah reaction because Nehemiah shared with God the pain that was in the heart of God to the current bad situation of Jerusalem and the people of God who were in miserable situation.

***3. Clear understanding of the Scriptures:*** ***“8 Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant Moses, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: 9 But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there.” (Nehemiah 1:8-***

**10 KJV)** Nehemiah is aware that the covenant with God is conditional. If the people of God transgress the covenant of God, the Lord shall scatter them and allow troubles to come to them. But if they will repent and return to God and keep His commandment and do them, God will be able and He is faithful to restore them and gather them back even if they are in far places and even if they are in a miserable condition or under many oppressive forces.

**“10 Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.” (Nehemiah 1:10 KJV)** Nehemiah realize that those people who are repented they are not only the people of God and they are saved, as well as they are the servant of God. In the say way when you, the people of God, and the churches of God who repent of their sin they are not only saved by the blood of Jesus, as well as they are the people of God and the servants of God, serving the Lord with us, bringing new souls to the Lord and waiting with us for the Lord to come to take us to Heaven.

**4. Humility:** Nehemiah humbled himself in God’s hand realizing that without the aid of God nothing can be done to reverse the miserable situation of the people of God and Jerusalem. He prayed and asked the Lord favour in the sight of the king that he was working as cupbearer to give him the permission to leave for a while and go to Jerusalem and do something to help the people as we can read here: **“11 O LORD, I beseech thee, let now thine ear be attentive to the prayer of thy servant, and to the prayer of thy servants, who desire to fear thy name: and prosper, I pray thee, thy servant this day, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man. For I was the king’s cupbearer.” (Nehemiah 1:1-11 KJV)** From this verse 11 we can conclude the followings:

- No one can help us in our struggles but God alone.
- God will work in our behalf if we repent and come back to Him.
- Whatever the situation is bad God is able to reverse even the worst situation for He can bring us from death to life.
- Fearing God is essential to bring God’s salvation and prosperity in our midst.
- Favor and mercy only God can give.
- God when He is pleased with us He will grant us the favor even in front of kings.
- There are others servants who fear God and had repented and serve God as we are.

**My dear and Beloved:** God answered Nehemiah crying, pleading, petition, fasting and prayer and the Lord granted him the following:

**A. Favour:** Nehemiah was given by the King permission to leave his job temporarily and go to Jerusalem to rebuild it and to do the work of God.

**B. Provision:** Nehemiah was given the provision that he needed to travel and do the work of God. The king granted his requests to have letters to the governors of Trans-Euphrates, so that they will provide him safe-conduct until he will arrive in Judah. And a letter to the keeper of the king’s forest, so he will give him timber to make

beams for the gates of the citadel by the temple and for the city wall and for the residence he will occupy.

**C. Vision:** The Lord gave Nehemiah clear and complete vision how to rebuild the wall and the city of Jerusalem and to be restored back to what it was.

In the same way as you behave like Nehemiah God will grant you the same. God wants from you real repentance, real understanding of the Scriptures, humility, compassion and concern to the things that touch and fill the heart of God with pain. If you have that God shall give you favour, various kinds of provision, blessings, prosperity, deliverance restoration and the vision to go forward and do His work and will.

Let us pray.

**My Prayer:** Father God we come before you in the name of Jesus who died on the cross for our sins to give us eternal life. Lord we thank you for your Word that you sent to us.

Let us confess and renounce all our sins, idols, corruptions, compromises and wrong doings.

I confess and renounce the followings \_\_\_\_\_

Dear Lord 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 your churches. I confess the sins we the people of your churches, including myself, have committed against you. We have acted very wickedly toward you. We have not obeyed the commands, decrees and laws you gave us. Remember the instruction you gave your servants, saying, **“Remember, I beseech thee, the word that thou commandedst thy servant, saying, If ye transgress, I will scatter you abroad among the nations: But if ye turn unto me, and keep my commandments, and do them; though there were of you cast out unto the uttermost part of the heaven, yet will I gather them from thence, and will bring them unto the place that I have chosen to set my name there. Now these are thy servants and thy people, whom thou hast redeemed by thy great power, and by thy strong hand.** They are your servants and your people Lord Jesus, whom you redeemed by your blood and by your great strength and your mighty hand on the cross. O 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 servants success today by granting him favor, provisions and vision to move forward and do your will and your work.

Lord I pray for us as a church to be doer of your Word and to accomplish the tasks that you had called us to do for you. Lord refill us again with the Holy Spirit and give us the spiritual gifts that we need in our lives. Lord enable us to evangelize and reach new people with the Gospel and the message of Jesus Christ. Lord fill us with love, mercy, concern and compassion and enable us to plant more Bible studies and congregations for the church. Lord bless us, enlarge our territory, let your hand be with us, and free us from harm so we will not feel pain. May the grace of the Lord Jesus and the love of God and the fellowship of the Holy Spirit be with us all in Jesus name, Amen.

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