Nehemiah 9

The Power of Praying the Bible

Study Guide

**Destruction and the Power of Starting Over**

Randy started off with a story of the great Chicago fire in 1871 where a raging 3-day fire destroyed 3.3 square miles of Chicago. A Chicago Tribune editorial posted these headlines: “CHEER UP!” One historian said, “Almost immediately many Chicagoans came to see the destruction of the city as an unexpected positive event, a state in its irresistible upward development rather than a dispiriting setback.” Randy went on to talk about the numerous times in our lives when we start over. The first day of kindergarten, the first day of high school, going off to college or starting a new job. A clean slate.

1. How many times have you felt like you started over?
2. What was the most memorable time you had when starting over?

In Nehemiah chapter 9 Ezrah offered a prayer to God and scripture reading and prayer. It follows below versus 1-5 and versus 32-37

1 Now on the twenty-fourth day of this month the people of Israel were assembled with fasting and in sackcloth, and with earth on their heads. 2 And the Israelites[fn] separated themselves from all foreigners and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers. 3 And they stood up in their place and read from the Book of the Law of the LORD their God for a quarter of the day; for another quarter of it they made confession and worshiped the LORD their God. 4 On the stairs of the Levites stood Jeshua, Bani, Kadmiel, Shebaniah, Bunni, Sherebiah, Bani, and Chenani; and they cried with a loud voice to the LORD their God. 5 Then the Levites, Jeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashabneiah, Sherebiah, Hodiah, Shebaniah, and Pethahiah, said, “Stand up and bless the LORD your God from everlasting to everlasting. Blessed be your glorious name, which is exalted above all blessing and praise.

32 “Now, therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and steadfast love, let not all the hardship seem little to you that has come upon us, upon our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and all your people, since the time of the kings of Assyria until this day. 33 Yet you have been righteous in all that has come upon us, for you have dealt faithfully and we have acted wickedly. 34 Our kings, our princes, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law or paid attention to your commandments and your warnings that you gave them. 35 Even in their own kingdom, and amid your great goodness that you gave them, and in the large and rich land that you set before them, they did not serve you or turn from their wicked works. 36 Behold, we are slaves this day; in the land that you gave to our fathers to enjoy its fruit and its good gifts, behold, we are slaves. 37 And its rich yield goes to the kings whom you have set over us because of our sins. They rule over our bodies and over our livestock as they please, and we are in great distress.

Randy said that to rebuild a city you need stones, mortar and lumber. To rebuild a community you need prayer, scripture and a commitment to worshiping in community.

1. How do these elements rebuild community?
   1. Prayer:
   2. Scripture:
   3. Worship:
2. Randy refers to the scripture being “a map of where we are, a compass telling us where we need to be and a pair of glasses to help us see the way there.” What is a scripture that might come to mind when you think of the map, compass and glasses?
3. An expository prayer like this provides a different focus. It reveals God’s great name. It unveils our great need. It awaits his great plan. How do you think these items give us a different focus?
4. Randy talked about the counter-points in Ezra’s prayer. The people’s actions and God’s response. Read through 9-18 and see if you can name the counter-point of man’s behavior and God’s action?
5. When was a time you experienced a “but God” in your own life?
6. Randy talked about how God made a name for Himself through the people of Israel. What are ways that I can allow God to make a name for Him in my life?