

October 9th, 2022AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
Nehemiah 9:32-38 – “Confess Sin & Vow to Obey God”

- A. Written agreements are important in business contracts & other legal contracts.
 - 1. What about written agreements that church members should all sign?
 - 2. Today’s text give us an example of such an document.
- B. From the generous giving at the end of **Neh 7** through all of **Neh 8**, there is a record of great thanksgiving to God for all He did for Judah under the leadership of Nehemiah.
- C. **Neh 9** records a special worship service that was born out of a sincere repentance of sin.

God calls you to confess your sin & vow to obey Him.	I. <u>HOW TO CONFESS YOUR SIN TO GOD</u> II. <u>YOUR VOWS TO OBEY GOD</u>
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I. HOW TO CONFESS YOUR SIN TO GOD

- A. As always when you pray to God, you should start by addressing Him with due praise. → **v32**
 - 1. Imagine you are going to have a meeting with the most prestigious ruler in the world.
 - a. Even the greatest kings in the history of the world don’t compare in greatness to **“our God, the great, the mighty, & the awesome God”** (v32a).
 - b. **1 Tim 6** says He is **“the blessed & only Sovereign, the King of kings & Lord of lords, who alone possesses immortality & dwells in unapproachable light, whom no man has seen or can see. To Him be honor & eternal dominion! Amen”** (vv15-16).
 - 2. He is not only great & mighty; He is faithful because He **“keeps covenant & lovingkindness.”**
 - a. There are many reasons why we fail to keep what we have promised God & others.
 - b. In keeping of His long-awaited promise to send the Seed of the woman who would bruise Satan’s head (**Gen 3:15**), He sent His Son Jesus as a suffering Servant **“so that He would be just & the justifier of the 1 who has faith in Jesus”** (**Rom 3:26**).
- B. When you confess your sin, acknowledge God’s justice in the consequences of your sin. → **vv32-33**
 - 1. Notice the particular consequences these men of Judah mentioned in **vv36-37**. Look there.
 - 2. God promised them a land flowing with milk & honey yet because of their sin after the death of Joshua, all their abundant produce went to various oppressors during the period of the judges, then later to the Assyrians, the Babylonians, & the Persians.
- C. When you confess your sins to God, acknowledge your particular sins & the aggravating circumstance of your sins → **vv34-35**.
 - 1. They ignored God’s commands even after He sent His prophets to admonish/correct them.
 - 2. He set a rich land before them, yet they returned His goodness with evil deeds.

II. YOUR VOWS TO OBEY GOD → **v38**

- A. It is not best practice to confess your sins to God with a plan to do the same sinful practice as soon as you walk out of the church.
- B. Today's text gives us an example of the Jewish leadership having a covenant renewal of sorts.
1. We will look at his agreement in more detail next week; however, **Neh 10:29** mentions them making an oath; they took **“an oath to walk in God's law, which was given through Moses.”**
 2. This is very much like our church membership vows.
- C. What are some marks of a true Christian versus someone who merely “talks the talk?” (2 things)¹:
1. **Faith**— he or she is to rest upon Christ alone for salvation as He is offered in the gospel.
 2. **Repentance** unto life which is a saving grace includes:
 - a. a true sense of his sin
 - b. an apprehension or spiritual grasp of the mercy of God in Christ
 - c. grief & hatred of his sin leading him to turn from that sin **“unto God, with full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.”**
 - d. Jesus said, **“If you love Me, you will keep My Commandments” (Jn 14:15).**
 - 1) None of us does this perfectly; however, a true Christian's life is characterized by a **“full purpose of, and endeavor after, new obedience.”**
 - 2) True Christians are not made perfect; that is impossible in this life.
 - 3) The true believer is made evident by a repentant heart. He or she feels sorrow over sin, hates it, & endeavors to turn from it & towards the ways of Christ.
- D. Should we have a written covenant or agreement of sorts in our church?
1. There is a Christian movie called “Courageous” where some men made such a written vow of sorts to uphold.
 2. If you are a communicant member of this church, you already had such a ceremony here at this church. There is a written record of what you vowed before God & many witnesses:
 - (1) I believe the Bible, consisting of the Old & New Testaments, to be the Word of God, & its doctrine of salvation to be the perfect & only true doctrine of salvation.
 - (2) I believe in 1 living & true God, in whom eternally there are 3 distinct persons— God the Father, God the Son, & God the Holy Spirit—who are the same in being & equal in power & glory, & that Jesus Christ is God the Son, come in the flesh.
 - (3) I confess that because of my sinfulness I abhor & humble myself before God, that I repent of my sin, & that I trust for salvation not in myself but in Jesus Christ alone.
 - (4) I acknowledge Jesus Christ as my sovereign Lord, & promise that, in reliance on the grace of God, I will serve Him with all that is in me, forsake the world, resist the devil, put to death my sinful deeds & desires, & lead a godly life.
 - (5) I promise to participate faithfully in my church's worship & service, to submit in the Lord to its government, & to heed its discipline, even in case I should be found delinquent in doctrine or life²

Review, further application, & conclusion:

¹ Westminster Shorter Catechism 86 & 87

² This is modified from the OPC Directory for Worship, chapter IV.