

Ejaculatory Prayer – Nehemiah 2:1-8

I. Introduction:

- A. A couple weeks ago I mentioned that there are several different kinds of prayer – legitimate prayer to God.
1. Let me expand on that.
 2. There are those prayers of **the closet** – your alone time with God – informal, personal, intimate.
 3. Then there are the prayers of **the church** and **the temple** – like Solomon’s great prayer.
 4. There are the *“where two or three are gathered together in my name”* kinds of prayer.
 5. There are the **formal**, follow-the-pattern prayers – *“Our Father which art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.”*
 6. And there are the **free verse** hymns of prayer.
 7. There are **joyful prayers** full of praise and thanksgiving, & there are the **broken-hearted**, beat-on-the-chest prayers like Nehemiah’s and the publican’s – *“God be merciful to me a sinner.”*
 8. There are the **unspoken** prayers and the loud prayers **representing large congregations**.
 9. Nehemiah has shared one private prayer with us in **chapter 1**, and here he reveals another – *“So I prayed to the God of Heaven.”*
- B. In the language of the 17th and 18th century this was called an **“ejaculatory prayer.”**
1. We might call it an **“ex-clamatory prayer”** or perhaps **“interjectory prayer.”**
 2. As I’ve suggested in earlier messages, this might have been nothing more than **“Help me, God!”**
 3. Nehemiah doesn’t tell us its length or content.
 4. But the circumstances seem to suggest that it was silent and very brief.
 5. It was like the prayer of a man facing the charging lion or looking down the gun barrel of the drug-crazed thief.
 6. *“I am in trouble with a king who can order my immediate execution. Help me, Lord.”*
- C. My premise this evening is that this can be a very **beneficial** kind of **prayer**.
1. It was in the case of Nehemiah.
 - a. *“So I prayed to the God of Heaven.”*
 - b. **Verse 8** – *“And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.”*
 2. We need to **learn** about **ejaculatory prayer** and we need try to **practice it** far more than we do.
- D. I think we should begin by considering some other examples, or near examples, of this kind of prayer.
1. There was that night when **the disciples** were trying to cross the **Sea of Galilee**, having left Jesus on the eastern shore.
 2. A storm came up, but so did the Lord Jesus.
 3. *“And when the disciples saw him walking on the sea, they were troubled, saying, It is a spirit; and they cried out for fear.”*
 - a. *But straightway Jesus spake unto them, saying, Be of good cheer; it is I; be not afraid.*
 - b. *And Peter answered him and said, Lord, if it be thou, bid me come unto thee on the water. And he said, Come. And when Peter was come down out of the ship, he walked on the water, to go to Jesus.*
 - c. *But when he saw the wind boisterous, he was afraid; and beginning to sink, he cried, saying, **LORD, SAVE ME.** And immediately Jesus stretched forth his hand, and caught him...”*
 4. Could Peter have gotten on his knees or put his hands together in the child’s posture for prayer? No.
 5. He did all that he could do.
 6. He might have actually thrown his arms up – in the way some charismatics pray – but if he did it was probably not a prayer posture, but of someone who has had the floor knocked out from under him.
 7. He just blurted out **“Lord, save me,”** and that is just what the Lord did.
- E. Another example might be **Stephen**.
1. After he preached the truth to Saul and his henchmen, the mob picked up a few 20 pound boulders with which to crush his skull.

2. Stephen had said all that he could say to the mob; there were only a few seconds left in his earthly life.
 3. Not that he really needed to say anything more or to pray at all, he did say – *“Lord Jesus, receive my spirit.”*
 4. And Christ Jesus did exactly that.
 5. Have you ever wondered from where those words came? Would you pray like that under circumstances.
 6. Do you suppose that Stephen had been there at the crucifixion of Christ?
 7. I ask because Jesus uttered almost the same ejaculatory prayer, *“Father, into thy hands I commend my spirit: and having said thus, he gave up the ghost.”*
- F. There are a few other examples of short prayers, but they don’t necessarily qualify for our message tonight.
1. For example, **Samson** briefly prayed for strength before bringing down Dagon’s temple, but it wasn’t the same urgent, *“I am dying, help me”* sort of prayer.
 2. And **Abraham’s servant** briefly prayed for God’s assistance as he stood near the well in the city of Nahor, and after that there was another brief prayer of thanksgiving.
 3. So there may be other **examples of interjectory prayers**, but let’s try to draw our lessons primarily from Nehemiah.

II. We’ll begin with the NATURE of the EJACULATORY prayer.

- A. They are short and to the point – *“Lord, help,”* or *“Lord, receive my spirit.”*
1. There isn’t any repetitious knocking at the throne room door in this prayer – waiting for admission.
 2. The matter is so urgent we may just walk in and blurt out our need, and our God is so gracious and omniscient not to be offended by our intrusion.
 3. There aren’t any fancy titles; there isn’t any verbal genuflecting – any arguments or extra emotion.
- B. You are familiar with how some men blurt out a swear word when they hurt themselves.
1. What if we learned and conditioned ourselves to blurt out just as quickly, *“Lord, help?”*
 2. We hit our thumb with the hammer and out of our hearts pops, *“Help, Lord.”*
 3. When our hearts are right – that may be a more acceptable prayer with God than the Lord’s model prayer.
- C. Doesn’t this kind of prayer shed light on the words of ***1 Thess. 5:17; Rom. 12:12*** and ***Eph. 6:18***?
1. We have busy lives with hundreds of responsibilities every day, and yet Paul commanded, *“Pray without ceasing.”* How can we do that?
 2. Isn’t interjectory prayer a necessity in order to be obedient to this exhortation?
 3. How can we *“Rejoice in hope; be patient in tribulation; and continuing instant in prayer,”* if this kind of prayer isn’t a part of our daily lives.
 4. Paul exhorts – *“Praying ALWAYS with all prayer and supplication in the Spirit, and watching thereunto with all perseverance and supplication for all saints.”*
- D. Isn’t it safe to say that for this **to be a part** of our prayer life, it needs to be a part of our **general prayer life**.
1. Ejaculatory prayer is an extension of the rest of our prayer life.
 2. If we are not daily and regularly in prayer.... if we are not honest in seeking God when there isn’t a crisis... then it is unlikely that this kind of prayer is going to come easily or to be blessed by God.
 3. When you stop and think about it, this is usually a selfish and greedy kind of prayer.
 4. But if it is an honest extension of our larger prayer life, it is as natural as a gasp of air before putting your face into the spray of the shower.
 5. *“Lord, help”* is not going to be pleasing to the Lord if He doesn’t also regularly hear, *“Lord, I love you.”* *“Lord thank you for your blessing this morning.”* *“Lord, I praise you for meeting the need of my friend.”*
- E. And as you know, it need not be put to words – vocalized. It can be nothing more than a **prayerful thought**.
1. I don’t think that Nehemiah took time to close his eyes, fold his hands and intone his request to God.
 2. It popped out of his soul like an arrow, and it was just as silent – and just as accurate.

- F. Generally speaking we **need to think** about our prayers; we need to **engage** our hearts and our minds.
1. But in this kind of prayer, even more than others, we simply need to let *“the Spirit itself maketh intercession for us with groanings which cannot be uttered.”*
 2. Again, this is an extension of our regular or more formal prayer life.
 3. Nehemiah’s *“Help, Lord,”* was predicated on the prayer of **chapter one**.
- G. Nehemiah shows us that this kind of prayer may be **lawfully sandwiched** into any necessary situation.
1. I know that it is easy to forget, to become de-focused and in need of refocusing.
 2. I keep reminding myself that our mid-week service should be about the prayer, but I easily forget.
 3. When we started our study of **Proverbs**, I was thinking of calming devotions and aiming our hearts toward the Lord before the important work of prayer.
 4. I deliberately intended those lessons to be less than 30 minutes so there would be more time for prayer.
 5. Years ago most Baptists had *“Prayer Meetings,”* but then they became *“Mid-week Services”* and then *“Wednesday Bible Studies.”*
 6. On the third Saturday do we gather in our *“Men’s Prayer Meeting,”* or is it our *“Men’s Prayer Breakfast?”*
- H. Nehemiah shows us we can pray even when prayer is not the most important matter at the moment.
1. Saving his life was the most crucial point at that point.
 2. But it was easy for him to call on the Name of the Lord because he had been doing it every day for years.
 3. This kind of prayer might be looked at as the delicious deli meat between two crusty slices of moldy bread. *“Help, Lord.”*
- I. This kind of prayer may be as intense, or even more intense, than our morning’s half-hour prayer in the closet.
1. At least in Nehemiah’s case his *“Help Lord,”* was filled with more emotion than anything he had said all day.
 2. And do you think that when **Stephen** prayed, it was as emotionless – *“Lord, receive my spirit”?*
 3. Didn’t he intend it to be *“Here I come Lord, catch me.”*
 4. When Nehemiah prayed there wasn’t any hesitation, lack of confidence; it was no mealy-mouthed request.
 5. It was intense, quick and wordless, but it was Holy Spirit empowered.
- J. What if I said that this ejaculatory kind of prayer may be the most real prayer in that list I gave you earlier?
1. I hear some people pray in public services or in small groups on Wednesday and I think, *“Come on that’s not the way you pray in your private devotions, is it?”*
 2. Do we pray with the same phrases when in public as when no one but the Lord is listening?
 3. And are our requests really the same? Are we as earnest – one way or the other?
 4. When there is no time to think and prepare... when we can’t plan and read through our prayer list... those prayers are a more true expression of the heart.
 5. *“Lord this time it is all about me. Help Lord.”*

III. What a PRIVILEGE God gives to us with this kind of prayer.

- A. How many Catholics still think that they can not pray unless they have the help of beads, candles and idols?
1. How many Episcopalians have to have their prayer book in order to pray?
 2. Some people require a special place to pray – a church, a mountain top, a little niche in the woods.
 3. How many religions require the use of a prayer shawl or some other device to assist in their prayers?
 4. Some Baptists have their necessary helps as well.
- B. But we don’t need some sort of special hand-shake, engraved invitation or eavesdropping priest to get our requests unto God.
1. Nehemiah was quick on the draw – just point and shoot.
 2. It’s not necessary to visualize the Lord blending down to listen to our request before we open our mouths.
 3. It’s not necessary for you to look up to heaven, or to put on your religious voice. *“Help, Lord”* is sufficient.

4. In every corner of our lives, there is a heavenly CCTV camera beaming your heart into God's throne room.
5. *Isaiah 65:24 – “And it shall come to pass, that before they call, I will answer; and while they are yet speaking, I will hear.”*

- C. What if Nehemiah had paused to think things through; what if he stopped to considered the best response?
1. Isn't it possible that the door of opportunity might have closed?
 2. If he had hesitated any longer, might not Artaxerxes have decided there was something evil in all this?
 3. What Nehemiah did was spit out the need and then permitted God to lead in a response.
 4. This required faith – this required a **practiced** faith.

IV. There are genuine blessings in this kind of prayer.

- A. But are the blessings different from any other prayer? I suppose sometimes they can be.
1. I am not quick on my feet; I can't think well under pressure; I don't have a debater's nature.
 2. Was Nehemiah like me? I hope not. But I picture him as just a bit ruffled at this point.
 - a. *“Wherefore the king said unto me, Why is thy countenance sad, seeing thou art not sick? this is nothing else but sorrow of heart. Then I was very sore afraid,*
 - b. *And said unto the king, Let the king live for ever: why should not my countenance be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' sepulchres, lieth waste, and the gates thereof are consumed with fire?”*
 3. Can't you just hear Nehemiah's heart rate doubling and see his blood pressure sky-rocketing?
 4. *“Then the king said unto me, For what dost thou make request? So I prayed to the God of heaven.”*
 5. Now I can see Nehemiah's vitals starting to stabilize.
 - a. *“Sire, would you consider sending me to Judah to help my Jewish brethren there?”*
 - b. *“And the king granted me, according to the good hand of my God upon me.”*
 6. Isn't there a calm which comes with the prayer of faith? Any kind of prayer of faith.
 7. Even if the prayer is ejaculatory – short and insistent – there is a soothing effect when we put our hand in the hand of the man who calmed the water of the Sea of Genessaret.
- B. Obviously, interjectory prayers can become a part of our spiritual defense.
1. Here comes Satan, like a dictatorial king, carrying with him that temptation which you know so very well.
 2. A quick *“help, Lord”* might be all you need on this occasion to keep him in his place.
 3. Since this kind of prayer is not built on your wisdom or your perception of the situation....
 - a. Since you are not trying to dictate to the Lord exactly how He should help you...
 - b. This kind of prayer strengthens your dependence upon God – His wisdom, His direction, His strength.
 4. There is as much victory in this prayer as there is in any other, perhaps even more.
- C. Picture Nehemiah and Artaxerxes
1. What was their relationship religiously or spiritually?
 2. Did Artaxerxes even know Nehemiah was a Jew?
 3. I have no doubt that **Daniel** witnessed of his Saviour to Cyrus, Nebuchadnezzar and Darius.
 4. I admire those people who can open their mouths *“boldly, to make known the mystery of the gospel.”*
 5. I may be totally off base when it comes to our hero, but he appears to me to be less bold with his earthly king than Paul was or Daniel was.
 6. And yet when he interjects, *“Help, Lord,”* he is empowered to speak with confidence.
- D. Let's say, you have that friend to whom you have witnessed many times – but that ended years ago.
1. Since that confrontation back in 2014, you haven't spoken directly about the Lord.
 2. What if, on your next visit, when the door of opportunity opened, your heart ejected a quick *“Help, Lord”*?
 3. What is the likelihood that you'd be given words to speak? Isn't the Lord able? Wouldn't it be very likely?
 4. I am suggesting that our service for Christ might greatly increase if there was more ejaculatory prayer in our lives.

- E. Or you are in a church service, listening to Bro. Fulton preach God's word.
1. You know that your old lost friend is sitting in the back, perhaps he's hearing just what you are hearing, but is he really listening?
 2. You can't jump up and run back, pull him to his feet and force him to pay attention.
 3. But you can eject a silent prayer, *"Help him, Lord."*
- F. This is a congregation which strengthens and blesses the preacher with a few periodic *"amens."*
1. I thank you for them.
 - a. They don't come naturally to me, and I admit to not being very good with them.
 - b. Again I thank you and ask you to keep them coming.
 2. But do you think the messages at Calvary Baptist Church might become more effectual if there were 50 ejaculatory prayers to go along with those amens?
 - a. You pray on Saturday night and Sunday morning for the service, and I thank you for your prayers.
 - b. Especially in recent weeks, I believe I have experienced the power of the Lord because of your prayers.
 3. But what if we leave the *"amens"* to those in habit of using them, while the rest of us, take up a ministry of interjectory prayers during the messages.
 4. *"Help the preacher Lord. Empower that thought into the heart of that lost man."*
 5. A message shot through and through with *"amens"* is a joy.
 6. How many times does your mind get snagged on a misquote or mistake, and you make a mental note.
 7. Now, how many times have you prayed, *"Strengthen him, Lord."*
 8. A message pierced with silent, emotional spiritual prayers might be more helpful, than one filled with *"amen."*
 9. You have an opportunity to become a powerful part of every church service. *"Help, Lord."*
- G. There are many different ways to pray, and I suppose that there can be different purposes in those prayers.
1. One with which perhaps we are not well-experienced is the ejaculatory prayer.
 2. Let's not wait until we find ourselves like Stephen, *"Lord receive my spirit."*
 3. Let's be more like Nehemiah – *"I need your help, Lord, in order to glorify thy name."*
 4. Spit out that prayer to the Lord, even it is only a single word – *"Help!"*
 5. Our God is in the helping business, especially toward those who sincerely yearn for it, and who are in the habit of thankfully receiving it.