

Nehemiah 9:5-38

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[0 : 00] So the book of Nehemiah, Nehemiah chapter 9. Nehemiah chapter 9. What a, it's an amazing text we have before us. It's so rich. You'll see it in Nehemiah chapter 9.

We'll be where we're at. We're going to pick up in verse 5. We'll read to the end of the chapter. We're reading the prayer of God's people.

A prayer of praise and recognition. So it would be Nehemiah 9 verses 5 through 38. But it's rather extensive prayer.

We'll take our time. We'll read through it in its entirety. But what a beautiful portion of scripture it is before us. But let's pray. Father, we thank you so much for allowing us, again, the opportunity of gathering together.

What a joy and what a privilege to have a place in which we can come together in fellowship and to be encouraged by our fellowship and to be challenged by the word. So we pray, Father, that you be with us as we open up the word of God.

[1 : 01] And that as we come to it, we long to know more of you. We long to understand more of your ways and your character and your abilities.

But, Lord, we ask that we would do that with the ambition of being conformed to your image. Thank you for the truth of scripture. Thank you for the matters that take place.

And thank you for the way that it speaks to our hearts and minds. And we pray that as we gather together and as we read the word of God together, that Christ be magnified. Lord, we continue to pray for those around us that are in need, those that stand and want.

And, Lord, may we have eyes of compassion and a heart of willingness and lives committed to your service and your glory. And we ask it on Christ's name. Amen. Nehemiah chapter 9.

If you recall, when we got into the first four verses of the ninth chapter, the people had come and there was this great absence of Ezra.

[2 : 03] So the people are gathered together. They're gathered with the Levites and they're confessing. This is the first day that they have the opportunity after the reading of the word. So the word of God was read on the first day of the seventh month, which is the festival of trumpets.

We find that in the eighth chapter, verse one. They go through the festival of trumpets rather quickly. They celebrate that. They go into the day of atonement, which is on the 15th day.

They celebrate the festival of booths or living in booths or tabernacle. But on the 24th day, it tells us in the first verse of the ninth chapter that they gathered together with mourning and weeping and fasting and sackcloth upon them and dirt upon themselves.

And we looked at this reality that this was the first time that they could take the opportunity to be broken over the reality of the word. Because when they heard the word for the first time, they were told, do not weep, do not mourn.

This is a time of rejoicing and rejoicing is a choice. We know that. So we dare not mourn and weep when God has called us to rejoice. And in those festivals and that season, it is rejoicing in the goodness of God, not mourning and weeping over the wickedness of man.

[3 : 19] But now the time has come with the reality of the word, all the festivals they have observed and the testimony of that has set in and they come to this place of repentance.

They come to this place of rightful mourning for the word of God reveals the sin of man and they are broken rightfully so over what God has declared.

And they come and they gather and they confess their sins, which God had told them to do in the book of Leviticus, that if my people turn away from me and they don't follow me, then I'm going to disperse them among the nations.

But if they gather together and they confess the sins of their fathers and their sins, then I will restore them. So they're following the biblical principle, right? They're naming their shortcomings.

They're naming what they've done wrong. And then they come and for a fourth of the day they confess and for a fourth of the day they hear the word and they stand and they praise.

[4 : 16] But we pick it up in verse 5, the ninth chapter there, Nehemiah. Then the Levites, Yeshua, Kadmiel, Bani, Hashbaniah, Sherabiah, Hodiah, Shabaniah, and Pathahiah said, Arise, bless the Lord your God forever and ever.

Oh, may your glorious name be blessed and exalted above all the blessing and praise. You alone are the Lord. You have made the heavens and the heaven of heavens with all their hosts, the earth and all that is on it, the seas and all that is in them.

You give life to all of them and the heavenly host bowed down before you. You are the Lord God who chose Abram and brought him out from the Ur of the Chaldeans and gave him the name Abraham.

You found his heart faithful before you and made a covenant with him to give him the land of the Canaanite, of the Hittite, of the Amorite, of the Perizzite, of the Jebusite, of the Gashgashite, to give it to his descendants.

And you have fulfilled your promise for you are righteous. You saw the affliction of our fathers in Egypt and heard their cry by the Red Sea. Then you performed signs and wonders against Pharaoh, against all his servants and all the people of his land.

[5 : 26] For you knew that they acted arrogantly toward them and made a name for yourself as it is this day. You divided the sea before them, so they passed through the midst of the sea on dry ground.

And their pursuers you hurled into the depths like a stone into raging waters. And with a pillar of cloud you led them by day and with a pillar of fire by night to light for them the way in which they were to go.

Then you came down on Mount Sinai and spoke with them from heaven. You gave them just ordinances and true laws, good statutes and commandments, so you made known to them your holy Sabbath and laid down for them commandments and statutes and laws through your servant Moses.

You provided bread from heaven and for them for their hunger, and you brought forth water from a rock for them for their thirst. And you told them to enter in order to possess the land which you swore to give them.

But they, our fathers, acted arrogantly. They became stubborn and would not listen to your commandments. They refused to listen and did not remember your wondrous deeds which you had performed among them.

[6 : 28] So they became stubborn and appointed a leader to return to their slavery in Egypt. But you are a God of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger and abounding in loving kindness.

And you did not forsake them. Even when they made for themselves a calf of molten metal and said, This is your God who brought you up from Egypt and committed great blasphemies, you and your great compassion did not forsake them in the wilderness.

The pillar of cloud did not leave them by day to guide them on their way, nor the pillar of fire by night to light for them the way in which they were to go. You gave your good spirit to instruct them, your manna you did not withhold from their mouth, and you gave them water for their thirst.

Indeed, forty years you provided for them in the wilderness, and they were not in want. Their clothes did not wear out, nor did their feet swell. You also gave them kingdoms and peoples and allotted them to them as a boundary.

They took possession of the land of Sihon, the king of the Heshbon, and the land of Og, the king of Bashan. You made their sons numerous as the stars of heaven, and you brought them into the land which you had told their fathers to enter and possess.

[7 : 36] So their sons entered and possessed the land, and you subdued the people before them, the inhabitants of the land, the Canaanites, and you gave them into their hand with their kings and the people of the land to do with them as they desired.

They captured fortified cities and a fertile land and took possession of houses full of every good thing, hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive groves, fruit trees in abundance. So they ate, were filled, and

grew fat, and reveled in your great goodness.

But they became disobedient, rebelled against you, and cast your law behind their backs, and killed your prophets who you had admonished them, so that they might return to you. And they committed great blasphemies.

Therefore you delivered them into the hand of their oppressors who oppressed them. But when they cried to you in the time of their distress, you heard from heaven. And according to your great compassion, you gave them deliverers who delivered them from the hand of their oppressors. But as soon as they had rest, that they did evil again before you, therefore you abandoned them into the hand of their enemies. So they ruled over them. When they cried again to you, you heard from heaven.

[8 : 43] And many times you rescued them according to your compassion. And admonished them in order to turn them back to your law. Yet they acted arrogantly, and did not listen to your commandments, but sinned against your ordinances.

By which if a man observes them, he shall live. And they turned a stubborn shoulder, and stiffened their neck, and would not listen. However, you bore with them for many years, and admonished them by your spirit through your prophets.

Yet they would not give ear. Therefore you gave them into the hand of the people of the lands.

Nevertheless, in your great compassion, you did not make an end of them, or forsake them. For you are a gracious and compassionate God.

Now therefore, our God, the great, the mighty, and the awesome God, who keeps covenant and loving kindness, do not let all the hardships seem insignificant before you, which has come upon us, our kings, our princes, our priests, our prophets, our fathers, and on all your people, from the days of the kings of Assyria to this day.

However, you are just, and all that has come upon us. For you have dealt faithfully, but we have acted wickedly. For our kings, our leaders, our priests, and our fathers have not kept your law, or paid attention to your commandments, and your admonitions, with which you have admonished them.

[9 : 57] But they, in their own kingdom, with your great goodness, which you gave them, with the broad and rich land, which you set before them, did not serve you, or turn from their evil deeds. Behold, we are slaves today.

And as to the land, which you gave to our fathers, to eat of its fruit and its bounty, behold, we are slaves in it. Its abundant produce was for the kings, whom you have set over us, because of our sins.

They also rule over our bodies, and over our cattle, as they please, so we are in great distress.

Now, because of all this, we are making an agreement in writing, and on the sealed document, are the names of our leaders, our Levites, and our priests.

And if we were to read on in chapter 10, the first 27 verses, gives us the names of these leaders, Levites, and priests, who signed their name, on that sealed document.

What a wonderful prayer, but I want you to see this evening, a modeled prayer of repentance. A modeled prayer of repentance. When we look at the history of God's interaction, with his people Israel, and in particular, when we open up the Old Testament, we realize there are some truths, that we must hold on to.

[11 : 09] That is, we do not open up the Old Testament, with a name it and claim it mentality, saying, well, these promises, all belong to us, because admittedly, some of the promises, which God gives to his people, are peculiar to his people.

That is, they belong entirely, to the people of the Lord. Namely, those promises of a land, and a people in a particular land, and a land within its borders, that land does not belong to us.

This prayer, is a prayer that is centered, upon the land. A number of times, in the book of Nehemiah, I believe it's around 19 times, there is the mentioning, of the land. 13 of those mentionings, is in this prayer.

It is this constant reminder, that God, you called us as your people, to live in a particular land. You brought us into this land, yet we're in this land, as slaves, and this is not our land.

Now to us, that doesn't seem to make, much of a difference. For we have the freedom, on this side of the cross, in our covenant relationship, with Jesus Christ, that regardless, of where our temporal, or earthly existence is, we can still be his people, where he has put us.

[12 : 16] Paul says that, in the sermon, that he delivers, on Mars Hill, in the book of Acts, Acts chapter 17, that God appoints, the days, and the seasons, and even the places, in which his people, will exist, for his glory.

But for the people, of the Old Testament, the nation of Israel, the promises of God, were directly connected, to a land. For God, had entered into a covenant, God made a covenant, that was conditioned, upon his faithfulness, rather than Abraham's faithfulness, that he would multiply, the seed of Abraham, and they would live, in a particular land, and experience the blessings, and the promises of God.

We need that to happen, historically, because that is where, Christ our Savior, comes from. Those promises matter. But one thing we can do, when we open up this, and I know that's a lot, of information, we cannot disregard, the attributes, of who God is, among his people.

We must look at, God's interaction, with the nation of Israel, and we say that, God is the same, yesterday, today, and tomorrow. And so now, that the light has shown, unto the Gentiles, that is us, through Jesus Christ, for he is a, light of revelation, to the Gentiles, that all the world, may be known.

And from the very beginning, of scripture, we see that God, is calling the nations, to himself. That is not a, new terminology, found in the New Testament. Rather, it is a continuation, of that.

[13 : 40] And finally, the light switch, has been flipped, for God has, shown the light, to the Gentiles, in particular, beginning, with the missionary, endeavors of Paul. We know, that the character, of God, does not change.

We are connected, to the same God. We are, as Paul would say, in the book of Romans, Romans 9, 10, and 11, as he speaks, in particular, to the nation of Israel. We'll get to that, in the eighth week, by the way, what about Israel?

We'll really be focusing, on that section, in Romans. But what we see, is that we are grafted, into the family of God. We are grafted in. We are the, wild olive branch. Some of us, a little wilder, than others, but we are the, wild olive branches, that have been grafted, into the, cultured, olive tree, which is Israel.

And it doesn't mean, that we possess, all that they, have been promised. It's not, we don't replace them, but we now, have a relationship, a covenant, with the Lord God, of Israel.

And what is true, of his character, among those people, is true of his character, with us. And much like, the nation of Israel, we too are rebellious people.

[14 : 48] And there is an opportunity, in each one of our lives, where we must repent, and return, and cry out, for mercy, and forgiveness, and say, oh God, we have failed, and we have stumbled.

And so we see here, this modeled prayer, of the nation, as they are returning back. They are in their land, they've been restored, in their land, for a number of years. The walls, have been reconstructed, the sacrificial system, has been reinstated.

The temple, is much smaller, but it's in existence. And now they're hearing, the word read to them, from the Levites, and the priests, and Ezra is there, and the word of God, is becoming known to them. So now they're becoming, a distinct people, a different people, right?

People that are set apart, not just culturally, but religiously, theologically, if you will, because now they have, a relationship with God. And they have to repent, of this.

So we see this, model prayer, that's given to us, of what does it look like, of true repentance. And while this prayer, is beautiful, we can just really, break it down, into some small sections.

[15 : 51] And the first thing, that we notice, in this prayer, if we're going to go to God, and we're going to say, oh Father, we need your forgiveness, we need your restoration, we need to be, who you've called us to be, for your glory.

This is exactly, what they're calling out for here. What must take place? Number one, we see that it exalts, the name of God. It exalts, the name of God.

The Levites cry out, and they say, arise and bless the Lord, your God, forever and ever. The word, it challenges the people, the word is a blessing, to the people, even in its conviction.

And now, the Levites, are calling the people, to stand up, and bless the Lord. To declare his praise, and declare his righteousness, and declare his worthiness. And then there's this cry, oh may your glorious name, be blessed, and exalted, above all blessing, and praise.

And it is the cry, of the heart of this prayer, to exalt, the name of God. And it is to exalt, who God is. Friend, listen, in any true prayer, a prayer that comes, what we would say, with a right attitude,

begins, with the exaltation, of who it is, we're talking to.

[17:15] I've told you this before, it was Andrew Murray, who once said, Andrew Murray's wrote, a lot of great books, on prayer. Andrew Murray once said, Christ never taught, his disciples how to preach, he only taught them, how to pray.

And that's pretty telling. They didn't say, Jesus teaches how to preach, because they spoke, out of the overflow, and as Peter would say, we have to tell the things, we have seen. But they did say, Lord teach us how to pray.

Well how did he do that? You know, we say it over, over and over again, how does that start? Our father, what is that doing? Exalting a name of God. It begins, with the exaltation, of who he is.

And it is declaring, who he is, as the Lord God almighty, for the disciples, and for us. That is astounding, for we know, we know the attributes, of God recorded, in the Old Testament.

And we know, as the psalmist cries out, what is man, that you would take notice, of him. In light of, the expanse, of creation, and all of eternity, what am I, that you would think, of me, that you would take, notice of me, for you are the Lord, God almighty.

[18:23] We, as brother Mike, shared this morning, often are like Job, we have heard about him, with our ears, but then there comes, that moment, where we see him, in his grandeur, and his splendor, and we say, wow, God is magnificent.

But yet, Christ teaches us, to pray by saying, our father. And we are told, elsewhere in scripture, that it is through, the spirit of adoption, that we cry out, Abba father. For now, we have this name, of intimacy, this name, of oneness, this name, of awareness, of I belong, to him.

But in this prayer, before us, notice the exaltation, of God's name. The very first thing, they do, is begin to declare, who he is. Because prayer, must begin there, it must begin, with who he is.

They start out talking, in this prayer, that God is creator. You have created, all things, you've created everything, that is in heaven, everything that is on earth, everything that is in the seas, all the heavenly beings, and bodies, that could be both angels, and stars, and planets, and galaxies, and all those other things.

All things have been created, by you, we know from the New Testament, and for you, and through you, right? And he said, you are the creator. You are the almighty, magnificent creator, but you're also, a God that calls us, into covenant.

[19:41] And you, the creator, called Abram, from the land of the earth, the Chaldeans, and entered into a covenant, with him. So you are the covenant maker. And not only are you, the creator, and the covenant maker, you are also the one, who hears us.

For when they cried out, you are the redeemer, you led them out of Egypt, and you parted the sea. You are the sustainer. For when they were in the wilderness, their clothing did not wear out. They were not hungry.

They were not thirsty. You are the covenant keeper. You're not only the covenant maker, but you're the covenant keeper. So now you are the redeemer, the sustainer, and the faithful one. Over and over and over again, in this prayer, what we have, is the exaltation, of who God is.

For we must start, there in prayer. Prayer must begin, with who he is. Because before we ever, come to him, with all of our problems, and all of our needs, and all of our longings, then there must first be, the acknowledgement, and even the exaltation, of the name of God.

Think Bartimaeus this morning, we said it is such a subtle thing, there right? What would you have me to do for you? Before he, I mean, if it was you and I, I think if it was me, maybe I don't want to put words, in your mouth, but if it was me, and I'd been sitting there, my entire life, blind and begging, I would have just blurted out, I just want to see.

[20:59] I just want to see. But he didn't start there. He said, Rabbani, which is what? My master. He declared who Jesus was, before he made his petition known. All prayer, begins, with the exaltation, of who God is.

Because if not, we have bypassed, one of the most important parts, if not the most important part, of prayer. We need to know, who we are addressing. Because it absolutely matters.

When you call someone on the phone, who you are calling, really matters, you will address them differently. You will speak to them, in a different manner. Sometimes, Braden will call me, from his mom's phone, and when it pops up on my phone, it's her caller ID, and I answer it, thinking I'm talking to my wife.

I'm not talking to my wife, I realize very quickly, he's like, Dad. I'm like, oh, sorry. Because it's usually something like, hey, beautiful, and he goes, Dad. I'm like, oh, yeah, no, I'm not you. That's not who I was talking to. Because it absolutely matters, right, who you're talking to. And it absolutely matters, how we address that person, because it's going to dictate, the remainder of that conversation. So in prayer, we must exalt the name of God, because it's going to dictate, the rest of our conversation.

[22 : 19] The second thing that we notice, in this prayer, is not only does it lift up, the name of God, it emphasizes the work of God. Because God in name, is a great theory.

He is a God who creates, he's a God who sustains, he's a God who redeems, he does all those things. And if we understand that, well, that's his name, that's who he is, that's great. But what we see is, they also emphasize, in this prayer, the work of God.

Because these names, are not just theoretical. It's not something that, is good in thought, it's something he actually does. One reality we find in scripture, is that the names of God, are often connected, to something God has just done.

When we find new names of God, new revelations of the character of God, throughout the Old Testament, it is connected with something, that he just did. Jehovah Jireh, the Lord my provider, the first time we notice that, the first time we know, that God is our provider, is when Abraham declares it.

You know when Abraham declares it, right? It's right after he took Isaac, off the altar, because they found the goat, hung in the briar bush over here, and God provided. So now there's a new name of God. Jehovah Nisi, the Lord is my banner.

[23 : 25] When do we see that? Well, that's when they're holding up the banner, and Joshua's fighting the battle, down there, and Moses is up here, holding up the banner, and his hands get tired, and he sets down on the rock, and he has, and when he holds it up, they win the battle, and he lets it down.

No, it's because the Lord is my banner. God did something there, and so it's connected to a work. Every new name of God in Scripture is connected to a work he has just done, each and every one of them, and as you see his work, there is a new revelation of his character, there's a new revelation of his reality, there's something that appeals to that, it means something, and it has a stance behind it, because it's not just theoretical, it is actually practical.

This is who he is. Elohim, in the Old Testament, the very first name we have for God, in the beginning, Elohim, that is the almighty, creator, powerful God, created the heavens and the earth, and that's the first name we have, because the first way we meet him, is creator, but there's a great transition, by the time we get to Genesis chapter 3, we're no longer looking at Elohim, we're looking at Adonai, and why do we go to Adonai there, in the third chapter, because now God is not dealing as creator, now he's dealing in relationship, because you have two people, named Adam and Eve, he's doing something different, and it is consistent, the rest of Scripture.

Don't separate the name of God, from the works of God, because the works of God, are what validate the reality, that this is indeed, who God is, and these are, what Samuel would refer to, as the Ebenezer, these stones of help, these stones of remembrance, the nation of Israel, was really good, about putting up piles, of rocks everywhere, and the reason, they would put up piles, of rocks, for thus far, the Lord has helped us, we find, it tells us in 1 Samuel, but they would do it, so that the generations, would ask, why is there a big pile of rocks, right here, well let me tell you, what God did there, because that pile, is connected to something, God did, and here, this prayer, is a connection, you create it, you called, you provided, you parted the Red Seas, you gave us laws, you did it through this person, notice, when they recount the history, they're not recounting the people, they actually span, all these years of history, there's no mentioning, of any of the judges, there's no mentioning, of King Saul, there's no mentioning, of David, there's no mentioning, of Isaiah, Jeremiah, or any of the major prophets, there's no mentioning, of that, there's the mentioning, of Abraham, and passing for God, called him, and the mentioning, of Moses, because God gave him, the laws, but other than that, nobody, is magnified, but the work of God, is magnified, and they are, continuing to emphasize, he is a God, who does something, so, we don't worship him, because, of who he claims to be, we worship him, for what he has shown us, he is, how you know God, is intimately connected, with the work, you have seen him do, in your life, when I came to Christ, my desperate need, was for a savior, I needed a savior, and I needed him bad, for I knew the wickedness, of my own heart, and so I called out, and I said, Lord Jesus, would you save me, and

redeem me, and I knew him as savior, and what a sweet savior, he is, for he set me free, and at the sleep, of the righteous, is sweet, and the night,

[26 : 56] I slept the best night, I'd ever slept, up to that point, and I slept, with such sweet peace, no circumstances, around me had changed, but eternally, I was secure, for I'd met a savior, and the savior, was wonderful, until I walked, a little bit longer, and then I realized, I don't only need a savior, I need a lord, that is, I need someone to dictate, how am I going to live, each and every day, of my life, so now he is, Lord and savior, and then the longer, you walk with him, the more you see, these things come up, and the more attributes, and the more works, and the things, you see him doing, in your life, now there are greater names, and there are greater, character attributes, not because I find them, written somewhere, in scripture, but because I know, they're true, I've seen him do it, in my life, and so now, in prayer, when you go in prayer, and you claim, the name of God, this is not just saying, God I've heard you, or this, no it's God, you have proven yourself, worthy, and I know you're my father, I know you're the provider, I know you're the sustainer, I know that when I cast my life, upon you, then you are the one, who takes the control, so I choose not to worry, though the world may declare, that now is a great season, of worry,

I choose, because I've tested you, and I've tried you, and I haven't done it spitefully, but what I have seen Lord, is you have done, these things in the past, don't fail, to raise, some stone heaps, in your life, and continue, to remind yourself, of those piles, in prayer, because if you don't, then we think, we're just crying out, to someone who may do it, not someone we have seen do it, and so they begin, to emphasize, the work of God, after, exalting the name of God, and emphasizing the work of God, in this prayer, we see, that they express, the failures of man, now we get to the point, of repentance, where we say, God you are, all these things by name, you are, all these things in practice, but we have failed you, do you see this, they begin to, express their failures, in verse 16, but they, our fathers, acted arrogantly, after you did all these things, you redeemed them, you led them, you provided for them, and then you told them, to go into the land, but they acted arrogantly, and said, no we're going to go back, and be slaves, they built a, metal calf, and said, this is your God, and they rejoiced, they revolted, but you didn't fail them, and you kept them, and they, wandered in the wilderness, for 40 years, and you brought their sons, and their daughters, into the land, and then it says, but when they got there, they had all this stuff, look at what it says, they had, took possession of houses, in verse 25, full of good, every good thing, hewn cisterns, vineyards, olive groves, fruit trees, and abundance, so they ate, were filled, and by the way, be careful when you eat, and are filled, and grow fat, give me neither riches, nor poverty, is one of my favorite proverbs, lest in my riches,

I deny you, and claim that I do not need you, or in my poverty, I steal and forsake you, give me what I need, says, but in their abundance, they, they were filled, and grew fat, and reveled in your great goodness, but look at the very next verse, but they became disobedient, and rebelled, this is what they did, they didn't need you anymore, for everything they needed, was right at their hands, and they cast your law, behind their backs, but you didn't do it, over, and over, and over again, we are told, of the failures of men, and to the point, where we get to, where they declare, where it says in verse 32, there's this great transition, this is what they're asking, now therefore, so now because of all this, this is what we're asking, but he makes this declaration, in verse 33, you are just, and all that has come upon us, you know you're in a prayer, of repentance, when you can say, God, I'm getting, what I deserve, you are just, you are just, and that's a hard place, for people to get to, because each and every one of us, would like to think, that we deserve more, than what we do, we would like to think, that we're pretty good people, and we're all these things, but a true prayer of repentance, acknowledges, to our heavenly father, that God, you are just, when I look at my life, this is what I deserve, when I look at, how I have responded, to who you are, and all that you have done, you are just, your judgments upon me, and the consequences,

I'm reaping, hey, I sowed that seed, so these are my fruits, you are just, and there's freedom there, right, when you can say, father, I deserve this, father, this is, right, instead of saying, this isn't fair, or I don't deserve this, and, I had a teacher, at, Cascade High School, he's not there anymore, thankful that he's not there anymore, but, I'm not going to name his name, some of you know him personally, I don't know if you do, because he's from, Bell Buckle, some of you know exactly, who I'm talking about, but, we had to write, on the top of every one of our papers, or we got a zero, on that paper, life is not fair, he made us write it, on the top of every page, he was a math teacher, he had to write, life is not fair, life is not fair, and if you didn't, write that, he didn't look at anything else,

you had, because he couldn't stand, anybody looking, and saying, that's not fair, he said, life's not fair, he also happened to be the teacher, that had on his wall, a quote by Pink Floyd, we don't need no education, but anyway, he was one of the most intelligent men,

I've ever met, he's probably one of the most intelligent men, some of you have ever met, he's just a little eccentric, okay, but, anyway, you had to write that, and that thing has always stuck with me, life is not fair, and you just needed to know that, in his class, but, we need to know that, in our walk with Christ as well, God is just, fairness is relative to our opinion, justice is according to his standard, we don't get to determine what fair is, because what's fair for you, and what's fair for me, can be totally different things, and we're not looking for fairness from God, we're looking for his justice, something that's right, and the prayer here is, Lord, you are just, in all that has come upon us, think about, I mean, these are people that are, still slaves, coming out of 70 years, of Babylonian captivity, lost their identity as a nation, and now they're crying out, and they're saying, we deserve this, this is ours, we've sown this, we've done, and now we're to this, this meat of repentance, but there's, there's one thing, because why, how can we do that, what gives us, the boldness to say,

[33 : 53] God, I'm getting what I deserve, and the reason most people, are kind of hesitant to do that, because they think, as soon as they do that, God will say, you're absolutely right, and leave us in it, but there's the fourth thing, that we must know, and that is, a model prayer of repentance, expects, a consistent response, it expects, a consistent response, response, from the Lord God Almighty, and when they had declared, who God was, and they began to emphasize, the works God had done, notice also, the emphasis on, but God, we rebelled, yet you did not forsake us, we rebelled, and yet you maintained, your covenant, we failed, and yet you did not, leave us hungry, nor thirsty, we walked away from you, yet you did not, completely give us over, you handed us over, to the enemies, when we cried out, you redeemed us, you handed us over, to our ways, we cried out, you redeemed us,

God's consistency, throughout the ages, this is God's response, to their failures, God's response, and even now God, you have not given us up, verse 17 says, but you are a God, of forgiveness, gracious and compassionate, slow to anger, and abounding, in loving kindness, I love how the legacy standard, the legacy standard, I kind of alluded to it, this morning, is like even a more, literal translation, of the new American standard, I love how it translates that, it says, you are a God, of lavish forgiveness, and the wording there, is you're not just, a God of forgiveness, you are a God, of lavish, over abundant forgiveness, that's who God is, friend listen to me, we repent, because that's who he is, he is a God, this is Old Testament, right, where the supposed, big mean God exists, he is a God, of lavish forgiveness, and his loving kindness, never cease, his mercy, is new every morning, it tells us, in the book of lamentations, of all things, where it's just a lament, and a weeping, and a mourning, and over, and over, we see,

God's consistency, verse 31, it says, nevertheless, in your great compassion, you did not make an end of them, or forsake them, for you are a gracious, and compassionate God, now, because of, who you are, now, because of, what all you have done, now, we know, we know our failures, but we're not ashamed, to cry out to you, in our failures, because we also know, you are consistent, always tell people, if you want to know, how God responds, to sin, because we in our sin, the enemy likes to tell us, hide from God, in your sin, and in your failures, don't bring all that mess, to God, because he's the Lord God, almighty, and he is absolutely, holy, holy, holy, he is the thrice, holy being, he is the one, that the angels, fall down in his presence, he is the one, that we will fall down, on our faces, before him, and cast our crowns, we don't ever want, to lose the holiness, of God, we don't ever want, to belittle, the grandeur, of his majesty, he is definitely, holy, holy, holy, but he is also, a God of mercy, and compassion, and forgiveness, which is astounding, and if we want to know, how God responds, to sin, go to the very first, mentioning of sin, in scripture, for is that, theme, called the law, of first mentioning, you go, find the first time, something is mentioned, in scripture, and however, it is mentioned, the first time, it will stay consistent, to the rest of scripture, it's the law, of first mentioning, the law, of the first mentioning, of sin, is Adam and Eve, you know that, we call it the fall, how did God respond, to Adam and Eve, he went looking, for them in the garden, in the cool of the day, and calling them out, by name, and when they confess, their sin, does God strike them down, and kill them, no,

God skins an animal, and clothes them, he shed the blood, to cover up their shame, there were consequences, he put them out of the garden, but he did not strike them, and kill them, he actually

blessed them, after that, right, they began to have children, and multiply, and fill the earth, and there was toil, and stress, and all this other, but he gave them, the sacrificial system, how does God respond, to sin, for those that confess, in his mercy, in his loving kindness, in his compassion, he covers it, and God is consistent, in that, and when we come, with the prayer of repentance, we expect, a consistent response, from God, and if you expect, anything less, it is only because, you have not, read the word, and seen how God responds, I have not seen, one time in scripture, where someone, honestly confessed, sin, or failure, to God, and God slapped them, across the cheek, I have not, when I read scripture,

I find a lot of people, that have failed, I read of a man, that has failed so miserably, he's in the belly, of the great fish, in the bottom of the sea, he cries out a prayer, that's a good time, to pray a prayer, of repentance right, when you find your place, in the bottom of the sea, in the belly of the whale, and what does God do, he restores him, sends him back, we don't know, how Jonah ends in the end, I mean it kind of, tells off there at the end, we know that, but when he cries out, God doesn't say, well you're getting, what you deserve, see you later Jonah, he doesn't do that, I find Abraham lying twice, about who his wife is, I find his son, doing the same thing, I find a lot of people, failing, old and new testament, but I see a consistent, response from God, throughout it again, it's that consistency, of scripture, that he is consistent, in that, and when we have, this prayer of repentance, we're expecting, a consistent response, from God, we're saying,

[40 : 07] God this is how, I have failed, and now I stand, humbled, or I bow humbly, before you saying, I need mercy, and you're the only place, I can find it, for you have, lavish, forgiveness, for someone, such as I, God, this is, a model prayer, of repentance, not just, for the nation, of Israel, but for people, that have failed him, throughout the ages, of which we are included, and we say, Father, here we are, may we be reminded, of who you are, all that you have done, how we have failed, but the way you respond, and we give you, all the praise, and the glory for it, let's pray, Father thank you, for this day, we thank you, for your word, and we thank you, for the opportunity, we have to read, and study it, but more than that, we thank you, that your word, reveals to us, the character of God, God you are lavish, in mercy, and forgiveness, you are wondrous, in your response, to sinful mankind, may we not get over, that reality, may we continue, to pile up, those stones, of remembrance, of all that you have done, and who you are, and how you have shown yourself, true in our lives, and may it be a testimony, to others, but may it be a testimony, to ourselves, in prayer, as we say, yes I can count, on the consistency, of God, this is who,

God is, and Lord may that be, the motivating factor, for our lives, to be lived, for your glory, and honor, from this moment on, that Christ may be magnified, among those, we come into contact with, we ask it all, in Jesus name, Amen.