

Remember to Repent

Scripture Reading — Nehemiah 1:4-11

"O LORD, God of heaven ... I confess the sins we ... have committed against you." Nehemiah 1:5-6

Nehemiah was on a mission to help his people, and he knew he had to ask forgiveness for the people's sins if the mission was going to succeed. Before praying for God's guidance and protection, he asked for God's forgiveness. He knew why God's people had been sent into captivity. He understood why things were not going right after they had returned. There was unconfessed sin that had created a barrier between God and the people and had kept them from experiencing God's blessings.

As Nehemiah prayed, he also included himself. The people's sins were his sins. He could have simply pointed his finger and blamed others. It was tempting to look back and list the sins of past generations.

For us, it's also tempting to point to the sins of believers who have gone before us. But when we talk about repenting, we need to include ourselves. True repentance involves all of us--individuals and churches.

God's great faithfulness gives us the courage to face our sins. There's the sin of silence when we should have spoken; there's the sin of speaking when we should have kept quiet. There's the sin of not extending grace to people who were desperate for a glimpse of it. There's the sin of pursuing our own agenda instead of serving God and trying to do his will.

We need to ask God to bring us to repentance.

Prayer

"O LORD, God of heaven," we confess the sins we have committed against you. Please forgive us for Jesus' sake and renew us to be your people. In your name we pray. Amen.

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