

Day 16

“When I heard these words, I sat down and wept. I mourned for a number of days, fasting and praying before the God of the heavens,” (Nehemiah 1:4, CSB).

When life hands you difficult news, how do you respond? Often, our reactions fall into anger and vengeance or sadness and isolation. What we see in Nehemiah, however, is God’s desire for us to run to Him with humility and perseverance.

Nehemiah’s ministry is marked by submission to the Lord. While serving as cupbearer to the king in the city of Susa, he received devastating news: Jerusalem’s wall was still in shambles, and the remnant living there was in great trouble. Nehemiah’s response was not immediate anger or despair, but fervent, humble prayer. His instinct was to fall before God.

Often, I find that my prayers tend to follow the same pattern. I begin with thanksgiving, move quickly to my requests, and close with more gratitude. At times, it feels as though I am offering God a carefully structured formula rather than a sincere cry of the heart. What we see in Nehemiah 1:1–11 is entirely different. His prayer was not scripted or polished. It was humble, fervent, and self-sacrificing.

In a moment of deep pain and uncertainty, Nehemiah fasted and prayed. In fear and grief, he responded with reverence before God. And in His grace, God answered. How much more might God use us if our response to trials was not fear or anger, but humility and persistent prayer?

Reflect on the past week. Identify moments when you responded in fear, anger, or self-reliance. What would it look like to respond instead with humble prayer before God?

“Lord, the God of the heavens, the great and awe-inspiring God who keeps his gracious covenant with those who love him and keep his commands, let your eyes be open and your ears be attentive to hear your servant’s prayer...” (Nehemiah 1:5–6a, CSB).

God, I humble myself before You. Help me seek You in the trials of life. My desire is to know You and walk in obedience to Your will.