

Oxford Baptist Church-September 13, 2015

Pastor Robin W. Pifer

Nehemiah Series: Building to Transform

"First Things First: Prayer" - Scripture: Nehemiah 1

How do you respond or react when you hear bad news?

Transformation happens first with prayer.

"Prayer is essentially a partnership of the redeemed child of God working hand in hand with God toward the realization of his redemptive purposes on the earth." Jack Hayford

"God will do nothing but in answer to prayer. The greatest thing anyone can do for God is pray. ... Prayer is striking the winning blow... service is gathering up the results. ... God shapes the world by prayer. The more praying there is in the world the better the world will be, the mightier the forces against evil." E.M.

Bounds. Power through Prayer

Prayer transforms you when...

- God is Great and Awesome. (v. 4-6)
 - Brokenness and Worship Prayer
- God gives Forgiveness through your heart of repentance. (v.6-9)
 - A broken and contrite heart God will not despise (Ps 51:17)
 - Proverbs 28:13

"Any deep change in how we live begins with a deep change in how we think. The Biblical word for this is *repentance* – in Greek, *metanoia*, a change of mind. Repentance is a ruthless dismantling of old ways of seeing and thinking, and then a diligent and vigilant building of new ones." P. 5 Mark Buchanan, The Rest of God.

- God grants you His success. (v. 10-11)
 - Matt 7:7-12
 - Isaiah 42:8 - God will not share his glory with idols.
 - Romans 8:17, 2Thess 2:14; 1Peter 5:1 – God shares his glory with those who are connected with Christ.
 - Nehemiah does the will of God.

Personal/Community Group Questions

- When you hear bad news what are your normal responses apart from prayer?
- How are you going to pray differently as a result of Nehemiah's example?
- Why are repentance and the confession of sin so important to line up with the will, purposes and direction of the Lord?
- In what ways has Nehemiah learned to discern between his desires and God's purposes in this situation?
- How can we avoid being prideful about our prayer life?
- What are your three take-a-ways from this message to impact your life this week?
- What are three ways in which we can strengthen the prayer ministry of our church?