

Our Covenant Keeping God

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Nehemiah 1-2
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Sermon Theme: God keeps His covenant promises and He answers prayer. This should cause us to trust Him more. It should also compel us to follow Nehemiah's example and in faith present our requests to God.

What We Learn About God:

I. God keeps His covenant promises

- V.5 – “the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love Him and keep His commandments.”
- God keeps His covenant promises. What He says He will do is what comes to pass.
- When they demanded a human king, they were ultimately rejecting the Lord

7 And the Lord said to Samuel, “Obey the voice of the people in all that they say to you, for they have not rejected you, but they have rejected me from being king over them. 8 According to all the deeds that they have done, from the day I brought them up out of Egypt even to this day, forsaking me and serving other gods, so they are also doing to you. 9 Now then, obey their voice; only you shall solemnly warn them and show them the ways of the king who shall reign over them.” -- 1 Samuel 8:7-9

- At times God’s people were stubborn and rebellious and He disciplined them. Then they returned to Him.
- God kept His promise to His people. A faithful remnant was preserved even though they had sinned.
- They did come back to the Lord; God’s gracious, promise-keeping hand was upon them, and they returned to Him.

“But if you return to me and keep my commandments and do them, though your outcasts are in the uttermost parts of heaven, from there I will gather them and bring them to the place I have chosen, to make my name dwell there (1:9).”

- When we return to God He restores us.

For this is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after those days, declares the Lord: I will put my law within them, and I will write it on their hearts. And I will be their God, and they shall be my people. And no longer shall each one teach his neighbor and each his brother, saying, ‘Know the Lord,’ for they shall all know me, from the least of them to the greatest, declares the Lord. For I will forgive their iniquity, and I will remember their sin no more.” -- Jeremiah 31:33-34

II. God is attentive to our prayer

“Let your ear be attentive and your eyes open, to hear the prayer of your servant that I now pray before you day and night for the people of Israel your servants (1:6).”

“And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me (2:8).”

- He is the sovereign Lord, yet is attentive to our prayer. He holds the moon and the stars in His hands, yet cares about the details of our lives.
- His steadfast attention to our prayers means that we can continue to pray with faith!

“There is One who cares for you. His eye is fixed upon you. His heart beats with pity for your woe, and His omnipotent hand shall yet bring you the needed help. Don’t doubt His grace because of your tribulation, but believe that He loves you as much in the season of trouble as in times of happiness.” -- Charles Spurgeon

“For the eyes of the Lord are on the righteous and his ears are attentive to their prayer” -- 1 Peter 3:12

III. God moves hearts for His good purposes

- God moved Artaxerxes heart to send Nehemiah to accomplish God’s mission of rebuilding the walls.
- God moved Nehemiah's heart to go and lead the rebuilding effort.

Question 28 – Heidelberg Catechism

Q. What does it benefit us to know that God has created all things and still upholds them by His promise?

A. We can be patient in adversity, thankful in prosperity, and with a view to the future, we can have a firm confidence in our faithful God and Father, that no creature shall separate us from His love; for all creatures are so completely in his hand that without His will they cannot so much as move

Questions for Discussion/Application

- Having listened to the sermon, what stands out to you the most about chapters 1-2 of the book of Nehemiah?
- How does the story of Nehemiah leading the effort to rebuild the city walls demonstrate that "God keeps his covenant promises" ?
- In what ways does it encourage you that God was faithful to His promise in spite of the idolatry and sin of His people? How does this encourage you regarding your own life as well as others you love and care about?
- How, in your own life or in the life of your family, have you seen God be faithful?
- God was attentive to and answered Nehemiah's prayer that he would be able to go and lead the rebuilding effort. How does what happened here encourage you in your own prayer life?
- How do we balance praying in faith for God to move in powerful ways with the reality that in God's sovereignty, He doesn't always answer our prayers in the ways that we had hoped?
- Most of us have "unanswered prayers." How can we avoid having a cynical attitude and mindset towards prayer in light of those unanswered prayers?
- In what ways do you want to see God move powerfully in your own life and circumstances?
- Consider taking time to pray for one another, asking God to move in the ways discussed. Also ask God to help us to trust Him more, as our promise keeping God.