

Dear Heavenly Father,

### *Praise*

I join with Nehemiah and exalt you as the “LORD God of heaven, the great and awesome God who keeps covenant and steadfast love with those who love him and keep his commandments” (Neh 1:5). Even though I, like Israel, sinned against you and broke your commandments, you still loved me and wanted me to be a part of your family. How wonderful is love like this! Hallelujah!

### *Today in Your Word*

Today you told me about the third return to Jerusalem under the leadership of Nehemiah. This took place 93 years after the first return led by Zerubbabel and 13 years after the second return led by Ezra. In the years since Ezra’s return, the remnant had experienced further opposition from the Samaritans. Rehum and Shimshai convinced Artaxerxes to prevent the Jews from rebuilding the walls of the city, and when a delegation from Jerusalem visited Nehemiah in Susa, he was told that the remnant were “in great distress and reproach, and the wall of Jerusalem is broken down and its gates burned with fire.” The news disturbed Nehemiah greatly, and he spent days fasting and praying. After confessing his sins and the sins of the people, he asked you to give him favor with Artaxerxes. You answered Nehemiah’s prayer, and the king sent Nehemiah to Jerusalem with full authority to rebuild its walls and restore its gates. Nehemiah wasted no time. Three days after he arrived in Jerusalem, he inspected the walls of the city by night and then urged the officials to begin the work. They agreed in spite of the scorn of Sanballat, Tobias and Geshem and began to repair the walls and build the gates. Nehemiah’s actions teach me several lessons. First, Nehemiah based his prayer on your character. This teaches me that theology is the foundation of devotion. I can’t have a right relationship with you if I don’t understand who you are. Nehemiah’s prayer shows that he knew you to be an awesome, faithful and approachable God (Neh 1:5–6). Praise the LORD! Second, Nehemiah’s appeal to the king came after he asked for your guidance and blessing. This teaches me the importance of seeking your will in all my decisions. When my plans are in harmony with your desires, I can rest in the knowledge that your “good hand” is on me. Third, Nehemiah showed prudence by spending time with the leaders of the remnant and by inspecting the walls in secret *before* he encouraged them to rebuild (Neh 2:11–12). This teaches me to build relationships with those I seek to influence and thoroughly research a situation before I propose a solution. If I follow Nehemiah’s example, I will build consensus, demonstrate integrity, and give others the confidence to join me in my endeavors.

### *Reflection*

The prospect of approaching someone like Artaxerxes with a request to rebuild Jerusalem must have been frightening, but Nehemiah conquered his fear and acted in faith. Is there anything your Spirit is prompting me to do that I’ve resisted because I’m afraid to act?

### *Request*

Father, give me the courage and wisdom of Nehemiah. Help me to act in faith when I know your will and to show prudence when facing difficult circumstances.

### *Thanksgiving*

Thank you for godly men like Nehemiah. I have much to learn from their example!

In Jesus’ name, Amen.

*Suggested Hymn: “[What Shall Be Our Word for Jesus?](#)” – Frances R. Havergal.*

*Meditation Verse: Nehemiah 2:20.*