

A Worship Study Guide for Individuals, Groups and Families for the week of May 17, 2020

Mercy in the Sight of This Man

This week, Pastor Steve Shelby preached from [Nehemiah 1:11-2:8](#)

1:11 "O Lord, let your ear be attentive to the prayer of your servant, and to the prayer of your servants who delight to fear your name, and give success to your servant today, and grant him mercy in the sight of this man."

Now I was cupbearer to the king.

2:1 In the month of Nisan, in the twentieth year of King Artaxerxes, when wine was before him, I took up the wine and gave it to the king. Now I had not been sad in his presence. ² And the king said to me, "Why is your face sad, seeing you are not sick? This is nothing but sadness of the heart." Then I was very much afraid. ³ I said to the king, "Let the king live forever! Why should not my face be sad, when the city, the place of my fathers' graves, lies in ruins, and its gates have

been destroyed by fire?" ⁴ Then the king said to me, "What are you requesting?" So I prayed to the God of heaven. ⁵ And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, and if your servant has found favor in your sight, that you send me to Judah, to the city of my fathers' graves, that I may rebuild it." ⁶ And the king said to me (the queen sitting beside him), "How long will you be gone, and when will you return?" So it pleased the king to send me when I had given him a time. ⁷ And I said to the king, "If it pleases the king, let letters be given me to the governors of the province Beyond the River, that they may let me pass through until I come to Judah, ⁸ and a letter to Asaph, the keeper of the king's forest, that he may give me timber to make beams for the gates of the fortress of the temple, and for the wall of the city, and for the house that I shall occupy." And the king granted me what I asked, for the good hand of my God was upon me.

- Do you have **God's favor** today? How do you **know**?
- Nehemiah believed that the "**good hand of God**" was upon him (2:8). **What does he mean?**
- What is one way that **you see God's favor** in your life?

Four months pass since Nehemiah hears of his people's ruined inheritance and makes his appeal to the Lord. His life as the king's cupbearer proceeds as normal, but his burden for the "city of his father's graves" (2:3) increases. As the royal cupbearer, Nehemiah has rank, influence, and acts as a bodyguard and adviser to the king. He tastes the king's food to be certain that it is safe to eat. He is also expected to maintain a pleasant countenance at all times in the presence of the king. To show sadness or any other negative emotion risks suspicion of displeasure and disloyalty from the king, a dangerous thing. For months, Nehemiah keeps up the appearance of contentment, but finally his composure breaks. Knowing that the moment he has prayed for is upon him, he boldly makes his request of the king.

- What do you think **Nehemiah's life was like** as a Hebrew exile who served in the trusted position as cupbearer in the court of a foreign king? (1:11)
- Looking at this passage, **how do you think Nehemiah spent the four months** between learning of Jerusalem's ruin (1:4) and making his request of the king (2:3)?
- What is **Nehemiah's response** when the king notices his sadness (2:2b)?
- Why does **Nehemiah answer** the way he does? (2:3)
- The king directly asks Nehemiah to make his request. What does Nehemiah **think and do**? (2:4-5)
- What are Nehemiah's additional **requests and objectives** (2:6-8)? Why?
- Have you ever **risked rejection or failure** to follow Jesus? What was that like? How did the good hand of God grant you favor?

Pray in response to God's Word

- **Thank** the Lord that, because Jesus suffered God's just wrath, we enjoy God's good hand
- **Pray to the God of heaven** for courage & favor to follow Jesus

