

Seizing Promises by Prayers

01-31-16AM

The Bible contains a number of remarkable prayers by remarkable people. In Nehemiah 1:5-11 once such prayer occurs. There Nehemiah asks God to remember a promise He made in Deuteronomy 30:1-3. A similar prayer was made by Daniel in Daniel 9:1-19. There Daniel asks God to remember the promise He made in Jeremiah 29:10. Both prayers are similar in that they ask God to do what He has already said He would do.

Many people view prayer as a conversation that begins with our petition to God, and then waits for a response from God. If the response is not forthcoming or clear, then we feel that God has not answered our prayers. Yet this may not accurately reflect what is really happening with a prayer. It is not the case that we spoke and then we wait for God; as with Daniel and Nehemiah, what we need to understand is that God has spoken first. Imagine how awkward a conversation is if we do not realize who is answering whom.

Nehemiah and Daniel both answered God's promises. Let us use the term "seize" to describe their action; by prayer, these men seized promises God had previously made to them. God has made us a number of promises too. He has promised us His constant presence, our daily needs, an understanding of His will, that He is always listening, and most important, eternal life. How we seize these promises relies on understanding two things: understanding God's conditions to the promise and understanding the manifestation of the promise.

A Constant Presence: *"Lo, I am with you always, even to the end of the age."* Matthew 28:29. This promise is both manifested and obtained by Faith (which we are told comes by hearing the Word of God). Ephesians 3:17 tells us that Jesus dwells in us by faith. Luke 24:49 tells us that this is true of the Spirit too (with John 6:63). Thus we can understand what God has said, and effect our prayers accordingly.

Daily Needs: *"Do not worry then, saying, 'What will we eat?' or 'What will we drink?' or 'What will we wear for clothing?..... all these things will be added to you."* Matthew 6:31,33. This promise is obtained by putting the kingdom first in our lives (Matthew 6:31-33). It is manifested by the works of the church (2 Corinthians 9:8-10).

Understanding: *But if any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives to all generously and without reproach, and it will be given to him* - James 1:5. The knowledge of God and wisdom is revealed to come through a knowledge of Scripture (2 Timothy 3:15). This knowledge is not supernaturally given, but comes because of our diligence to learn (2 Timothy 2:15).

Listening: *"Until now you have asked for nothing in My name; ask, and you will receive, that your joy may be made full."* John 16:24. While God is clear He does not hear sinners (Isaiah 59, John 9), He promises to hear our prayers. But our prayers must reflect our relationship with Him. If we ask for things that are not His will, He will not listen (James 4:3). If we are not His obedient

servants, He will not listen (1 John 3:22). This promise is manifested through Faith, as Jesus explained in Mark 11:24.

Eternal Life: *By this the love of God was manifested in us that God has sent His only begotten Son into the world so that we might live through Him.* 1 John 4:9. Eternal life is obtained only by obedience (hearing, believing confessing, repenting and being baptized, John 3:16, Romans 10:9. Acts 17:30, Mark 16:16). It is manifested in this life only by Faith through Scriptures, I John 5:13.

Seizing promises means that we first know what God has promised. He has not promised financial success, happiness in all things, or victory in this life. Second, we need to know what is expected of us in order to seize the promise. God sets conditions, and we must act to seize the promise. Finally, it means knowing what to expect in the manifestation of the promise.