



THE EXHORTER

“And with many other words did he testify and exhort, saying, Save yourselves from this untoward generation.” Acts 2:40

The Palmer Road church of Christ, Westland, Mi. (prchurchofchrist.org)

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JUMP START #574

Nehemiah 13:31b- *“Remember me, O my God, for good.”*

Our verse today ends the book of Nehemiah. It is a great book about faith, leadership and commitment. One of the added blessings of reading Nehemiah is finding several prayers of Nehemiah. This last sentence is one of those prayers. Nehemiah started this prayer earlier in this book.

There are three lessons that I want you to see here.

First, prayer doesn't have to be long. This prayer is made up of seven words. Nehemiah is known for the short and specific prayers. The prayer that Jesus taught his disciples was also short. Every prayer does not have to contain the same things. (i.e. thanking the Lord for the weather, the church, the family....) Nehemiah prayed for one thing.

Second, he asked God to remember. That's a thought that we don't hear much anymore. Generally, when talking to God, we want God to forget. Forget our mistakes, blunders, sins and times we let people down. Or, we might ask God to forgive us of our sins. To remember, that's something. Now, for God to remember, there has to be something for him to remember. That only makes sense. If we are to be busy living our lives and fulfilling our dreams, what is there for God to remember? Nehemiah wanted God to remember.

Third, remember me for good. That is, remember me for the good that I have done. When you think of some people, you might remember them for being kind, or being helpful, or being there for you. Nehemiah wanted God to remember him for good. There was good that Nehemiah had done. He had rallied the people of God to build and repair the wall around the city of Jerusalem. He had led the people in returning their hearts back to God. He had kept the enemies at bay and refused to meet them on the platform of compromise. In his life, as with all of us, there had been sins. He had made some decisions that were not as thought out as they should have been. Those negative things can dominate us, and fill us with remorse and guilt. We can look back and think that we have done nothing worthwhile, nothing good. But that's not the case, especially when one has been walking with Christ. There is good. This is not boasting nor bragging, but a desire and a plea for God to remember those. He will. He does. That's not the basis of our salvation nor is it like a school teacher who looks at the grades

and must make the choice between pass or fail. God's not like that. **Titus 3:5** tells us that we are saved according to his mercy, not by what we have done. Our faith in Christ compels us to obey him, trust him, follow him and do whatever he asks.

Remember me, O my God, for good. God's people are to be engaged in good deeds. We are to be known for the good that we do. The list of things that I have seen Christians doing through the years is amazing. These things have made huge differences in the lives of others. They have opened doors that seem closed. They have lifted broken hearts. They have connected people back to God, who had given up. They have strengthened churches. They have taken God's word to the ends of the earth. Working with us and through us, God has done amazing things. The Glory belongs to God. We have been his instruments, His tools.

There is a common characteristic I've seen in all of these people who have been busy doing good—they give of themselves. They have sacrificed and put aside the desire to be selfish. They see potential in others. They give up hours, dollars and comfort to help others. Most helped people who could not do anything in return, other than tearfully thank them. They did this because Jesus has done the same for them. He gave up his life so they could have life.

Remember me, O my God, for good. The past few days I have been chasing down some family history on the internet. Specifically, I'm trying to find pictures of the graves of some ancestors. I've found my first descendant that came to America. He came from Germany. I'm now chasing down the German connections. I'm looking at the tenth generation from me. I'm talking about the 1600's. That's a long time ago. The spelling of my last name has changed from those early people. When a person goes back that far, they realize there are a ton of people that are relatives. The family today is huge. When I found the picture of the grave of Johann Schauss, it made me think of our passage today. I wonder what he did. Did he do anything good? Were there things that God would remember him for?

Someday, some might do the same for you and me. They may come across our names and wonder, did they do any good? Sure they made a living, raised a family—about everyone does that. Lived in a house. Paid taxes. Went to school. Nothing impressive about that. Did they do any good? Was there anything that we did for good?

Nehemiah, wanted God to remember. Remember the good. How about you? What good will God remember about you? Don't you think it is about time to get into the "doing good" business? There are things to be done---that are good. There are things that can make a difference in the lives of others. There are things that you can do. People need YOU. God needs YOU to do these things. You can make a difference.

Remember me, O my God, for good. I like that. It says it just right.

Roger Shouse

