

Nehemiah 9

by Robert F. Adcock

The sermon on Nehemiah 9 emphasizes the vital connection between prayer, confession, and the remembrance of God's faithfulness in worship.

Duration: 50:09

Scripture: Genesis 12:1-3, Exodus 12:31-42, Nehemiah 9:2-3, Nehemiah 9:9-11, Matthew 6:33, 1 Corinthians 10:6-11

Topics: "Heart Preparation", "Corporate Worship"

Description

In this sermon, the speaker reflects on the importance of preparing one's heart to receive God's word. The speaker emphasizes the need for gratitude and acknowledges the ingratitude shown by the Israelites towards God despite His numerous blessings. The speaker highlights the significance of reading and studying God's word, as well as the value of meeting together and responding to God in prayer. The sermon also mentions the Israelites separating themselves from strangers, confessing their sins, and worshiping the Lord.

Transcript

A first year old got over to congratulate my brother Detwiler, Mrs. Detwiler, this afternoon. I told him the truth. I'm really glad that that brother came to Durham.

He and Lester Wilson and a lot of others. I think there are many in this room tonight that would say amen to that. Brothers really had a fruitful life.

And I know that the scripture tells us that there are some brethren that you can call beloved brethren. Not all brethren are beloved brethren. I believe Brother Detwiler is a beloved brother.

I certainly appreciate the Lord sending him to us and he's been a blessing in my life. It's a great joy to be able to share this afternoon notes of thanksgiving to he and his wife. I'd like for us tonight to look at Nehemiah 9. Last Sunday night we considered the value of the word of God.

And as you remember, Ezra, at the request of the people, he went in and he got the book of the law and he brought it out, and they read the word of God from the morning hour right up until noon. About five hours, perhaps, of reading the word of God. And there were men there that were able to expound the word.

There were those there that could explain the meaning of the word, because the people heard and they understood, and that's so important. The value of God's word for God's people, we needed it. They needed it, and it speaks of a revival that was breaking out.

Here are people that have been brought back from years of captivity, and a place that they could enjoy, a place of safety. Nehemiah had constructed the walls, and this was just the capstone to that ministry that Ezra had carried out. And now the people are able to safely, and with some sense of security, they could resume without any hindrance their worship of their God.

We need to reflect from time to time and thank God for the very pleasant circumstances in which we're not harassed. There may be a little hostility around when you witness for the Lord, but ordinarily we can go about our business from day to day with little or no opposition from anyone, little hostility. So sometimes you have to be denied the privilege before you're really appreciated.

And I talked last Sunday night about dusty Bibles. We talked about people that have been denied the privilege of reading the word of God. That dear woman in Russia, Christian, that had not had her hands upon the word of God in thirty years.

And when she got it in her hand, what did she do? She read it day and night. She wouldn't put it down. It meant so much to her.

How do we value the word of God? We've always had it. We've never been denied the privilege of reading it and studying it, meeting together, and reaping all of the value of hearing God's word. Tonight, the part that really complements the reading of the word of God, of course, is that response that comes from our hearts when we speak to God in prayer.

And they are kept in balance in the passage. And I'd like for us to think about that tonight and what is said in this ninth chapter. I'm not going to read the entire chapter.

I'll just read perhaps the first three or four verses, and then we'll take it up as we go along. Reading from verse 1 in chapter 9, Now in the twenty-and-fourth day of this month the children of Israel were assembled with fasting and with sackclothes and earth upon them. And the seed of Israel separated themselves from all strangers and stood and confessed their sins and the iniquities of their fathers.

And they stood up in their faith and read in the book of the law of the Lord their God one fourth part of the day, and another fourth part they confessed and worshiped the Lord their God. Then stood up upon the stairs of the Levites, Joshua, Benaiah, Cadmeel, Shabaniah, Bunai, Sherubbiah, Danai, and Shanani, and cried with a loud voice unto the Lord their God. I'm going to let that suffice because that sets the stage again for what we want to consider.

Now, Nehemiah realized a vital truth as we pointed out last week. Just because they were behind the protection of those walls that he had so miraculously constructed in a period of fifty-two days, mind you, and that's still a miracle to me. When you think about reassembling all those stones and re-erecting that wall, putting it up in place, that's a miracle.

You recognize that there's something divine behind all of this. You can see the omnipotent hand of God working, but he recognized something else. They needed more than just that wall around them, that physical wall that represented in the minds of many security and safety.

They needed more than that. They needed the word of God. They needed to reacquaint themselves with the greatness of the God that they served.

And no time is ill spent that we spend before God reacquainting ourselves with how great he is and how wonderful he is. Ezra, I believe, is the one that read, and with the help and aid of these other brethren that helped him, I think the meaning or the sense of the word was explained as he went along. People benefited from hearing the word of God.

Now we read in the opening of this ninth chapter of a posture of prayer. Now that the reading of the word has taken place, and in this instance an equal time was devoted to the reading of the scriptures. Three hours were devoted to reading the word of God, and now there's going to be a time of praise and thanksgiving.

I'm told that this is one of the longest prayers in the word of God. Perhaps Ezra was a leader in offering up this prayer. Now as you go along, I couldn't help but think about this when I read this this time.

Sometimes we accuse brethren of, he prayed from Genesis to Revelation, and all in between. You know, he just seemed to go on and on. Well, sometimes prayers can be kind of difficult to follow.

But I've always appreciated a prayer when I hear the brethren pray, and they make mention of the fact that our God is a great God. And the very fact that God has done many wonderful things for us. I don't mind hearing brethren reviewing their prayers, what the Lord has done for us.

You know, it's reassuring. And in this case, as we look at the passage, the chapter, we discover that there are many things that are reviewed that relate to the past. I think the first thing that is mentioned as we go along is, of course, it deals with their past history.

And of course, Abraham would be very prominent in this, and that's where it starts. But the very fact that there was a recognition that prayer was an important part of their relationship with God. You know, our relationship with God is something that deals with that vertical aspect of our Christian experience.

In which heart is lifted heavenward. We make known to him all of the joy, all of the expressions of worship and adoration that we feel for him because of what he's done for us. I think it was J. Edgar Hoover, a few years ago, at least I think this is a quote from something he said, in which he referred to our need today as a nation to bow our hearts and our knee in the presence of God.

Well, we just celebrated a day of prayer in our nation. I don't know how many participated in that. I don't know how many really took that seriously.

Personally, I think for it to be truly effective, I think everything ought to shut down. Every factory ought to close its door and tell its workers to go home. This is a day of prayer for our nation.

Well, Mr. Hoover said one of the most spectacular things that anyone could ever see or behold would be a nation of people on their knees before God. He recognized more power in this than even atomic bombs. Now, you know, that's something to think about.

We say we believe in prayer. We've got a little motto on the wall at home. Prayer changes things.

Well, you know, it's such a tremendous benefit to pray, to unburden the heart to God. Prayer is, well, it's the poor man's means of releasing all of those inhibitions and those things that he has within his soul. He

doesn't have to go to the psychiatrist and lie down on the couch and whisper and tell all those things that he has in his heart that may be burdening him and causing him problems.

We go to our God and we tell him what's in these hearts and minds. He brings joy. He brings relief.

He brings healing. And here are a people. And there's this recognition, we need the help of our God.

And so Ezra and the others, perhaps, that took part in this time of prayer began to review all that God meant to them. Now, this is indeed a time of rebuilding for the nation of Israel. They had to reestablish what they were spiritually and politically.

And it required that the people be consciously aware that our greatness is involved primarily in our relationship to our God. After all, it was a nation that the spiritual aspects of it were. There was an altar always in the center of their gatherings.

They met their God at an altar. And there was this recognition that his greatness had been revealed to them in many, many wonderful ways down through the years that they had been dealing with him. You always sometimes have to have a time of preparation when you're preparing for special meetings.

And, you know, I think the success sometimes of meetings is measured in terms of, are God's people prepared? Have sins been confessed? Are hearts rejoicing in what God has done for them? Revival starts within our own hearts. And, you know, revival can come, and if you're not in a spirit of revival, it could come and go and you'd never know anything about it. So in a sense, the groundwork must be laid, preparation must be made, in order that the people's hearts might be right toward God.

And it starts out, as they assemble, with fasting. Now, fasting means a lot of things to a lot of people. I suppose the most common understanding of fasting is abstinence from food.

But really, the true biblical concept of fasting is that we deprive ourselves of anything that would dull our senses and hinder in any way to that sensitive inner witness of the Spirit of God in touch with our God. Anything that represents a threat to divine communion and fellowship, communication with God, it must be put aside. And in this instance, first of all, there was fasting.

They wanted to have every sense acutely in tune with what they were going to hear. It takes preparation. You know, you go eat a big meal, and you go sit down in a nice, comfortable chair.

You don't pick up the Word of God and start reading it. If you do, slumber length, you're gone. You know how food and so many things that we engage in, how it dulls our senses and sometimes prevents us from really having something precious come into our lives through the Word of God.

These people, first there was fasting, setting aside everything that would be a hindrance. Sackcloth always bespeaks of humbling oneself, self-humiliation. They weren't adorning themselves for a big party.

They were being prepared within the inner man for a contact with God. So all that sackcloth outwardly represented, it was to be an experience within the heart and soul of these people. They separated themselves from the strangers and stood and confessed their sins.

You know, recently we've been talking about church priorities, and the first thing, of course, is contact in worship and praise of our God. The preeminent place that the Lord Jesus should enjoy in each of our lives comes before anything else, before any service that we ever render. Let there first be a bending of the

knee and an opening of the heart in worship and praise of our God.

Secondly, of course, in order of priority is an attention and a care for God's people. And sometimes we have to think in terms of if we're going to set the stage properly for an attitude of receiving any sort of message from God, we must really isolate ourselves from everyone, in a sense. We must closet ourselves.

It doesn't mean you have to go into a closet, but preparation of mind and heart so that we're receptive to the voice of our God. In this instance, there's been a lot of intermingling of the people of God with the nations that were around them. It really created problems for them.

So often when drastic measures were taken, it meant separating families. A man might have to put away his wife and those children. It really sometimes required that severe measures be taken to separate themselves from the strangers, those that would represent anything in the way of a friend.

Because after all, all of these strange alliances that had been made along the way, and so many other things that God found so grievous in His Son. So here they take measures of separating themselves from strangers, and they stood and confessed their sins. And I mentioned this morning, and I believe that if there's one thing today that we must do as God's people, we've got to start being honest with God about sin in our lives.

This thing of Christians tolerating sin in their hearts and lies and going on as if nothing, well, it doesn't really matter. I can conceal it so easily. No one even detects that there's unconfessed sin in my life.

And it breathes the Spirit of God, rubs us of any power in our witness for the Lord Jesus. It must be dealt with. Sin must be confessed.

And this is certainly set before us in this passage. They confess their sins, and the iniquities of their fathers. There's going to be a calling to mind of the things that happened in the past that can be as an example to them, a reminder to them, as it should be to us.

And before we close, I'd like for us to look at a New Testament passage that, in a sense, the Apostle Paul reviews for us, things that we should observe. Someone has said, the man that only lives in the present and never takes into account the past is a man with a very short-sighted view of what living is all about. We should learn from the past.

We should learn from history. Someone as well said, the one thing that we learn from history is that we don't learn from what has happened, but all the things that could be avoided, the grief that we could spare ourselves if we would just look carefully and seriously at what has happened in the lives of others. And in a sense, we could circumvent all of that problem.

But here is preparation for the people of God in their approach to God. Now, as an assembly, there must be repentance and a confession of sin. Now, the word of God, again, was read for three hours.

There again, I think rather than just reading, I believe that there was proper exposition given of what was being read. A true sense of what was being read was given to the people. They heard, and they were thrilled again.

I don't know if it's happened to you, but Saturday mornings when we gather together, the brethren, and we pray together, Wednesday nights when we gather for prayer, you know, if there's been preparation within my own heart, because God has spoken to my heart. I read in, I think it was Brother Ironside's book, Only a Mind, which he makes a comment about this balance that we see here. Reading the word of God, and then a time of prayer.

You find someone, and all he does is just pull her over the book. He might provide you with a theoretical Christianity, or a brand of Christianity that's just theoretical. Oh brother, he knows the verse, he knows the passage, he can take you right to it.

But if there's not a proper place given in that man's life, or that woman's life, to prayer and meditation upon the word of God, it can be so cold. It can be lacking in that one ingredient that sometimes you're aware of when someone opens up a passage and you read it. And you know there's been prayerful meditation over the word when it's presented.

By the same token, if someone only devotes himself to prayer, and he has no time for the word of God, he doesn't sense the value and the importance of reading and studying the word of God. With all of the emphasis that's placed in the scriptures upon reading and studying God's word, the psalmist, wherewith all shall a young man cleanse his father, words sewed up in our hearts, becoming a part of us. Men and women that are just filled with the word of God.

But it's when someone says, well I spend all of my time in communion, you've got to be careful. First thing you know there's become something rather mystical about all of that. First thing you know you might find yourself wandering off, becoming rather wishy-washy as far as the importance that you place upon things in the word of God that are of prime importance, that must be balanced.

Reading the word of God, meditation upon it, studying it, and then a time of opening the heart and soul before the Lord and offering up praise and thanksgiving to him. Hear God speak to us, and then let us speak to God, and let there be balance as we do this. The word that is studied and prayed over by how precious it can be to the soul, the beauty about it is you don't forget it as easily as you do, as if you just scan through something and you read it and then it's gone.

But if you spend that quiet time in meditation and thought and prayer and it becomes precious to you. You know, you must have had this happen to you, but I can recall many experiences when I would read just a verse or a passage, and my acquaintance with verses like Galatians 2.20, and that's just one, but many other passages I can recall, I can tell you when I read that. It was years ago.

And God impressed that on my mind, on my heart, and I've never forgotten. It wouldn't take anything for it. I just regret that I hadn't had more of those experiences.

In reading God's precious word, in which there was such an experience, and knowing his presence and revealing what that passage was all about, it just thrilled your soul. And yet, very often we deprive ourselves of those wonderful experiences. Well, these first four verses or so deal with this preparation of heart.

Now, the people are prepared, and now this prayer starts. It's a long prayer, but it's filled with a lot of things that would be of interest to those Israelites. They were going to be reminded of some things.

First thing comes to mind, this call of Abraham. Wouldn't those Israelites perk up their ears when these brethren begin to pray and praise God for what he had done in calling Abraham? Thou art the Lord, the God who didst choose Abraham. And of course, there would perhaps be a sense of pride that would well up in their souls.

We are God's chosen people. He has chosen us out of all the nations of the earth, and with a view of blessing us, we have our father Abraham. And then verses 9 through 11, I noted, took into account that deliverance from Egypt.

You show me the Israelite that knows anything about his heritage that can't tell you about that time of deliverance out of Egypt. Brother, this is in the prayer. They're praying.

So when you hear brethren get up and they begin to praise and thank God for what he did, they're just calling to mind what God has done for them, and how it's thrilled them, and how it's blessed them. So don't be critical of the brethren when they pray. If you don't think they're praying scripturally, pray for them.

And if you don't think those prayers are really doing what it should do for God's people, warming their hearts and promoting praise and worship among God's people, well, tell them about it. But if the prayer was precious, nothing wrong with saying, Brother, your prayer warmed my heart. It blessed me to hear you pray and praise God and bring to remembrance all of those things that have been such a blessing in your life.

It did me good. Nothing wrong with that. But here is a review of what happened in that wonderful deliverance from Egypt.

And there's just one thought that I bring before you. It's at the latter part of the tenth verse. It says, So didst thou get thee a name, as it is this day.

You know, something happened as a result of that deliverance. Those Egyptians never forgot the God of the Israelites. They'll never forget him.

Down in Egypt, those Israelites that left here, it was their God that delivered them. God in a sense. He got for himself a name.

That name may bespeak of fierceness and wrath and judgment, but he got for himself a name. For the Israelites, he's our great deliverer. He is the one that delivered us out of Egypt.

And we're not about to forget it. We want each one of you here today to be reminded that the great God that we serve, he brought us up out of Egypt. You see, this is laying the groundwork for revival.

They know this is true. No doubt, many of these passages have been read in their hearings. They've done a review of these things.

These people are standing on their feet. There's anticipation of what's going to be said next. Right on the heels of this, promises that were given in that wilderness experience.

You know, if they thought back to those 40 years in which God's people were recipients of all of that loving providential care that he provided for 40 years, in which he watched over them just as tenderly and carefully as he could. Although there were many occasions of murmuring and complaining and falling into idolatry and so many things that grieve the Lord, and so often his hand of judgment and chastening was

upon them, yet there were provisions that were made in that wilderness experience. You know, that's still what we're talking about.

Each one of us in our Christian experience can recount many instances in which God provided for us. And brother, there's not anything wrong in recalling to mind the goodness of God to us. A reminder of this.

Ever keep it before us. Great things for us he has done. I'm persuaded that he'd do even greater things for us sometimes if we were just prepared to receive it.

It takes preparation of heart, again, to really be in an attitude of heart where these things can be appreciated. So Ezra, as he prays, provisions in the wilderness. And then toward the end of the chapter, once they'd gone into the land, I think about the conquest and the conquering of Canaan and coming into that promised land, something no doubt that they'd just been looking forward to, something that they had right within their grasp just a short time after they left Egypt because of a lack of faith, because of weakness on their part.

And on listening to that strange voice, no doubt Satan-inspired men that said, No, we can't go in, they're giants in the land, ignoring Caleb and Joshua. There it was, it was theirs. God had promised it.

But now 40 years they went a-wandering, but now they've come in, and God has seen to it that they're going to find a refuge in this place. They took strong cities. There's one thing about all this to me that always just stands out.

You know, without God's help, they couldn't have done any of it. I think of that experience at Ai, when there was sin. That sin had to be judged.

And you know, that sin was judged and it was dealt with. Then there are no problems. You know, that's always spoken to me.

If there is sin in our midst, if there's sin in my heart, you know, the blessing of God cannot flow through this little life of mine. This little life of mine cannot be a channel of blessing to others when there's sin in my life. This assembly, the Church of God in the world today, cannot be a blessing to the people that we should be reaching if there's unconfessed sin.

You just can't tolerate sin in your midst and have the blessing of God. And this, they were reminded of. They were disobedient.

They rebelled. They did so many things that when you review it and think of it, you say that is despicable conduct. The ingratitude that these people have shown toward this great God that has done so much for them, and yet the one that is praising God, the one that is speaking to the Lord so that the people of God can hear, there is a review of all that he had done.

There wasn't any hiding of those areas of their life in which they had failed. There wasn't any glossing over of periods in which you say that's a shame. Let's don't mention that.

Let's don't make any mention of those things that we've done that we're ashamed of. No, bring it all out in the open. Tell the whole story.

We were not faithful. And finally, in the closing verses, I believe that Ezra makes a plea for mercy and pity upon these people. Do you ever get a sense or a feeling of your own weakness or part? And you know the

one that knows himself best is the one that knows just how weak he is.

Without him you can't do anything, says the word of God. But I can do all things through Christ who strengthens me. And so here, as this brother leads in prayer, and he makes his plea to God, the first thing he says, You are our God.

You are our God. You are the great and the mighty and the terrible God. And when you make a promise, you keep your promise.

And if there's a covenant made with you, you keep that covenant. How unlike us. We are a covenant-breaking people.

We make vows that we don't keep. Yet he remains faithful and true. But this is a time in which, regardless of all of our failures and our weaknesses in the past, God has mercy upon us.

We know what we are. We're surveying our past. We know that we've got a miserable failure so many times.

But, oh God, have mercy upon us. We're your people. Well, it's a stirring thing to think of this occasion and God's people assembled, and in a sense, this prayer, this petition that included praise and thanksgiving and confession and notes of repentance, intercession of God's people.

But as I read this, I thought, the thing that they're being reminded of is this, that unlearned from the past, it had no value for them. And when we come to the New Testament, and we pick up our Bibles, and we turn to a passage like 1 Corinthians chapter 10, we read these words. Paul says, Now, these things were our examples to the intent we should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted.

That's the first thing, and there are five things mentioned here in which these people were guilty of. Paul reviews the Israelite history, how all these things happened unto them as an example, and they were written for our instructions, for you and me. This thing relates to us.

This is not something we just read tonight and we've amused ourselves with for a few minutes and said, you know, it's great, nice to hear about that revival among God's people. No. We've got to bring this thing down to this present time.

We've got to learn something from this. We should put into practice in our own lives all of the value that's associated with these lessons. That's what Paul says.

He says, first of all, We should not lust after evil things, as they also lusted. And you can go to Numbers 11, and it concerns itself with that provision that God had made for Israel in the manna. But they didn't want just the manna.

They wanted meat. They wanted something over and beyond what God had provided. Listen, doesn't God know what's best for us? He knew what was best for them, but they wanted something else.

Isn't that just like us? That's our nature. Are you satisfied with what God has prepared and provided for you? Oh, yes, I am, but, but, and then there's something else that we think would be better for us than that which God has provided. You know, well, that's a lack of faith on our part.

That's a lack of trust and commitment to our God to do nothing but that which is best for us. They lusted. Verse 7 says there was idolatry.

They became an idolatrous people. Exodus 32, that golden calf, and all that was associated with that. And Paul could remind and warn those Corinthians, Listen, you know what idolatry is.

You've been associated with all of these evil things that prevail in your culture, and many of you have bowed the knee to an idol. I'm reminding you, look what happened to the people of God. Brothers and sisters in Christ, how many idols are there in our lives? I tell you, we have to search our hearts.

We have to be careful. There must be that daily review of what we're doing with our lives and what we're putting the importance upon. And those things may have become precious and dear to our hearts that are nothing more than idols that we're tolerating in our lives.

And then there was immorality. And certainly the Corinthians knew something about this. Neither let us commit fornication, as some of them committed and fell in one day, 23,000 people in one day.

The account in Joshua, in Numbers 25, says that there were 23,000. But in one day, 23,000 fell of immorality. Verse 9 says, And there was unbelief, and you remember those fiery serpents that came upon them to punish them for their sin of unbelief.

And then there was murmuring and complaining, as mentioned in verse 10. And you know, when you think about poor and the judgment that fell upon him and his brethren. And I believe the people, in a sense, they murmured about this.

Lord, you shouldn't have done that. Shouldn't have done that. Who are we to tell God what to do? He made us.

He is the sovereign God of the universe. And would we raise our puny voices in one moment of murmuring against God? He is the sovereign God of the universe. He made us.

We owe our very existence and being to Him. But all of these were warnings that were given. They relate to Israel's history.

I believe God has an interest in all of the affairs of men. Do we recognize that He sovereignly rules in the affairs of men? Do we recognize that He would sovereignly rule and reign in our own hearts? That's the bottom line. We say He raises up and He brings down.

He does. What is He doing in this little bitty life of mine? I may think I'm too insignificant. I don't really matter in the eye of God.

I'm not that important. I shouldn't even attach that much importance to it. That's the work of Satan.

That's the work of Satan. Haven't we had brought to our attention by our brother Lynn Sheridan and in our meditations on Wednesday night, we're members of the body. And God counts every member in that body as to be precious in His sight because it was precious to Him and because it was purchased with the precious blood of the Lord Jesus.

We're members of that body. I thank God that Ezra, as he closes out this prayer in which there's been a recounting of all the things that they were familiar with as a people who might have had to leave their

minds refreshed. He brought them back to a position where he says, I know that you are a covenant-making God.

We want to covenant before thee today that we shall serve thee faithfully. We'll offer up faithful service to thee. We'll have undivided hearts for thee.

How often do God's people do that as a collective group? There's some of these things that, as a local assembly, we shall welcome these things. We're so reluctant to do anything that represents a lifting of our voices as one in which we say, we have sinned against thee, O God, but we want to come back. This is a time of confession.

This is a time of rededication of our lives, and we want to serve thee in a way that is acceptable, a way that brings pleasure to you. This is what this is all about. Reading the word of God in prayer, always with a purpose of drawing the people of God back into a pure and undefiled relationship with their God.

When we assemble together, brothers and sisters in Christ, it's for a purpose. It should be profitable. Not just another meeting.

There should be some profit in this time that we gather together. Fellowship together around the person of the Lord Jesus. He says we're two or three gathered together in my name, there are mine in this.

Is he here tonight? Praise God, he is. Do we recognize it? Are we addressing ourselves at this time to him, to our God? Is there this spirit within us of rededication, willing to enter into a covenant with him, in which we say, Oh God, I'll seek to obey thee more perfectly. I will seek to serve thee more faithfully than I ever have before.

Brothers, if there's another time when you do that, it won't happen. If there's never any experience of saying, Oh Lord, I've been unfaithful. But I want to be fruitful.

I want to obey thee more perfectly. I want to follow in your ways. And I want to serve you faithfully in every way that I can.

If we don't have a time when we do this, when will it ever happen? We can just go on in that little rut that we're in. Playing church. Coming together.

Having our small talk sometimes about the things of God. But no real depth. No real meaning.

No real purpose for coming together. Let God revive us within our soul. Let the Spirit of God speak to us tonight.

And say, Lord, if there needs to be anything set right in my heart, I want it set right tonight. If there's anything between me and a fellow believer, if there's any sin in my life, I want to confess it. I want to forsake it.

Then tonight's meeting could be profitable. Be a blessing. Let's pray.

O Father in heaven, we do bow in your presence again and give thanks to thee for the Lord Jesus. And Lord, we occupy a position tonight as believers in that wonderful body of the Lord Jesus. We don't deserve this.

But you never ask us to be occupied with our undeservance. We just see this place of blessings that we occupy in Christ. Oh, we praise thee and thank thee tonight that in him things have been so beautiful for our lives.

Blessed are the people that are assembled here. Grant, we pray thee, that we shall learn from these examples, from these things in the past that can be so profitable to us. Grant, we pray thee, as thy people gather in this place and around the world, there will be wonderful divine thoughts of thy greatness and your wonderful provision in the person of the Lord Jesus.

To the end, we might serve thee better. We might know thee better. We might worship and praise thee better.

For this we ask in the name of the Lord Jesus. Our brother Les has a hymn for us, and then the service will be over.

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