

## “Grace Upon Grace” Nehemiah 9:1-38

“A prison cell, in which one waits and hopes...  
completely dependent on the fact that the door of freedom  
has to be opened from the outside, is not a bad picture of Advent.”  
[Dietrich Bonhoeffer]

Advent: a time of \_\_\_\_\_, waiting leading up to Christmas  
Nehemiah 9 gives us one of Scriptures most detailed prayers of \_\_\_\_\_  
Lament: an expression of \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_  
The \_\_\_\_\_ is not the way it's supposed to be  
Our \_\_\_\_\_ are not the way they're supposed to be

### I. A day of confession

- A. Some facets of confession
  - 1. It is holistic – vs. a \_\_\_\_\_ faith
    - a. Fasting promotes spiritual hunger
    - b. Sackcloth is a sign of \_\_\_\_\_  
Ezra and Nehemiah are eager to associate God's will with \_\_\_\_\_
  - 2. A time of \_\_\_\_\_  
Vs. syncretism (to mingle opposing \_\_\_\_\_)
- B. The Lord has the first Word
- C. Prayer: \_\_\_\_\_ speech  
This prayer is a \_\_\_\_\_ of Biblical quotations, recollections, and images  
The Levites who led the prayer knew the Word \_\_\_\_\_
- D. Scripture informs and evokes confession

### II. Redemptive history shows us our need of confession

- A. Downward \_\_\_\_\_: the cycle of sin and then forgiveness is alarming  
It is easy to disparage the unfaithfulness of the Israelites, until we see our true selves in the  
\_\_\_\_\_ of God's Word  
Some characteristics of this spiral
  - 1. We \_\_\_\_\_ upon God's grace
  - 2. We stiffen our necks and refuse to \_\_\_\_\_
  - 3. We are not mind-full of God's wonders among us
  - 4. We cast God's Word behind our backs
  - 5. We are \_\_\_\_\_ to what masters us  
Left to ourselves we cannot ascend! We are locked in a prison cell  
But we lament in \_\_\_\_\_!
- B. Ascent of grace: “But God”  
*“But you are a God ready to forgive, gracious and merciful, slow to anger and abounding in steadfast love, and did not forsake them...in your great mercies did not forsake them in the wilderness.” [17-19a]*  
*“Many times you delivered them according to your mercies.” [28b]*

### III. The Lord and His Supper

Our Lord has not forsaken us to the \_\_\_\_\_  
On the cross Jesus lamented: “My God, My God, why have you forsaken me?”  
In God's great mercy God Christ has been forsaken for us  
The Gospel is “tidings of \_\_\_\_\_ and \_\_\_\_\_”  
The door of our prison has been opened forever!