

“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!