

Prayer and mourning

Read: Nehemiah 1:1–11

Golden Text: *'When I heard these things, I sat down and wept. For some days, I mourned and fasted and prayed before the God of heaven'* (Nehemiah 1:4).

When I was at Training College 16 years back, we studied the Book of Nehemiah. I came to know and understand better who this man was in his time. I admired him, reading his whole book, and my heart melts and is broken before God as I reflect on how this brave man encountered every opposition—as the devil tried to discourage him and his people when rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem. Nehemiah knew what to do, *he prayed*.

Nehemiah was one of the most powerful Jews in Babylon, but he broke down in tears as he heard of Jerusalem's miserable condition. He mourned for God's holy city and scattered people. He did not hide his concern and feelings. From chapters 1 to 13 of Nehemiah, his prayer reflected his heart's passion, which offers us a very clear way to follow, despite difficulties and the opposition we face. He faced them with joy and, in the end, the work was accomplished.

Currently, around the globe, we are going through these sad moments, which bring us to tears. Speaking on Fiji alone, Fiji is now in a stage where Covid-19 cases are rising every day and the fatalities are also increasing. To some, it does bring fear, uncertainty, pain and chaos, which they have not experienced before. Political issues arise; this leads to instability, which brings confusion where people do not know what to think. When things heat up, where do we run to? Who do we call for *help*?

As to what Nehemiah did when he heard what was happening (Nehemiah 1:4), he sat down and wept, he mourned, he fasted and prayed before God. He prayed before he spoke with the king, he prayed on the journey and he prayed when he encountered resistance. He interceded on behalf of his people.

I believe this encourages us in what to do: let us fast and pray over this situation, in awe, with a humble and forgiving spirit; let us be broken before the Lord and cry to him for help, now, for he longs to hear our voice; let us seek him, because he hears our prayers. Whatever our situations, big or small, let us pray, pray and pray...

By Captain Vakato Wawa
21 August 2021