

STORY 6: CONVERSATION

Nehemiah was a Jewish man who lived in a city called Susa in 446 B.C. He was there because the Jewish people had been exiled from their homeland, and Nehemiah had become a servant to the Persian king.

One day, his brother and some other men came from Jerusalem and Nehemiah asked them about the situation there. They said, "The people there are in bad shape. They feel totally disgraced. The walls of Jerusalem have been broken down and the gates have been burned.

When Nehemiah heard this, he sat down and cried. For several days he prayed and mourned- he even went without food to show how sad he was.

He prayed to God, "Lord, God of heaven, You are a great and awesome God. And you faithfully keep your promises to everyone who loves you and obeys your commands. I confess that I, my family, and the rest of your people have sinned by choosing to disobey you and the laws you gave us."

He goes on to pray "Lord, I am praying for your servants--those you rescued by your great strength and mighty power. Please hear my prayer! When I serve the king his wine today, make him pleased with me and have him do what I ask. Put it in his heart to be kind to me."

So, a few months later, Nehemiah got his chance. While he was serving the king his wine, he was sad, because he was thinking of Jerusalem.

The king noticed and said, "Why do you look so sad? You're not sick. Something must be bothering you." Even though he was terrified, Nehemiah replied, "Long live the king! I feel sad because the city where my ancestors are buried is in ruins, and its gates have been burned down."

Then the king asked, "So, how can I help you?"

Nehemiah said a quick prayer to God, and asked the king, "Sir, if it's all right with you, please send me back to Judah, so that I can rebuild the city where my ancestors are buried."

The king not only agreed to send Nehemiah, but also agreed to give him letters to authorize his travel.

Nehemiah said, "God's gracious hand was upon me."

STORY 6: CONVERSATION

- **review:** re-tell the story
- **dialogue:** discuss the story
 - What do you like or not like about this story?
 - What can we learn from Nehemiah in terms of sharing our concerns with God?
 - What can we learn about God from this story?
- **application:** live the story
 - Why don't we tend to talk things through with God?
 - If we were to "pray without ceasing*," what would our lives look like?
 - What is one action you can take to apply this story to your life?
- **notes:**

*-1 Thessalonians 5:17