

6 Hour Service

I. Slide1 Announce:

A. Slide2 Sun, 3-5pm guest speaker for Children at Risk is...Dr, Andrew Doan
[Author: Hooked on Games] Video Game addictions.

1. *The Endgame*: Protecting Your Family Against Internet Gaming Disorder and Online Predators.

I. Slide3 Intro: 6 Hour Service

A. It is interesting that 3 of Israel's *great national prayers* are in Dan. 9, Ezra 9, Neh.9.

1. We have here *the longest recorded prayer in the bible*. vs.5-38.

B. Just two days after the glad *Feast of Tabernacles* the people came together in a **solemn assembly**. This was a solemn public confession of their **sin**, and it was to be directed by the **Levites**. When they came together, **the book of the Law** was again **read aloud**. Then they **confessed their sins**.

C. The prayer in chapter 9 is a *spiritual summary* of the OT history of the Jews:

1. The **Creation** (6); the call of **Abraham** (7,8); the **Exodus** (9-14); the nation's **wilderness** experiences (15-23); the **conquering** of the land (24-25); the period of **Judges** (26-29); the period of **prophets** up to the captivity (30-31).
2. **Now therefore...** in vs.32, brings us up to Ezra/Neh's day **and** the need of the nation to **repent** and **confess sin**.

D. What list would you give a Christian friend that is seeking to *get their life right with God*? [Let's find that list in the 1st 3 verses]

II. Slide4 THE LAITY (1-3)

A. We find here **5 steps** to Intimacy with God:

B. Slide5a Self-Humbling (1) – (*Fasting, sackcloth, ashes*) [cloth made of *black goats' hair*, coarse, rough, thick]

C. *Outward demonstration* of deep mourning & heaviness of heart.

D. Slide5b Separation (2a) –

1. We must *separate ourselves from the world* as we draw near to the Lord.
 - a) Here, most likely didn't marry foreigners.
2. **Separation w/o devotion to the Lord becomes Isolation**, **but devotion w/o separation is hypocrisy**.

- E. Slide5c Sins confessed (2b) Do not expect God to cover *what* you are not willing to uncover¹
1. “A man should never be ashamed to **own** he has been in the **wrong**, *which is but saying, in other words, that he is **wiser today than he was yesterday.**”
Alexander Pope*
- F. Slide5d Scripture read (3a) –
1. They **read** for **3 hours** about *the sins of their fathers*, and then confessed for **3 hours** *doing the same awful deeds.*
 2. In the **Scriptures** He speaks to **us**. In **prayer & praise** we speak to **Him**.
- G. Slide5e Worship (3b) – True worship encompasses all of these (just named).
1. **Note confessed & worshiped.** *Never let **self-examination** extend to the place of ignoring the Lord.*
 - a) The more you look at **yourself**, the more discouraged you will become.
Slide5f Ultimately focus on His *perfections*, not your own *imperfections*.
 2. Slide5g How would you describe **your relationship w/God today?** [eyes closed]
 - a) Is it warm & steady or is it cold? Is it interrupted & distracted?
Is it a surface relationship or a deep relationship? Is it slow? Is it stale?
Is it an exciting personal adventure or, is it a mechanical routine?
- H. This then is a fine model for *a confessing people* to approach God.
1. We must cultivate *closeness w/God* w/these **spiritual disciplines**.
 2. **Involvement, yes...but...Intimacy???** [what do you plan to do w/this sermon?]
 3. **Do you feel lonely, hallow, shallow...frayed or frustrated** on your spiritual journey? **I have this against that you, that have left your 1st love.**
 - a) *Superficiality is the curse of our age. The doctrine of instant satisfaction is a primary spiritual problem. The desperate need today is not for a greater number of intelligent people, or gifted people, but for **deep people**.* Richard Foster
 - b) Swindoll gives **4 spiritual disciplines** to cultivate this *Intimacy with the Almighty*:
Simplicity, which requires reordering our lives. **Silence**, which asks us to be still.
Solitude, which involves cultivating serenity. **Surrender**, which beckons us to let go
- I. This prayer includes **20 sins** of *Israel*...but **74 facts** about **God**.
1. **God** is the subject matter here...don't miss that.

¹ Duncan Campbell

2. This deals 1st with **Who He is**. Then, **What He does for His people**. Then, **What His people must do for Him**.

III. Slide6 **THE LEVITES (4-38)**

- A. (4,5) They **stood**, cried out, then got everyone else to their feet. [why *stand* 4x's]

IV. Slide7 **FROM CREATION (6)**

- A. (6a) They start with God as **Creator**.
- B. (6b) **His Providential Care** - you preserve them all
1. Ps.145:16 **You open Your hand And satisfy the desire of every living thing**.
- C. (6c) We can't **duplicate** the angels worship, **but** we can **imitate** their devotion to the Lord.
1. **We** have more cause to worship than *angels* do. [Would you agree? why/why not?]
 - a) **We are not just servants...but children**. We have been **forgiven**.
- D. In our *worship, praise, & prayer*, it's wise to **begin** w/the **Greatness of God**.
1. Why is doing this important in **all** our praying? **Ask?**
 2. Did Christ model this for us? **Ask?** (yes, the beg of the Lord's Prayer)
 3. Isn't this proper for *any dignitary*...how much more *the Lord God Himself?*

V. Slide8 **FROM ABRAHAM TO MOSES (7,8)**

- A. It is good to **review** the dealings of God with **ourselves** & w/those who have **gone before us**.
1. **At times** in our walk w/God we have stood on **hilltops** where *the air is clear*, seeing in all directions, rejoicing that...*life is good*.
Other times, standing waist deep in **mire**, w/**fog** all around us.
 - a) *What do you do when you're driving & it is foggy outside? You slow down to the brightness of your headlights.*
 2. Like a **rest** in a piece of music, the **silence** helps define the significance of the **sound**. - Slow down & be silent before God.
 3. **God will not always scream & shout because life is noisy**. He expects us to **provide some quietness where His still & small voice can be heard**.²
 - a) This section rehearses the history of Israel, **but** it is also a very accurate summary of *our own personal lives* in Christ.
- B. The word **give** (or **gave**) is used 16x's in this chapter.

² Chuck Swindoll; pg. 4 "Intimacy with the Almighty."

1. Our God is a **Giving** God. He gave Israel *a Land, a Law, the ministry of the Spirit, food & water, deliverers, & victory over their enemies...* to name a few mentioned here.

VI. Slide9 FROM MOSES TO JOSHUA (9-23)

- A. In the last verses (7,8) God was the **Founder** of a Nation. In (9-12) God, the **Deliverer** of a Nation. In (13-15) God, the **Guide** of a Nation. In (16-31) God, **Long-Suffering** towards a Nation.
- B. Side by side w/the story of **God's care**...runs the story of **sin/sorrow/suffering**.
 1. *The Gold & Black strands are closely interwoven.* (Meyer)
 2. *This Oriental tapestry* is put together with many exquisite strands.
 - a) It has the **gold** of happiness, pleasures, good days, w/God's Faithfulness. And the **black** of **bruising sorrows**. [it takes **both** to make it beautiful]
 - b) *He will use both in your life to make it beautiful.*
- C. (16) *What lessons from the past* do you need to remember today, to keep you from making foolish choices, w/devastating consequences?
 1. *It's just best for me if I just don't take even one drink. It's just best if I stay away from casinos. It's just best I don't hang around w/certain old friends for awhile.*
- D. (20) **Your Good Spirit** – The Holy Spirit here in the OT.
 1. He is the **good Instructor**, the **good Comforter**, the **good Guide**, The **good Sanctifier**, the **good Quickener**, & the **good Intercessor**.
 - a) Let us always **adore** Him, **revere** His person, **seek** His aid, **own** His power, **speak** to His **praise**, & **never** **grieve** Him.
- E. (21) **They lacked nothing** – Like Ps.23 (same word)
 1. **The Lord is my shepherd I shall not want.** (nlt) *The Lord is my shepherd; I have all that I need.* (msg) *God, my shepherd! I don't need a thing.*

VII. Slide10 FROM JOSHUA TO JUDGES (24-26)

- A. (25) As a nation they **didn't** thank God in times of **blessing**, **but** they were quick to turn to Him in times of **suffering**.
 1. *Yet before we point at them...what about us?*
 2. For every 100 who can stand **adversity**, there is only 1 who can stand **prosperity**.

VIII. Slide 11 FROM JUDGES TO THE TIME OF EZRA & NEHEMIAH (27-31)

- A. They wanted the Father's *wealth* but nor the Father's *will*.
 - 1. What a record of Israel's *sins*...but what a *greater* record of God allowing *new beginnings* & allowing them to *bury the past*.
- B. (28) What does this prayer tell you about Human stubbornness & pride?
 - 1. Can you relate to this verse? *Is this not our testimony?*
- C. (31b) In His *Mercy*, God didn't give them what they deserved.
And in His *Grace*, He gave them what they didn't deserve.³

IX. Slide 12 AT THE TIME OF EZRA & NEHEMIAH (32-38)

- A. (32) You enjoy living like the heathen? Then go live with the heathen.
- B. (33) Unapproachable purity reaching out to *sinful humanity*.
- C. The song ended with the people entering into a *covenant* w/the Lord.
 - 1. *A Covenant* – A formalized relationship w/commitments to loyalty.⁴
- D. *Prayer*: God, may you sit upon the throne of our lives arrayed in royal apparel.
May we be quick to own our sin. Quick to repent. Quick to return again.

³ Wiersbe pg. 116

⁴ John MacArthur; pg.90