A. This Heart … Cares for the things of God (vs. 3-4a):

1. **Said** – Nehemiah’s brother had a report to give because he went to Judah to care for the people who were in distress.

   a. **In great distress** – The people in Judah were experiencing painful and very unpleasant circumstances.

   b. **And reproach** - The people were despised by other nations and disrespected in many ways.

   c. **Gates broken down and burned with fire** – The gates are in a completed state of being destroyed. Their enemies have full access to destroy the city. The condition of the wall and gates are a statement to the pagan nations that their God no longer looks upon Israel with favor.

2. **When I heard these words** - The words that Nehemiah’s brother spoke kept ringing in his ears.

3. **When I heard these words** - Nehemiah did not ask the question just to get an answer, Nehemiah asked the question because his heart was committed to help resolve the issue.

4. **“I sat down and wept”** - Nehemiah with no end in sight sat down and displayed strong outward distressful emotions for the pain the people of Judah were going through.

5. **Mourn for days** – Nehemiah grieved loudly with no intention of ever stopping.

6. **Mourn for days** – Despite the good job Nehemiah had with safe and comfortable surroundings it never removed the love and concern he had for the people of God who chose to obey God and return to Judah under the leadership of Ezra.

B. This Heart.... Prays (4b):

1. **He was fasting and praying** – Nehemiah in the midst of the best food Babylon had to offer, did not eat because of other people’s distress.

2. **He was fasting and praying** – Nehemiah with no end in sight prayed an intercessory prayer on behalf of the nation of Israel.

3. **He was fasting and praying** – Nehemiah’s fasting and praying, like his mourning and weeping went on for days. He prayed persistently (Luke 8:1-8).

4. **He was fasting and praying** – After all the attempts that were made to resolve this problem Nehemiah realizes that only God can make the difference.
C. This Heart… has a Healthy View of God (vs. 5):

1. I Said – Nehemiah takes personal responsibility for the issues the people in Judah were experiencing.
   a. We are the salt and light (Matthew 5:13-16). Until we feel a sense of responsibility for where our nation is going, the unsaved in our community, the distressed in our community and city, there will be no sense of urgency to make a difference.
   b. The church today has encouraged believers to be more self-centered than Christ-centered.

2. Beseech – He prayed to God with a sense of urgency.

3. Oh, Lord of heaven – Nehemiah acknowledges that nothing that is taking place in Judah changes his view of the character and nature of God:
   a. Great – God is beyond the norm and beyond the borders of Israel and He is always a new experience.
   b. Awesome – God should be reverenced and feared because of His greatness.
   c. Who preserves His covenant - God provides careful attention to His covenant with Israel. God places a hedge around it guarding it from ever being destroyed. God never forsakes His Word.
   d. Lovingkindness to those who love Him – God steadfastly maintains His obligations with people. God is kind, loyal and benevolent to His people especially those who demonstrate a strong commitment to His Word. God never forsakes His people.
   e. Lovingkindness to those who keep His commandments – God steadfastly maintains His kindness, loyalty, and benevolence especially to those who pay careful attention to His Word with a commitment to preserve His Word in their hearts. God blesses faithfulness.
   f. His commandments – Those who preserve God’s Word in their hearts do so with the mindset that God’s Word are clear cut directives of His divine revelation. Therefore, God’s Word is not a suggestion.

D. This Heart…. Fully Surrenders to God (vs. 6):

1. Let your ear – Nehemiah seeks to gain God’s full attention because he is now completely depending on God to resolve the issue.
2. Now – What Nehemiah is about to say is an urgent request.
3. Attentive – Nehemiah is following the pattern of the Psalmist when he prays. It is not that Nehemiah does not believe that God is giving him attention, but rather Nehemiah is demonstrating respect for who God is when he comes before God with an urgent petition.
4. **To hear** – Nehemiah’s request challenges God to address the issues in Judah. His prayer is very focused and purposeful.

5. **Prayer** – Nehemiah’s prayer is poetic, worshipful and with music. It is in line with the psalms of the OT. Nehemiah prays in a worshipful manner in the presence of God. His prayer is reverent.
   a. Pray with urgency – he immediately began fasting (vs. 4).
   b. Pray still trusting God to be who He says He is – His very nature and person (vs. 5).
   c. Pray believing that God is faithful to those who are faithful to Him (vs. 5; John 15:7).
   d. Pray with humility (thy servant constantly repeated; vs. 5,8,10).
   e. Pray with persistence (day and night).
   f. Pray with an open life (his sins and the sins of Israel).
   g. Pray within the scope of God’s Word.
   h. Pray out of your love and worship for God (vs. 11 – delight, revere).
   i. Pray believing in God for the results (Successful – vs. 11).

6. **Before you** – Despite the many issues the people of Judah are experiencing, Nehemiah is still confident that God is faithful and is all that he just described God to be.

7. **Before you** – Nehemiah is still confident that because of God’s covenant with His people he will still be accepted into the presence of God.

8. **Prays with humility**:
   a. **Your servant** – Nehemiah humbly comes before God like a slave before his master.
   b. **Confesses the sins** - Nehemiah makes a public proclamation of how off target Israel is in falling short in obeying God’s divine will. Nehemiah demonstrates respect for God’s holiness.
   c. **We have sinned** – Nehemiah declares that everyone, including himself, has fallen short of God’s standards by not living with respect to His divine will.