

Where's Your Chair?

Nehemiah 9 1-8



Then I acknowledged my sin to you and my iniquity I did not hide.
I said, 'I will confess my transgressions to the Lord,'
and you forgave the guilt of my sin.

Psalm 33:5-6

Praising:

Lord, cleanse the depths within
our souls
and bid resentment cease.
Then, bound to all in bonds of
love,
our lives will spread your peace.

Reading:

Nehemiah 9:1-8
Confession time

The people of Israel gather for a ceremonial confessing of sins. They appear in the time-honoured penitential way, fasting and wearing sackcloth and ashes. The law is read and in response the people name their sins and the sins of their forbears. Although the non-Jews do not participate, this is not so much about creating a tribal Jews/non-Jews distinction. The Jews are simply trying to avoid any

implication that their guilt and shame should extend to their non-Jewish neighbours. The confession of sin then morphs into a confession of faith with the people being exhorted to exclaim God's praise and glory. The priest and scribe Ezra takes up this note of worship and places God's sovereignty in historical context, charting God's initiative in creation and then his ancient promise to Abraham that his descendants would inherit the promised land.

Listening:

Praying:

Lord as we come to confess our sins, grant us courage

- to name our wrong thoughts, words and actions, large and small, for the sin that they are
- to let go of those sins completely, and having let go, to try not to pick them up again
- to live in the humility of knowing that our forgiveness comes through the cross of Christ

Father: bring me to realise that in my relationship with you, confessing always comes first. For having done my best to listen and follow, all I can offer in response to your love is my sin. Amen

Doing:

Monday, 01 October 2016