



Bible studies for disciples who make disciples

Loudonville Community Church

Volume 6 - Number 3
The week of November 15, 2020

Sermon Series: *Return and Rebuild*
Sticking to the Book
Nehemiah 8:1-12

In Nehemiah 8, we meet Ezra the priest, scholar and scribe. Ezra had returned to Jerusalem in order to teach God's Law among the people (cf. Ezra 7:10). Nehemiah arrived thirteen years later to rebuild the wall that once surrounded the city to enhance its security and to encourage the people to live inside it.

In this chapter, Ezra and Nehemiah appear together in order to lead in the spiritual restoration of the people. They recognized that the restoration of God's people was about more than a piece of land, a rebuilt wall, or a repopulated city. They knew the most important thing was the spiritual renewal or revival of the people of God.

1. What comes to your mind when you hear the word *revival*?

One of my (Pastor Paul's) preferred ways of describing what happens when there's a revival is that *God comes down*. Isaiah prayed for revival when he said, "Oh that you would rend the heavens and come down, that the mountains might quake at your presence" (Isa. 64:1).

2. What are some things that are likely to happen when *God comes down* or when He visits His people?

Read Nehemiah 8:1-12

3. What are some indications that what is happening here can be called revival?

Historians of revival have long discussed whether true revival is a spontaneous occurrence or the result of serious preparation.

4. How do you see evidence for both in this passage?

A Unified Desire (v. 1-8)

The date is the 1st of Tishrei, 444 B.C. This day would come to be known as Rosh Hashanah (i.e. the Jewish New Year). On this day, there was a sense of urgency. As if drawn by a magnet, people arrive at the Water Gate by the thousands (v. 1). They are depicted as gathering *as one man*. Clearly, the unity of God's people is a high spiritual value (cf. John 17:20-21; Ephesians 4:4-6). Unity is not uniformity. We are not expected to think alike or look alike, but we should have a common spiritual desire.

5. What do the people ask Ezra to do? What does their request indicate?

According to Verse 7, a group of Levites were sent out among the crowd in order to help the people to understand the Law. Their activity is summed up in verse 8.

6. What are at least three observations you can draw about what it means to understand God's Word?

This passage illustrates the importance for God's people to desire God's Word.

7. Why is the Bible (hearing, reading, and studying it) essential in true revival?

8. How might you measure your own spiritual hunger for God's Word?

9. What things have you permitted in your life that have spoiled your appetite for God's Word?

A Softened Heart (v. 9)

As the people heard and understood the Law, they wept. The end of verse 9 suggests their weeping endured for a while.

10. What was the reason for their tears?

Another indication of the reviving work of God in His people is the conviction of sin. The absence of conviction reveals a hard heart. Personal revival starts with the heart. Take a moment and ponder the state of your own heart.

11. What does it mean for you to fall in love with Jesus all over again?

An additional sign of God reviving the heart of His people is found in verse 10, “to send portions to anyone who has nothing ready,” and in verse 12, “to send portions ...”

12. What kind of attitude and lifestyle does this imply?

13. In what ways can you extend a helping hand to those in need?

A Renewed Spirit (vv. 10-12)

Three times the people were instructed to stop weeping! It’s not that Nehemiah and Ezra were trying to squelch the conviction of sin, but they wanted to stress the grace of God’s forgiveness. God’s Word + a softened heart = joy. The joy mentioned here is the joy of the Lord or the Lord’s joy.

14. What is the basis for true joy in our lives? What could a lack of joy among God’s people indicate?

As you wrap up your discussion time, ponder *The Gospel According to Nehemiah*: God loves you and wants to fill your life with His joy!

Sunday, November 15 thru Saturday, November 21, 2020

1 Chronicles 5-6, Hebrews 10, Amos 4, Psalms 148-150; 1 Chron. 7-8, Hebrews 11, Amos 5, Luke 1:1-38; 1 Chron. 9-10, Hebrews 12, Amos 6, Luke 1:39-80; 1 Chron. 11-12, Hebrews 13, Amos 7, Luke 2; 1 Chron. 13-14, James 1, Amos 8, Luke 3; 1 Chron. 15, James 2, Amos 9, Luke 4; 1 Chron. 16, James 3, Obadiah 1, Luke 5

God loves you and
wants to fill your life with His joy!