

(12) "*Restore unto me the joy of thy salvation; and uphold me with thy free spirit.*"

- b) When we confess and forsake our sin, God gives us His mercy (Pr 28:13).
- c) When God forgives a sin, He buries it in the depths of the sea (Mic 7:19) and removes it from us as far as the east is from the west (Ps 103:12).
- d) Once forgiven, we can be blessed or happy (Ps 32:1).
- 2) The people obeyed and made great mirth (v.10, 12)
  - a) They ate rich foods and drank sweet juice.
  - b) They gave food to those who had none
  - c) They made great mirth (gladness)
- c. **Their revival caused them to obey the Bible**
  - 1) They read how God commanded to live in booths during the Feast of Tabernacles (Lev 23:33-43).
  - 2) They obeyed and made booths for themselves.
    - a) These booths were to commemorate the time Israel lived in booths in the wilderness after leaving Egypt. It was a time of reflection on God's goodness.
    - b) We too need to spend time reflecting on the great things God has done for us. As the hymn writer put it this way, *Count your blessings name them one by one and it will surprise you what the Lord hath done.*

**Conclusion:** How important is the Bible to you this evening? Do you read it daily, seeking to learn from it? Do you listen carefully when it is preached? Do you seek to understand the Bible? Am I explaining it on your level? If not, come see me about it. Are you digging to study it yourself? Most important, are you applying it to your life? Do you repent and change when it convicts you? Are you rejoicing in the Lord after God forgives you?

These are thought-provoking questions, but important ones. If you are to have a revival in your heart, you must allow the Bible to do its work. If you are not reading the Bible as you should – confess it as sin and begin reading tonight. If you are not applying the Bible to your life – repent and submit to the Lord this evening. If you are not rejoicing in the Lord – accept his forgiveness and rejoice.

**Song:** You can have Revival or Forgiven

# Nehemiah's Revival Week

17 December 2017 PM – Nehemiah 8:1-18 – EzNe17 – Scott Childs

**Introduction:** A revival is a time when Christians get right with God, especially when several get right at one time. Someone once said, "*When Christians are on fire, believers are warmed and sinners are attracted to the light.*" That is revival! In Nehemiah 8, we will read about a revival that took place in Jerusalem.

**Transition:** As we look at this passage, I want us to identify three actions the people took that led to revival and will do the same for us.

## 1. They **Listened** to the Word of God **Attentively**

### a. All the people listened attentively (v.1-3).

- 1) They were gathered together as one man (v.1)
- 2) Men, women and children old enough to listen (v.2)
  - a) Everyone needs to hear the Bible read. The Bible is not just for adults, but for entire families.
    - (1) While very young, Moses had learned a fear of God that kept him true while living in the palace.
    - (2) By his teen years, Daniel had developed Bible convictions he was willing to die for (Dan 1:8).
    - (3) By age 12, Jesus knew the Bible well enough to discuss it with the temple teachers (Lu 2:46-47).
  - b) Parents need to have a daily Bible time with their children. It need not be long but at least some time in the Bible and prayer together as a family.
  - c) Everyone – INCLUDING CHILDREN – need to read the Bible privately every day. Even reading just a few verses can help keep our hearts from sin, if we read them seeking to learn. God urges us all to read the Bible. (2 Timothy 2:15) "*Study to show thyself approved unto God, a workman that needeth not to be ashamed, rightly dividing the word of truth.*"
- 3) Services lasted 6 hours each morning for a week (v.3)
  - a) Quite obviously they had a hunger for the Word.
  - b) Both a hunger for the Bible and desire for Christian fellowship ought to draw us out to EVERY church service.

**b. The readers were elevated so all could see and hear well (v.4-5).**

- 1) They stood on a pulpit or raised platform.
  - a) Ezra shared the reading with 13 fellow men (v.4)
  - b) The people stood in respect whenever the Bible was being read (v.5).
- 2) The people said “Amen” and bowed their heads and worshipped the Lord (v.6). [Illustrate]

*First, the people listened to the Word of God attentively. Second,*

**2. They Understood the Word of God Clearly (8:7-8)**

**a. Teachers were appointed to help the people understand (v.7)**

- 1) Thirteen men plus Levites were appointed to this work.
- 2) They explained the Bible between reading sections.
  - a) They may have been on the pulpit taking turns explaining the Bible. Or they may have walked among the congregation answering questions.
  - b) Part of these men’s jobs may have been to interpret the Bible into the Chaldean language for those who were not familiar with the Hebrew. We do not know.

**b. These teachers explained, and applied the Law.**

- 1) They *read the Word distinctly* – clearly declared it.
- 2) They *gave the sense* or gave insight – explained it.
- 3) They *caused the people to understand* – made application
- 4) All biblical preaching ought to include these three duties – **declaration**, **explanation** and **application**.
  - a) Biblical preaching includes reading a portion of the Bible.
  - b) Biblical preaching is not boring lectures or appealing pep talks promoting self-esteem; it is clear Bible exposition that explains what God said.
  - c) Biblical preaching makes personal application of the text. Many preachers fear to apply God’s word lest they offend the hearers.

✧ *Charles Spurgeon said, “It is infamous to ascend your pulpit and pour over your people rivers of language, cataracts of words, in which mere platitudes are held*

*in solution like infinitesimal grains of homeopathic medicine in an Atlantic of utterance. Better far give the people masses of unprepared truth in the rough, like pieces of meat from a butcher’s block, chopped off anyhow, bone and all, and even dropped down in the sawdust, than ostentatiously and delicately hand them out upon a china dish a delicious slice of nothing at all, decorated with the parsley of poetry, and flavored with the sauce of affectation.”* – Spurgeon, *Lectures to my Students*, p. 74

*First, the people listened to the Word of God attentively. Second, they understood the Word of God clearly. Third,*

**3. They Applied the Word of God Personally (8:9-18)**

**a. The people mourned and cried when they heard the Bible read and explained.**

- 1) God’s word convicted them of their sin (v.9).
- 2) This caused the people to mourn and weep.
  - a) Instead of ignoring God’s conviction, they repented with tears of shame.

✧ *A 17<sup>th</sup> Century preacher remarked that he found two things difficult in his preaching; firstly, ‘to make the wicked sad’; and secondly, ‘to make the godly joyful’”*

*Thomas Watson quoted by Evers in Doing a great work, p. 161.*

- b) When the preaching of God’s word identifies a sin in your life, it ought to bring deep conviction and even cause you to mourn and weep in your heart.
- c) If you ignore God’s conviction, it will develop spiritual calluses in your heart. That is very dangerous.

**b. Once right with God, the people greatly rejoiced.**

- 1) Nehemiah urged the people to accept God’s forgiveness and rejoice (v.9-10).
  - a) When David repented he prayed, (Psalms 51:7) "*Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean: wash me, and I shall be whiter than snow.*"(8) "*Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice.*" (10) "*Create in me a clean heart, O God; and renew a right spirit within me.*"