

rebellion. (Psalms 147:7) "*Sing unto the LORD with thanksgiving; sing praise upon the harp unto our God.*"

- 3) They worshipped the Lord (v.43)
 - a) Along with the rejoicing, singing, and thanksgiving was the offering of sacrifices in the Temple. These were probably for thanksgiving not forgiveness. They were to honour God through giving.
 - b) We can do this through giving of our substance to the Lord. Tithes and financial offerings given to the Lord honour him and are a means of worship. (Proverbs 3:9-10) "*Honour the LORD with thy substance, and with the firstfruits of all thine increase: So shall thy barns be filled with plenty, and thy presses shall burst out with new wine.*"
- 4) They rejoiced in the Lord (v.43). Because their hearts were right, God gave them joy.
 - a) When Christians allow the Holy Spirit to fill them, they have great joy. (Acts 13:52) "*And the disciples were filled with joy, and with the Holy Ghost.*" (1 Thessalonians 5:16) "*Rejoice evermore.*"
 - b) Everyone had joy, the men, wives, and children. The neighbours all knew about it too as their joy was heard afar off. Joy cannot be hidden.

Conclusion: From this passage we have learned the importance of purifying our hearts before we try to worship and praise the Lord. The singers were godly and pure. We learned that God-glorifying music uplifts the Lord not the flesh. The music focused on thanking and praising God. Remember, CCM music is not godly music. If you enjoy CCM music, you should stop listening to it and ask God to give you a taste for godly music. We learned that thanksgiving, singing to the Lord and worship will lead to rejoicing.

If God has touched an area of your life that is not right this evening, I urge you to get it right before you leave. Come kneel and pray.

Song: Lord, I'm Coming Home - 253

Dedication of the Wall

7 January 2018 PM – Nehemiah 12:27-47 – EzNe17 – Scott Childs

Introduction: When I was in high school I played trombone in a marching band. Marching in parades was thrilling. The march music of our 100-piece band rang through the streets of our small country town. Children with wide eyes watched with excitement as we marched by followed by decorated floats.

As exciting as a parade can be, I don't think any parade I have ever seen or been in could compare to the parade on the top of Jerusalem's walls led by Nehemiah and Ezra. The purpose of the parade was in honour of the dedication of the newly rebuilt city wall. All the praise during the parade was directed to God himself. What a parade that must have been.

Transition: This evening as we look at the events of this ceremony, I want us to note three aspects of it that dedication service from which we can learn valuable lessons.

1. The Preparation for the Dedication (v.27-30)

a. Gathering of Levites for the dedication

- 1) Levites were gathered (v.27)
- 2) Among the Levites were the singers (v.28-29). We learned this back in Ezra 2.

b. Purification before the dedication

- 1) Before anyone could participate in the dedication ceremony, they had to purify themselves (v.30).
 - a) For the Jews, this was in part a ceremonial cleansing – sprinkling blood of sacrificed animals.
 - b) It was also a cleansing of the heart before God.
- 2) As Christians today, we are to purify our hearts by confessing and forsaking all known sin. A Christian who does not have a pure heart cannot honour the Lord or truly worship Him. (Psalms 66:18) "*If I regard iniquity in my heart, the Lord will not hear me:*" (James 4:8-9) "*Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanse your hands, ye sinners; and purify your hearts, ye double minded. Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and your joy to*

heaviness."

2. The Procedure of the Dedication (v.27)

a. The procedure was to glorify God through . . .

- 1) Gladness – joy and rejoicing from the heart
- 2) Thanksgiving – appreciation for God's blessings
- 3) God-honouring music: Vocal singing and instrumental music – cymbals, stringed instruments (lit. flowing music), harps, and trumpets (v.41).

b. God glorifying music uplifts the Lord and does not rouse the flesh

- 1) This was true of the dedication music.
 - a) The singers were godly and pure (v.45).
 - b) Their music was accompanied by gladness, thanksgiving to the Lord (v.27), sacrifices to God and rejoicing in what God had done for them (v.43)
 - c) Their music was led by an overseer and sung loud (lit. loud enough that it could be heard) (v.42). The words were important.
 - d) They gave thanks with trumpets (v.41)
 - e) Their music was songs of praise and thanksgiving to the Lord (v.47)
- 2) This must be true of our music as well
 - a) When we sing we ought to be spiritually clean and pure.
 - b) Glorifying the Lord ought to be the object of every song.
 - c) Our music must be distinctly God-honouring not fleshly. It must not be patterned after secular rock music. Contemporary Christian Music (CCM) or charismatic music is not God-honouring music. Its rock beat rouses the flesh to dance. The words are usually shallow and often doctrinally wrong. The singers are often dressed immodestly. The lighting is often patterned after rock concerts. It often glorifies the singer who is praised and applauded.
 - d) The music we make and listen to reflects the content of our hearts. Music that is patterned after the

rebellious syncopated music of the world cannot glorify our holy God.

- 3) Ephesians 5:18-21 describes one who has allowed the Holy Spirit to fill them. The Spirit-filled life has four evidences:
 - a) Humming (psalms, hymns, spiritual songs)
 - b) Singing & making melody in the heart to God
 - c) Giving thanks to God for all things
 - d) Submitting one's self in the fear of God
- 4) When a Christian sings, plays, or listens to music that glorifies the flesh instead of God – he is NOT allowing the Holy Spirit to fill him. No Christian can be right with God who sings or enjoys listening to CCM or Rock music. Begin listening to good music like www.abidingradio.com

3. The Parade of the Dedication (v.31-43)

a. Two groups marched on the city wall

- 1) The parade split and went in two directions on the wall.
 - a) It must have been quite a sight to see hundreds of people marching on the wall singing and praising God.
 - b) They gave thanks (v.40). This word translated "*thanks*" includes words of praise to God, thanksgiving in song and hymn, and confession of sin.
 - c) Psalm 100 speaks of this kind of thanksgiving. "*Make a joyful noise unto the LORD, all ye lands. Serve the LORD with gladness: come before his presence with singing. Know ye that the LORD he is God: it is he that hath made us, and not we ourselves; we are his people, and the sheep of his pasture. Enter into his gates with thanksgiving, and into his courts with praise: be thankful unto him, and bless his name. For the LORD is good; his mercy is everlasting; and his truth endureth to all generations.*"
- 2) They sang and played music that thanked the Lord
 - a) They spoke thanks (v.40).
 - b) Priests played thanksgiving songs on trumpets (v.41)
 - c) Singers sang thanksgiving songs directed by Jezrahiah (42). A heart that is overflowing with thanks to God will want to sing songs of thanksgiving not of