

NEHEMIAH - CHAPTER 8

NOTES FROM LARGE GROUP DISCUSSION

DATE _____

V1. GATHERING AS ONE MAN

- UNITY IN A CHURCH (TO GATHER AS ONE MAN) REQUIRES PEOPLE TO GATHER NOT WITH AN ATTITUDE OF WHAT THEY CAN RECEIVE, BUT RATHER WHAT CAN I POSSIBLY CONTRIBUTE
 - WE DON'T HAVE TO ALL AGREE ABOUT EVERYTHING, BUT IN THE CENTER OF IT ALL WE MUST AGREE ON OUR FOUNDATION TO HAVE SHARED CONVICTIONS TO GATHER AS ONE
 - GOD DOES SOMETHING WITH PEOPLE WHO COME WITH A SPIRIT TO CONTRIBUTE TO WORSHIP, GIVING, LEARNING, AND SERVING-EVEN IN A GROUP OF TREMENDOUSLY DIVERSE PEOPLE. PEOPLE ARE ALWAYS DIVERSE. GOD'S PEOPLE ARE UNITED.
- YOU CAN'T WALK WITH CHRIST AND NOT WALK WITH HIS PEOPLE AS ONE. FOLLOWING CHRIST REQUIRES CROWDS, THE GATHERING OF PEOPLE CENTERED ON TRUTH AND KINGDOM FOCUS
- IT IS POSSIBLE FOR US TO GATHER AS A COUPLE HUNDRED INDIVIDUALS- IT IS ALSO POSSIBLE TO GATHER AS ONE MAN MADE OF HUNDREDS OF PEOPLE READY TO CONTRIBUTE AND ENGAGE
- YOU CANNOT HAVE LIFE FROM A PULPIT WITH DEAD RECEIVING UNENGAGED PEOPLE IN THE PEWS-THEY MUST COME TO CONTRIBUTE.

When you gather with your body of believers at church do you do it expectantly, with unity, and gladness?

V2-8. THE WORD RETURNS

- THE PEOPLE REQUEST THE BOOK-EZRA TEACHES EXPOSITIONALLY
 - READ THE BIBLE, EXPLAIN THE BIBLE, APPLY THE BIBLE.
 - HE TRUSTED IN THE SUFFICIENCY OF GOD'S WORD

Where do you look to find encouragement, direction, or wisdom outside the Word of God?

- THE TORAH IS READ FROM MORNING UNTIL NOON
 - WOODEN PLATFORM MADE AHEAD OF TIME (MORE PLANNING)
 - FACING THE SQUARE-HALF THE DAY
 - MEN, WOMEN, AND THOSE ABLE TO UNDERSTAND
 - WONDERFUL ENCOURAGEMENT FOR MINISTRIES SUCH A NURSERY, AND SO ON
 - 6 READING MEN ON EZRA'S RIGHT SIDE
 - 7 READING MEN ON HIS LEFT SIDE
 - GOD CAN USE ANY VOICE HE CHOOSES, AT ANY TIME-SO LONG AS THAT PERSON IS YIELDED TO SAY WHAT HE SAYS. ANYONE CAN READ-ANYONE.
 - 13 TRANSLATORS/COMMUNICATORS TRANSLATION MATTERS! (HEBREW>ARAMAIC)
 - ALL THE PEOPLE LISTENED ATTENTIVELY-THERE WERE NO SLEEPERS
 - EXPECT THE BIBLE TO BE CENTRAL AND ESSENTIAL IN WHAT HAPPENS AT CHURCH-BRING IT, OPEN IT, READ IT

How much do you want to hear God speak?

How much do you believe/trust/engage in the complete SUFFICIENCY of the Word?

Jesus is both the gate and the gatekeeper..... His joy (our coming home) is our strength!

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- WE DON'T REALLY BELIEVE THAT THE BIBLE IS LIFE. OUR PRIORITIES SHOW WE ARE DISTRACTED FROM WHAT WE KNOW, AND OUR HEARTS DESIRE THINGS OF THIS WORLD. LORD, HELP OUR UNBELIEF!

V6. POWERFUL POSTURE

- THE POSTURE OF THE PEOPLE MATCHED THEIR HEARTS
- THE POSTURE OF A CONGREGATION IS SIGNIFICANT
- OUR ARMS CAN BE EXTENDED, OR OUR KNEES CAN HIT THE FLOOR, OUR FACES CAN BE BURIED IN OUR HANDS IN PRAYER.... BUT OUR HEARTS CAN BE HARD.
- CONVERSELY, OUR HEARTS CAN BE SOFT AND YET OUR BODIES STILL.
- BUT GOD WANTS OUR RESPONSE, NOT OUR PRETENSE. HE WANTS US TO ENGAGE SINCERELY.
- VARIETY OF WORSHIP-HANDS UP, HEADS DOWN- BOTH MEANINGFUL & INTENTIONAL WORSHIP
- THERE WAS INTENSITY IN THEIR PRAISE-THEIR JOY WAS GREAT

Does your posture match your heart when you worship?

Pray for the Spirit of God to loosen our tongues—we do not sing or shout Amen until He does!

V9-12. THE JOY OF THE LORD

- VRS 9- ALL THE PEOPLE WEPT
 - NO HARDNESS OR LACK OF RESPONSE
 - THEY CAME TO ENGAGE
 - THEY KNEW THEIR NEED-THEY HEARD WHISPERS OF THE ONE TO COME
 - THEIR SIN AND THE SAVIOR TO COME BOTH ILLUMINATED BEFORE THEM
 - THEY KNEW THEY FELL SHORT OF ALL THEY WERE INTENDED ONCE TO BE-AND WEPT

Has another fixed your eyes upward at a time of holy celebration when you wanted to weep?

- VRS 10-12- THEY WERE REDIRECTED
 - WEEPING COMES IN THE EVENING, BUT JOY COMES IN THE MORNING.
 - THEY SAID HAVE JOY NOW-"MORNING" CAME QUICKLY
 - WHY? THE WORD BEING REOPENED MATTERS THAT MUCH
 - EVEN REMORSE AND REPENTANCE COULD WAIT FOR A BIT
 - THE READING OF THE WORD TOOK PRIORITY AND WAS TO BE CELEBRATORY
 - THE JOY OF THE LORD IS MY STRENGTH. COMES FROM EXILED PEOPLE!
 - WHAT IS THE JOY OF THE LORD? THE LORD'S JOY IS BRINGING HIS PEOPLE HOME TO DWELL SECURELY.

V13-18 THEY BUILT BOOTHS TO REMEMBER WILDERNESS LIVING

- VRS 13-JUST THE GUYS GATHER TO STUDY
 - IT'S THE SEVENTH MONTH-LET'S DO WHAT MOSES SAID TO DO!
 - THEY APPLY IT IMMEDIATELY
 - SO THEY PROCLAIMED, POSTED, GATHERED ITEMS, BUILT BOOTHS ON THEIR ROOFS
 - THEY READ THE WORD EVERY DAY FOR A WEEK

We also are being brought out of our sin and wilderness living into the security of stable living in the city!

Jesus is both the gate and the gatekeeper..... His joy (our coming home) is our strength!