

Restoring Lost Joy

“...since today is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve,
because the joy of the LORD is your stronghold.” Nehemiah 8:10b

Text: Nehemiah 8

South Orlando Baptist Church

Topics: Preaching, Conviction

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Supplemental Texts: See below

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If you are going to restore lost joy, you must...

1. Receive the Word (vs. 1-8)

- A. There is much emphasis in this passage that Israel was to understand the law. (vs. 2, 3, 7, 8, 12)**
- B. The Word was read and explained for the sake of application.**
- C. Preaching is the contemporary method where we hear the Word of God read and explained for application. (1 Timothy 4:13)**

2. Rejoice in the Lord (vs. 9-12)

- A. Though Israel wept as they heard the law, Nehemiah told them to go and celebrate saying, “the joy of the Lord is your stronghold.” (See also Psalm 30:5)**
- B. “The words they had heard did remind them that God punishes sin, but also that God blesses obedience.” (MacArthur Study Bible)**
- C. Because they understood the Word of God, they departed to go and party (vs. 12).**

3. Remember your Salvation (vs.13-18)

- A. To remember what God had done for them - they were instructed to celebrate the feast of tabernacles. This had not been celebrated since the days of Joshua.**
- B. This feast was done in remembrance of God’s deliverance of Israel through the 40-year journey in the wilderness before they entered the promised land.**
- C. Reflection on the deliverance of God should always result in joy.**

Recap of Nehemiah

Nehemiah, contemporary of Ezra and cupbearer to the king in the Persian palace, leads the third and last return to Jerusalem after the Babylonian exile. His concern for the welfare of Jerusalem and its inhabitants prompts him to take bold action. Granted permission to return to his homeland, Nehemiah challenges his countrymen to arise and rebuild the shattered walls of Jerusalem. In spite of opposition from without and abuse from within, the task is completed in only fifty-two days—a feat which even the enemies of Israel must attribute to God’s enabling. By contrast, the task of reviving and reforming the people of God within those rebuilt walls demands years of Nehemiah’s godly life and leadership.¹

Questions for Application

- 1. What did the people want Ezra to read? (8:1)**
- 2. Who was included in the assembly at the Water Gate? (8:2)**
- 3. What attitude did the people of Israel have toward the Book of the Law? (8:3, 6, 9, 17)**
- 4. What did the people do when Ezra opened the Book of the Law? (8:5)**
- 5. What specific steps did Ezra and the other leaders take to make this event practical for everyone? (8:5-8)**
- 6. How did Ezra and the people of Israel respond to the reading of the Law? (8:6)**
- 7. Why were the people of Israel weeping? (8:9)**
- 8. How would you describe Israel’s view of God’s written Word?**
- 9. In what specific ways are Israel’s actions in this passage a good model for us today?**
- 10. As Christians what reasons do we have to celebrate?**
- 11. Why is it important for believers to meet corporately?**
- 12. Generally speaking, how should we respond to God’s Word?**
- 13. In what ways do you think you should change your attitude toward reading the Bible?**
- 14. What steps can we take to be sensitive to the message of God’s Word?**
- 15. How can we guard against apathy toward God’s Word?**

¹Bruce Wilkinson and Kenneth Boa, *Talk Thru the Bible* (Nashville: T. Nelson, 1983), 123.