

“Obedience Is Worship!”
Nehemiah 8:13-18

Introduction:

1. As We Have Seen, Nehemiah 8 Is A Great Tutorial On Worship!
 - When The Wall Of Jerusalem Was Finally Rebuilt – They Responded To The Lord In Worship!
 - We Can / Should Respond Too!
 - For What He Has Done & Will Do – Through Worship!
2. Concerning Worship:
 - 8:1-8 - The Word Is To Be The Center Of Our Worship! It Was Then! It Should Be Now!
 - 8:9-12 - The Lord Is To Be The Focus Of Our Worship! It Was Then! It Should Be Now!
 - Through Their Example, We Learned That: “The Best Form Of Worship Is Obedience!”
 - As Samuel Said To King Saul - 1 Samuel 15:22 - “Behold, to obey is better than sacrifice!”
 - Our Passage Tonight Expands On This Truth!
 - 8:13-18 - Obedience Is The Expression Of Our Worship! It Was Then! It Should Be Now!
3. When You Obey The Lord, You Are Worshiping The Lord!
 - Nehemiah Understood This! We Must Understand This!
 - But Not Just Any Kind Of Obedience Will Do!
 - **IE:** Remember What My Teachers In Elementary School Always Said: “Delayed Obedience Is Disobedience!” – They Wanted Us To Obey – But Not Just Any Obedience Would Satisfy Them! It Had To Be Immediate Obedience!
 - Obedience Is Worship!
 - When There Is:

1. *A Design To Obey!*

- 8:13 - “And on the second day were gathered together the chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests, and the Levites, unto Ezra the scribe, even to understand the words of the law!”
 - We Were Never Meant To Obey Alone – In Our Own Strength! The Lord Has Given Each One Of Us A Responsibility To Encourage One Other To Obey The Lord – Through The Strength Of The Lord!
 - Only Through Christ Can We Obey!
 - John 15:5 - “Without Me Ye Can Do Nothing!”
 - Philippians 4:13 - “I can do all things through Christ which strengtheneth me!”
 - Everything Up Until This Point Happened In Just 1 Day!
 - Now, It Is The 2nd Day Of The 7th Month, And Another, Smaller Group Is Gathered Together – To Encourage Everyone To Worship The Lord Through Obedience To The Lord!
- Through Likeness!
 - This Diverse Group “Gathered Together” As One!
 - As One People – For One Purpose!
 - They Became A Team!
 - To Bring Everyone Else Along With Them In Obedience To The Lord! What Christ Does!
 - Philippians 2:2 - “Fulfil ye my joy, that ye be likeminded, having the same love, being of one accord, of one mind!”
- Through Leadership! What Christ Is – Our Leader! Others:
 - 4 Groups Mentioned - Each With An Important Role! But Still Part Of This Team!
 - First Listed - The “Chief Of The Fathers”?
 - These Men Were The Leaders Of Their Families!
 - They Were Responsible For Their Families - Spiritually!
 - They Were Listed First! The Primary Leaders!
 - This Is Where Worship Begins – In The Home!
 - As Important As Public Worship Is!
 - Why Ezra / Levites / Priests Mentioned!

- Private Worship - Family Worship Is First!
- Through Learning! About Christ!
 - Why Did They Come Together? “Even To Understand The Words Of The Law!”
 - They Wanted To KNOW God’s Word So That They Could SHARE God’s Word!
 - There Were Probably Some Barriers: Language / Cultural / Interpretation / Application!
- You Have This Same Responsibility!
 - You Are Part Of A Team!
 - Each Of Us Has A Role & Responsibility To Direct Our Families & Church To Worship The Lord Through Obedience To The Lord!
 - Men Have A Primary Responsibility In This!

* Obedience Is Worship – When There Is:

2. A Determination To Obey!

- 8:14-15 - “And they found written in the law which the LORD had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month: / And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, and in Jerusalem, saying, Go forth unto the mount, and fetch olive branches, and pine branches, and myrtle branches, and palm branches, and branches of thick trees, to make booths, as it is written!”
 - I Like How It Is Put In 8:14 - “They Found!”
 - It Wasn’t Something New!
 - **IE:** Like Some “Bible Code” - There All Along!
 - It Was Something Neglected!
 - But When This Was “Discovered” They Were Determined To Do Something About It! Obey!
 - They “Found” The Rules About Another Feast – The Feast Of The Tabernacles – Which Was Coming Up Fast! 15th Day!
 - And They Were Determined To Obey God’s Word No Matter What!
 - Exodus 19:8 - “All That The Lord Hath Spoken We Will Do!”
 - They “Found” Some Very Specific Instruction!
- Specific People!
 - “The Children Of Israel!”
- Specific Place!
 - “Dwell In Booths!”
- Specific Period!
 - “Feast Of The Seventh Month!” (September - October)
- Specific Purpose!
 - Leviticus 23:43 - “That your generations may know that I made the children of Israel to dwell in booths, when I brought them out of the land of Egypt: I am the LORD your God!”
- Specific Procedure! (8:15)
 - There Was No Time To Waste!
 - So They Got The Word Out Quickly & Urgently – Get Some Branches – Make Your Booths!
 - They Had To Take Action In Order To Obey The Lord!
 - Make It A Priority! Stop Everything Else! Make It A Family Event! **IE:** What Kid Doesn’t Like To Pick Up Sticks!
- How Determined Are You To Obey The Lord?
 - Whatever He Says In His Word?
 - Sometimes We May “Find” / “Discover” Something In His Word – Not Something New – But Something Neglected!
 - What Are You Going To Do?
 - Obedience Is Worship!

* There Must Also Be:

3. A Desire To Obey!

- 8:16 - “So the people went forth, and brought them, and made themselves booths, every one upon the roof of his house, and in their courts, and in the courts of the house of God, and in the street of the water gate,

- and in the street of the gate of Ephraim!”
- What Did The People Do? They Obeyed! And They Did It From Their Heart! Seen In:
 - A Personal Response! (From 8:15)
 - They Didn't Take These Specific Instructions Lightly!
 - “Go” – They “Went!”
 - “Fetch” – They “Brought!”
 - “Make Booths” – They “Made Themselves Booths!”
 - Same Words – Just Different Forms!
 - They Worshiped The Lord Through Their Obedience!
 - A Personal Responsibility!
 - “Every One!”
 - Didn't Matter Where They Lived / Or How Inconvenient It Might Have Been!
 - They Worshiped The Lord Through Their Obedience!
 - A Personal Readiness!
 - Some, Who Did Not Live In Jerusalem, Had To Set Up Their “Booths” Somewhere Else – Where?
 - Somewhere Close To Where They Could Worship The Lord Or Hear His Word!
 - “House Of God” / “Water Gate” / “Ephraim Gate”
 - **IE:** “Finding A Church Before Finding A Home!”
 - They Had A Deep Desire To Obey!
 - Do We? Do You?
 - Make Obedience Personal!
 - Because Obedience Is Worship!
 - But Not Just Any Obedience Will Do!

* There Must Also Be:

4. *A Delight To Obey!*

- 8:17-18 - “And all the congregation of them that were come again out of the captivity made booths, and sat under the booths: for since the days of Jeshua the son of Nun unto that day had not the children of Israel done so. And there was very great gladness. / Also day by day, from the first day unto the last day, he read in the book of the law of God. And they kept the feast seven days; and on the eighth day was a solemn assembly, according unto the manner!”
 - Obedience Was Not A Burden To Them – It Was A Delight!
- Through Effort!
 - They Made & Used Their Booths!
 - And It Took Some Planning / Time / Effort To Get Them Prepared For The Beginning Of The Festival!
 - Because Once They Were Made, They Would Live In Their Booths!
 - “Sat” - Dwell / Remain / Abide!
 - **IE:** Even Today - Booths Will Like The Streets - With Beds / A Cooking Stove / And Telephone
 - Power Cords!
- Through Enthusiasm!
 - “Very Great Gladness!”
 - It Wasn't The ACTIVITIES Of The Feast They Neglected!
 - Ezra 3:4 - The Did Keep The Feast!
 - It Was The ATTITUDE Of The Feast They Had Neglected!
 - Their Worship Was Fresh & Alive!
 - Not Because Their Actions Were Different!
 - But Because Their Attitudes Were Different!
 - Actually, They Were The Same As When Joshua Kept The Feast! Because They Had Actually Experienced It In The Wilderness! (Age 20)
- Through Example! (8:18)
 - They Continued This Spirit Every Day Of The Feast!
 - They Wanted To Be Faithful! “Day By Day!”
 - They Wanted To Be Fed! Every Day! By The Word!

- They Wanted To Fellowship! With Their Family / Friends / With The Lord!
- They Enjoyed Worshiping The Lord Through Obedience!
 - So Should We!
 - In The Area Of Giving - 2 Corinthians 9:6-7 - "But this I say, He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly; and he which soweth bountifully shall reap also bountifully. / Every man according as he purposeth in his heart, so let him give; not grudgingly, or of necessity: for God loveth a cheerful giver!"
 - If You Give – "Grudgingly" – Out Of Distress – "Necessity" – Out Of Duty – It's Not Worship!
 - This Can Apply To All Areas Of Obedience!
- When We Obey Out Of Delight – Obedience Is Worship!

Conclusion:

1. Do You Obey The Lord?
 - Is This How You Obey?
 - With Delight!
 - With Desire!
 - With Determination!
 - Because Of What The Lord Has Done For You & In You?
2. Through The Lord Jesus Christ:
 - Obedience Is No More A Weight / Burden!
 - Obedience Is Worship!

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