

'Building Blocks of Faith Series'

Sermons in the Book of Nehemiah

Message 13 - 'A Bible-based Awakening (2) **Nehemiah 8: 9-18**



Since we embarked on the verse at the beginning of chapter 8, we have been witnessing a truly wonderful spiritual awakening amongst the people of Jerusalem in the time of Nehemiah. There has been in the verses evidence of a great hunger for God's Word amongst the people, spiritual conviction and repentance. However, there has also been rejoicing in all that God has done on behalf of His people. Considering the verses at the end of chapter 8 we can see:

1. Conviction - The reading and explaining of the Word of God had caused the people to understand and to see their position before God. The Spirit had worked in their hearts and He was working within them, their sin caused them to weep. Therefore as the Word was preached, the Spirit applied it to their hearts, and it had a very great effect on them. The law cannot save, it can only convict and show a need of salvation, it can only chase us to Calvary. Apart from the grace of God, that is where every person on this earth stands without exception. 'for all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God' (Rom. 3:23). Friend, have you ever realised your sin? Have you ever realised that you have offended a holy God? They were convicted. That should convict us, it should rock us to our very core, it should cause us to weep. For the wages of sin is death! We must not treat it lightly, for it is a very grave condition. These people were convicted, but for them, there was hope, and there is hope for you to.

2. Cleansing - They had heard the Word of God, and it had convicted them, the Word is as a mighty sword, but for those within the assembly that had been reminded that God punishes sin, but also that He rewards obedience. Surely that was a reason to celebrate. Their sin needed to be dealt with, but they were also given hope of blessing. There were other reasons to rejoice, as through this process of cleansing by the Word, this exposure to their sin, they realised their utter need to depend on their God. They would be able to rest in His mercy, as a nation they had not been utterly destroyed, the great God had preserved them, despite their sin, and by God's grace, and this movement of His Spirit, they were standing on the brink of a new dawn. A time to repent, be cleansed and move forward with their God. Surely that called for a time of rejoicing, in the fact that God is a God of justice, of judgement, but He is also a God of mercy.

3. Celebration - Nehemiah and Ezra as we have seen had to encourage the people to rejoice. The people were in a position to rejoice, and when we have been forgiven we should rejoice. We carry burdens as the Lord's people, but if we live under His grace, we also should experience that transforming power that enables us to rejoice in all that He has done. When we rejoice in the Lord, our service will be more of a delight than a duty. From time to time throughout history, the history of the church, the Lord has sent occasions of great blessing. God's Spirit has burdened people to pray, to search the Scriptures, and confess their sins; from these areas of commitment, and by the mighty outpouring of His Holy Spirit, He has seen fit in His sovereign purposes to breathe fresh life into His people. This is what we have been witnessing here in Nehemiah's day, and friend, I tell you this, the God of Nehemiah, is the God whom we worship today, His hand is still mighty, He can still move in these marvellous ways! How we should pray, 'Lord rend the heavens!'



Penzance Baptist Church

'Upholding the Ordinary Means of Grace'

Pastor Jonathan Stobbs