

Bring the Book!
Nehemiah 8:1-12
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INTRODUCTION

1. Martin Luther, the German Reformer of the 16th century, was once asked to explain the Reformation.
2. How could he account for the history-altering effect of this religious movement?
3. How could he explain the Roman Empire being brought to its knees?
4. The answer Luther gave is revealing.
5. He said, “I simply taught, preached, and wrote God’s Word; otherwise I did nothing...the Word did everything.”
6. That is what we can say of Changed By Grace Community Church.
7. Our focus and priority has always been to simply “teach, preach, and write God’s Word.”
8. And because of that commitment God has blessed us tremendously.
9. Having spent the last 7 days in Los Angeles, California at the 2006 Shepherds’ Conference affirmed to me everything we’re doing.
10. This conference certainly poked and prodded things in our

personal lives.

11. But most of all, it affirmed to us that we're on the right track.
12. I have been to conferences before where I did not leave feeling that way.
13. In fact I left disappointed, not in the conference, but in the church I was ministering in.
14. For the first time in my life, I can say I am not disappointed.
15. Because you hunger for the Word of God.
16. One of the messages that was preached during the general session was by Pastor Steven Lawson of Christ Fellowship Baptist Church in Mobile, AL.
17. He brought a message that reminded us of the importance of what we do.
18. The text he used is found in Nehemiah chapter 8.
19. There were several points made that I would like to share with you.
20. Read Nehemiah 8:1-12.
21. D. Martyn Lloyd-Jones, the famed expositor of Westminster Chapel in London, once remarked:

"The most urgent need in the Christian Church today is true preaching; and as it is the greatest and most urgent need in the Church, it is the greatest need of the world also."
22. He's right!

23. A return to preaching—true preaching, biblical preaching, expository preaching—is the greatest need in this critical hour.
24. If reformation is to come to the church, it must be preceded by a reformation of the pulpit.
25. Again, this point was brought home to us this past week at the Shepherds' Conference.
26. Notice this point being made in Nehemiah chapter 8.

I. The Call for Biblical Preaching (vv.1-2)

A. They Called to Bring the Book

1. This came from the people (v.1)

“Now all the people gathered together” (approx. 42,000 people)

2. They gathered intent on one purpose (v.1)

“To bring the Word of God.”

B. This is to Be the Desire of All of God’s People

Sadly, many don’t even bring the Book when they come to study it. What a contradiction!

II. The Character of Biblical Preaching (vv.3-12)

Nehemiah gives 5 characteristics of expository preaching.

A. A Biblical Reading of Scripture (v.3)

1. He “read” from it (the Book)

“Read” - “To call aloud, to roar, to proclaim”

Paul told Timothy in 1 Timothy 4:13, “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

2. Public reading of Scripture is to be a priority of the pulpit

a) According to Acts 13:27 and 15:21 every Sabbath the Law of Moses was read

- b) In Acts 13:15-16 it says, “And after the reading of the Law and the Prophets, the rulers of the synagogue sent to them, saying, "Men and brethren, if you have any word of exhortation for the people, say on." 16 Then Paul stood up, and motioning with his hand said, "Men of Israel, and you who fear God, listen.”
- c) Jesus followed the same pattern in Luke 4:16-20
- d) Deut.17:19 gives the instruction to the daily reading of Scripture:

“And it shall be with him, and he shall read it all the days of his life, that he may learn to fear the Lord his God and be careful to observe all the words of this law and these statutes.”
- e) Jos.1:8 says, “This Book of the Law shall not depart from your mouth, but you shall meditate in it day and night, that you may observe to do according to all that is written in it. For then you will make your way prosperous, and then you will have good success.”

B. A Lengthy Treatment (v.3)

- 1. He “read” from “morning until midday” - 6 hours

This is what Paul did in Acts 20:7-11

- 2. He gave a full treatment of the Word of God
 - a) Acts 20:27 says, “For I have not shunned to declare to you the whole counsel of God.”

- b) Acts 28:23 - “So when they had appointed him a day, many came to him at his lodging, to whom he explained and solemnly testified of the kingdom of God, persuading them concerning Jesus from both the Law of Moses and the Prophets, from morning till evening.”
- c) 2 Tim.4:2 - “Preach the Word.”

C. An Authoritative Posture (vv.4-5)

- 1. He “stood on a platform of wood which they had made for that purpose”
- 2. This was so that he could be seen and heard
- 3. He stood before the people with an open Bible

Martin Luther said, “The pulpit is the throne of the Word of God.”

“When the preacher is serious about the Word of God it’s contagious!” (Steven Lawson)

- 4. He did what Paul told Titus in Titus 2:15:

“Speak these things, exhort, and rebuke with all authority. Let no one despise you.”

D. A God-Exalting Thrust (v.6)

“We are called to be exaltational expositors” (John Piper)

- 1. God is exalted when His Word is preached
- 2. What occurs in verse 6 should be the true effect of

expository preaching

E. Explain the Text (vv.7-12)

1. Again 1 Timothy 4:13 says, “Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine.”

“Reading” refers to the public reading of Scripture

“Exhortation” refers to the application of what is taught

“Doctrine” refers to teaching with emphasis on interpretation—understanding

2. True biblical preaching appeals to the mind first

“Ezra was a Word man—a walking Bible. He gave the right interpretation and a proper instruction of the Word of God” (Steven Lawson).

3. The apex of expository preaching is verse 12:

“And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.”

CONCLUSION

1. Dr. Broadus, who taught at Southern Seminary, was recorded by a student of him saying:

“Young gentlemen, if this were the last time I should ever be permitted to address you, I would feel amply repaid for consuming the whole hour in endeavoring to impress upon

you these two things, true piety and, like Apollos, to be men 'Mighty in the Scriptures.' Then pausing, he stood for a moment with his piercing eye fixed upon us, and repeated over and over again in that slow but wonderfully impressive style peculiar to himself, 'Mighty in the Scriptures,' 'Mighty in the Scriptures,' until the whole class seemed to be lifted through him into a sacred nearness to the Master. That picture of him as he stood there at that moment can never be obliterated from my mind."

2. You and I are called to be "Mighty in the Scriptures."
3. We have set a course, let's never deviate from it.
4. Let's pray.