

August 28th, 2022AM – Pastor Kevin Olivier
Nehemiah 7:70 – 8:8 - “Models for Worship”

- A. What do you do when God grants you special mercies?
- B. God’s good hand of favor was upon Nehemiah.
- D. The people of Judah had a great deal to be thankful for.
 - 1. The broken-down portions of the walls were repaired in 52 days.
 - 2. **Neh 6:16**: Their enemies “**recognized that this work had been accomplished with the help of our God.**”

Today’s text gives us some models for worship.	I. GENEROUS GIVING TO THE LORD II. THE EXPOSITION OF GOD’S WORD III. OTHER MODELS FOR WORSHIP
--	---

I. GENEROUS GIVING TO THE LORD-

- A. The **immense** wealth mentioned in **7:70-71** was from Nehemiah the governor & the “**heads of fathers’ households.**”
 - 1. Gold drachmas & silver minas were both types of coins.
 - 2. Nehemiah gave 50 gold basins or bowls.
- B. Notice in **v72**, people of every class also gave to Lord as well. → **v72**
 - 1. Chapter 5 tells us that some in Judah were poor because of a famine in the land (**5:3**).
 - a. Such persons may not have given much gold or silver at all.
 - b. The poor could have given linen or their time to carefully tailor priestly garments.
 - 2. The total census of the land was just under 50,000 people; together their contributions made-up a large sum of money & priestly garments.
 - 3. In **Neh 13:12** when the giving of tithes was restored, “**All Judah then brought the tithe of the grain, wine & oil into the storehouses.**” Those are things everyone could have given.
- C. Giving to God is not something that should be considered as drudgery or something to resent. When God gives to you, it should bring you joy to give back to Him in return.

II. THE EXPOSITION OF GOD’S WORD → **Neh 8:1-4**

- A. What exactly was read?
 - 1. **v1** says it was “**the book of the law of Moses which the Lord had given to Israel.**”
 - 2. This verse likely indicates that Ezra read the entire Torah— the 1st 5 books of the Bible .
 - 3. The Hebrew words translated as “**from early morning**” are more literally “**from the light.**”
- B. Notice that babies & young toddlers were likely not present for the reading and teaching.
 - 1. I do believe it is a good practice to teach very young children to sit in worship; however, you are not a lesser Christian if you have to keep babies & toddlers in the nursery.
 - 2. Today’s text models for us that there is a good place for a church to have a nursery.
 - 3. Those who heard the reading “**were attentive to the book of the law.**”
- C. This wasn’t merely a long reading; there was some exposition or explanation along with translation for some present. → **vv7-8**:
 - 1. **v7** says that explanation was involved.
 - a. Our church tries to follow this model of worship found here.
 - b. The Session’s desire is for you all to come to a greater understanding of God’s Word.
 - 2. Some couldn’t understand the reading in Hebrew. → Turn to **Neh 13:23-24** to see why.

III. OTHER MODELS FOR WORSHIP-

A. There was a great love & reverence for the Word of God.

1. It was the people that gathered to ask Ezra the scribe to bring & read the Word (**v1**).
 - a. God wants you to have a similar thirst for Scripture.
 - b. Pray that God would gather such people to this church.
 - c. The power of the Holy Spirit can give new spiritual birth to radically change the skeptic & disinterested person to become one who thirsts to understand Scripture.
 - 1) The first step in this process is for a person to come into a saving relationship with God through the Lord Jesus Christ.
 - 2) Using the words of the Great Commission at the end of **Mat 28**, one must 1st believe that Jesus is both Christ & Lord. The life of the disciple is to be taught to observe all that Christ has commanded.
2. The people's reverence for God's Word was shown by their posture when it was read. → **v5**
 - a. Today's text gives us some background as to why churches so often have elevated wooden pulpits placed **"above all the people."**
 - 1) God's Word is to reign over us because God has exalted His Word:
 - a) **Ps 138:2c "For You have magnified Your word according to all Your name."**
 - b) **Isa 42:21 "The Lord was pleased for His righteousness' sake to make the law great & glorious."**
 - 2) We are to be placed in submission or beneath His Word. We are to submit our hearts & desires to what the Word says. The elevated pulpit represents that.
 - b. When Ezra opened the book, **"all the people stood up" (v5)**. We added a recent practice to our worship wherein those who are able are to stand out of reverence when God's Holy Word is read before the preaching.

B. There was great reverence for God in prayer. In **v6**: **"Then Ezra blessed the Lord the great God."**

1. Ezra led the people in a prayer exalting God.
2. When we read about blessing the Lord, it means we tell of His blessedness & glory.
 - a. **Heb 7:7** says **"without any dispute the lesser is blessed by the greater."**
 - b. To **"give glory to the Lord" (Isa 42:12)** doesn't mean we can give Him any glory. We praise Him for who He is— the all glorious, almighty God.
3. After Ezra's prayer, **v6** continues: **"all the people answered, 'Amen, Amen!' while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low & worshiped the Lord with *their* faces to the ground."**
 - a. Some of us don't feel comfortable with our raising hands in worship, yet here is a case where it is clearly more than just the pastor when giving his benediction.
 - b. **Ps 134:2 "Lift up your hands to the sanctuary & bless the Lord."**
 - c. **1 Tim 2:8 "I want the men in every place to pray, lifting up holy hands, without wrath & dissension."**

Review, further application, & conclusion: