

Nehemiah 8

IT'S NOT ABOUT THE WALL

Current Situation in Jerusalem

- It has been about 2 months since Nehemiah arrived
- Nehemiah is now governor of the region
- There have been a lot of changes*

The Problem for Nehemiah 2 Months Ago

- It wasn't the magnitude of the brokenness that he saw when he arrived from Persia/Iran
- It was whether the Jews living there could actually see the brokenness
 - could they see it for what it was?
 - could they see themselves rebuilding?

Nehemiah believed that
God and this people could
rebuild this wall

- He risked his comfortable lifestyle as a diplomat in the king's court
- He led the people to rebuild the wall in just 52 days!
- God's people were changed as they rebuilt the wall under Nehemiah's leadership

- Nehemiah's greatest accomplishment was NOT that he built the wall in 52 days

- His greatest accomplishment was that he led the local people to build the wall in 52 days

- IT WASN'T ABOUT THE WALL

Nehemiah 8:1-8

About the Water Gate

- The Water Gate is where the flow of water was controlled for Jerusalem
- There was a stream of water, a kind of aqueduct system that went under and around Jerusalem
- The key was the closeness to the temple

About the Water Gate 2

- The priests in charge of the temple would take ritual baths before they would work. The washing with water represented the cleansing of the Law* (*John 7:38)
- The water was also needed to clean the floor of the temple due to all the animal sacrifices

The Reading of the Word

- Ezra, the Priest/Scribe
- Nehemiah and Ezra realized the people were hungry for the Word of God
- So thousands of families are called inside the walls on Jewish New Year's Day

- At sunrise, Ezra begins to shout out the Words of Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy
- The priests are placed strategically through the crowd, relaying and explaining the Word
- HE READS UNTIL NOON!

Jewish New Year

- It was a time of enjoying sweets
- It was supposed to be a FUN celebration
- But as the Word was read and explained, something happened in the hearts of the people

Nehemiah 8:9

The People were crying loudly

- Perhaps it was the comfort of the Word that they had heard about over the years and were now hearing proclaimed again in Jerusalem
- Genesis 28:13-15
- Exodus 19:4-8
- Deuteronomy 1:29, 4:29-31

The People were crying loudly 2

- It was ALSO the conviction they felt as the Word was read and explained to them
- The fact that Jerusalem was in ruins was due to:
 - the disobedience of God and His Word and
 - to compromise

- Leviticus 26:3-6
- Leviticus 26:14-17
- Leviticus 26:40-42

Have you been living in a broken-down Jerusalem?

- Remember the joy that you experienced when you first came to Christ?
- Remember the excitement of sharing Christ with your friends and family?
- Remember when joy felt you were filled with the Holy Spirit as you prayed for others, comforted others...?

Where is our joy now?

- Some here may be fine, and may be living a joy-filled, Christian walk.
- But if the Holy Spirit is speaking to you about the joy YOU ONCE HAD, Listen to Him and let Him restore you today!

- Nehemiah, in Chapter 1 is repenting, weeping before God
- By Chapter 8, the people are repenting and weeping before God
- The physical wall was repaired, and then the hearts of the individuals were being healed as they repented before God

Their Repentance

- It came as they realized the condition of their nation was NOT the fault of their forefathers
- It came as they realized it was not the fault of the Babylonian and Persian invaders
- Who was responsible?
- If you are not as close to God as you once were, who is responsible?

Nehemiah and Ezra Didn't Stop There

- The people genuinely repented
- But their leaders wouldn't leave them in their sadness
- Repentance should lead us to JOY!

"This day is holy to our Lord.
Do not grieve, FOR THE JOY OF
THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH."

-Nehemiah 8:10b