

March 10, 2019

Quality Time
Nehemiah 8
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Using This Study

❶ EXAMINE His Word

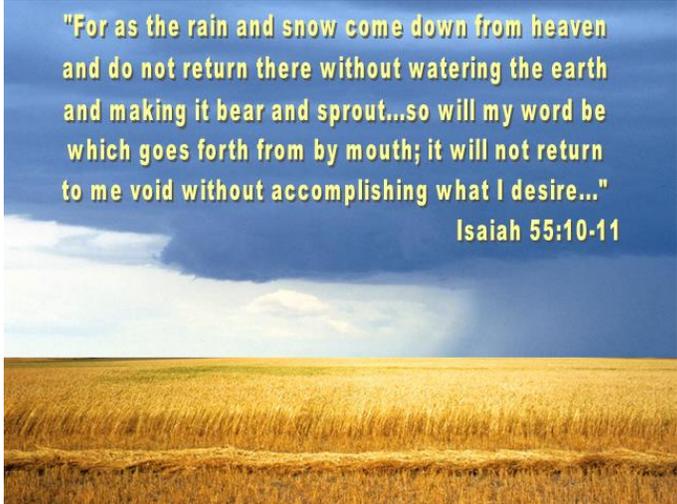
What does God SAY? Open your time with prayer. The words God uses to communicate matters, so go back and pay close attention to the details that are emphasized or repeated in the passage.

❷ EXPLORE His Word

What does God MEAN? Asking questions of the text helps surface how the details relate to the message God wants to communicate.

❸ EMBRACE His Word

Why does it MATTER to me? Embrace God by responding to what you discover in His word in faith and obedience.



"For as the rain and snow come down from heaven and do not return there without watering the earth and making it bear and sprout...so will my word be which goes forth from by mouth; it will not return to me void without accomplishing what I desire..."
Isaiah 55:10-11

Nehemiah chapter 8 focuses on the people's return to the Lord. They gather in a large assembly all together. In the assembly Ezra reads from the Word of God. Upon hearing the Word of God they people come to realize the magnitude of their sin and they begin to weep and mourn their sin. Then they are encouraged not to weep but to celebrate the Lord. They celebrate the reading of the Word and in a feast they set themselves apart for the Lord. It is important for all of us to spend time daily in the Word of God and to have regularly scheduled times in which we are set apart to focus on God. Join us this week as we talk about the importance of reading the Word and giving your time to the Lord.



Nehemiah 8 (NASB)

Ezra Reads the Law

8 And all the people gathered as one man at the square which was in front of the Water Gate, and they asked Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses which the LORD had given to Israel. ² Then Ezra the priest brought the law before the assembly of men, women and all who *could* listen with understanding, on the first day of the seventh month. ³ He read from it before the square which was in front of the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of men and women, those who could understand; and all the people were attentive to the book of the law. ⁴ Ezra the scribe stood at a wooden podium which they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand; and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah *and* Meshullam on his left hand. ⁵ Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ Then Ezra blessed the LORD the great God. And all the people answered, "Amen, Amen!" while lifting up their hands; then they bowed low and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground. ⁷ Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah,

Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, explained the law to the people while the people *remained* in their place. ⁸ They read from the book, from the law of God, translating to give the sense so that they understood the reading.

"This Day Is Holy"

⁹ Then Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people were weeping when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." ¹¹ So the Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved." ¹² All the people went away to eat, to drink, to send portions and to celebrate a great festival, because they understood the words which had been made known to them.

Feast of Booths Restored

¹³ Then on the second day the heads of fathers' *households* of all the people, the priests and the Levites were gathered to Ezra the scribe that they might gain insight into the words of the law. ¹⁴ They found written in the law how

the LORD had commanded through Moses that the sons of Israel should live in booths during the feast of the seventh month.¹⁵ So they proclaimed and circulated a proclamation in all their cities and in Jerusalem, saying, "Go out to the hills, and bring olive branches and wild olive branches, myrtle branches, palm branches and branches of *other* leafy trees, to make booths, as it is written." ¹⁶ So the people went out and brought *them* and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate

and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim.¹⁷ The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing. ¹⁸ He read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day *there was* a solemn assembly according to the ordinance.

● EXAMINE His Word (Observation) (For personal preparation)

What does God SAY? Prayerfully note significant details and terms emphasized in the foregoing passage.

1. Who is involved in the text? Author, audience, main characters.
2. Where and when is this taking place? Geography and timeline.
3. What actions are carried out or commanded? Look for the verbs.
4. Is there anything repeated?

5. What is emphasized?

6. Is there anything in these passages that is related to other areas of scripture?

7. Are there things to be noted that are alike or unlike such as similes and metaphors?

② **EXPLORE His Word (Interpretation)** (For Community Group discussion)
What does God MEAN?

8. Why do you think the people were weeping when they heard the Law?

9. Why were the people instructed to rejoice?

10. Were the people eager to follow the Law of the Lord when it was read?

11. According to verse 18 how often did they read from the Book of the Law?

12. What do you believe is the main message of chapter 8?

③ EMBRACE His Word (Application) (For Community Group discussion)
Why does this MATTER to me?

13. In Chapter 8 Nehemiah helps promote the reading of the Word and celebration of God and His goodness. How can we celebrate the Word in our church?

14. Chapter 8 of Nehemiah also promotes taking time to focus on God (Sabbath and feast of booths). How can we take time in our lives to focus on God?

15. What practices have helped you be successful in your commitment to a daily reading of the Word and taking time out of your schedule to focus on God?

Summarize your thoughts on the passage

Write about what God wants you to **KNOW**, to **FEEL**, and to **DO**...

Sermon Notes