

Life Group Questions w/b Sunday 7 February 2021

Ezra – a Story of Rebuilding Week 6

Nehemiah Chapters 8-10

Historical Background

The books of Ezra, Nehemiah, Haggai and Zechariah are all dove-tailed together historically, and so this week we are looking at part of the book of Nehemiah in which Ezra is personally involved. Nehemiah led the third group of those who had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon, and was instrumental in ensuring that the walls of the city were rebuilt. By chapter 8 the city was complete.

So what now for the people of God? What was to be the way of life for these new settlers in Jerusalem?

To ensure that they lived as God's people, in God's place, under God's rule and reign, it was imperative that they lived out the Scriptures in their daily lives. That is why the location for this marathon Bible reading is at the city gate rather than in the Temple.

Read: Nehemiah 8:1-12

- In verses 3-6 we see that the people used the Scriptures as the basis for their worship. How might we do that today?
- In verses 7-8 the people were given help in understanding God's Word. What helps you to understand the Bible better?
- In verse 9, what was the people's initial response to hearing the Scriptures? What sort of responses have you experienced in your Bible reading? What have you find the most helpful? (See for instance, verses 13-16, where the people found a command to obey.)
- How has reading the Bible influenced your daily life?
- Given the difficulties of this current season of lockdown, do you think it is possible to put into practice (8:10) 'the joy of the Lord is your strength'? You might find it helpful to begin by considering the meaning of the phrase 'the joy of the Lord' and the meaning of the word 'strength', remembering that the Hebrew word for "strength" is 'ozaz' which means a stronghold, fortress, refuge – a place of safety.

Prayer Focus Suggestion

Take some time to consider where you find your refuge and strength in troubled times. Pray for each member of the group to be strengthened by the Lord, and for each one of us to know more of His joy deep within our hearts.

Further Material – only if time!

Having heard all the promises of God in His Word, what promises do the people make back to him in Nehemiah chapter 10 and why? (see (9:38))

Look especially at verses 30, 31, 32, 34, 37, 39? Why was each of these important? What blessings and curses do you think might result from either keeping or failing to keep these promises? Do you think the principles involved in these promises are still useful for God's people today?