

Thankfulness and Celebration
Nehemiah – Part 4
November 28-29, 2020
Dr. Jeffrey Allen Love

"This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the LORD is your strength!" Nehemiah 8:10b (p.377)

- **The Strength To Follow God's Plan Comes From The Joy Of The Lord.**

"Always be joyful. Never stop praying. Be thankful in all circumstances, for this is God's will for you who belong to Christ Jesus." 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (p.907)

"After the wall was finished and I had set up the doors in the gates, the gatekeepers, singers, and Levites were appointed." Nehemiah 7:1 (p.375)

- 1. Remember what God has done in the past.**

"(Jesus)...This is my body, which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." 1 Corinthians 11:24-25 (p.877)

- 2. Celebrate what He is doing today.**

"The LORD is my strength and shield. I trust him with all my heart. He helps me, and my heart is filled with joy. I burst out in songs of thanksgiving." Psalm 28:7 (p.425)

- 3. Praise Him for what He will do tomorrow.**

"I pray that God, the source of hope, will fill you completely with joy and peace because you trust in him. Then you will overflow with confident hope through the power of the Holy Spirit." Romans 15:13 (p.868)

"We do this by keeping our eyes on Jesus, the champion who initiates and perfects our faith. Because of the joy awaiting him, he endured the cross, disregarding its shame. Now he is seated in the place of honor beside God's throne." Hebrews 12:2 (p.927)

Next Step: _____ This week I will begin and end each day with this prayer: *"I praise you and thank you Lord for all you have done for me in the past, all that you are doing for me today and all you will do for me in the future. Fill me with your joy! In Jesus' name, amen."*

Discussion/Groups Guide from the Weekend Talk

From the Weekend Talk of November 28-29, 2020

Nehemiah - Part 4: Thankfulness and Celebration

Life Groups use these questions to go deeper into what we talked about this weekend. Dig into them so you will be ready for the discussion at your Life Group. If you are not in a Group, find out more at alivechurch.com/groups.

You can also use this guide to discuss the Weekend Talk with your family or friends.

Conversation Starters

- How was Thanksgiving different for you this year?
- What did you learn over the holiday weekend about thankfulness?
- This first week of Advent focuses on Hope. What is hope?

Quick Review

- Looking back at your Talk Notes, was there anything you heard in the service that stood out or maybe even confused you?

Discussion Starters from the Weekend Talk

Refer to the Talk Notes and related Bible verses from this Weekend's Talk Notes.

The One Thing from the weekend Talk that Pastor Jeff wants us to remember is:

"The Strength To Follow God's Plan Comes From The Joy Of The Lord." (See 1 Thessalonians 5:16-18 (p.907*) and Nehemiah 7:1-3 (p.375*) and Nehemiah 8:10-11 (p.377*))

- What actions did Nehemiah take in the first three verses of Chapter 7?
 - Why do you think these actions were important?
- What is "the joy of the Lord?" (Nehemiah 8:10)
- When have you experienced the "joy of the Lord"?
- What other actions does Paul teach that go along with being joyful? (1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)
 - How do these relate?

Jeff led us through some ways in which we can experience the joy of the Lord:

1. Remember what God has done in the past.

(1 Corinthians 11:23-26 (p.372*))

- What event does this passage tell us to remember?
- What does this remembrance announce?
- How is it relevant for your life today to remember this?
- What has God done in your past for which you are thankful?

2. Celebrate what He is doing today.

(Psalm 28:7 (p.425*))

- When was the last time you celebrated something God had done in your life?
- What can you celebrate today?
- Why is it important to celebrate events and occasions?

3. Praise Him for what He will do tomorrow.

(Romans 15:13 (p.868*) and Hebrews 12:1-2 (p.927*))

- How is "hope" related to "joy"? (Romans 15:13)
- In Hebrews 12:1-2 the writer describes the "joy awaiting" Jesus when he "endured the cross."

- How is that a joy?
- What encouragement do you get from Hebrews 12:1-2?
- What “race” are we running?
- What position does Jesus have now?

Digging Deeper

There’s so much going on in the first 8 chapters of Nehemiah that it could be an interesting exercise to simply go back and touch on some of the things we did NOT get to in our Talk Series in this fascinating book.

So, here are a few passages and a few principles that we haven’t have time to touch on:

- Chapter 1
 - How Nehemiah prayed (1:5-11)
 - What elements were contained in his prayer?
 - What principles can we learn from his prayer?
- Chapter 2
 - Nehemiah’s stealth reconnaissance mission. (2:11-17)
 - Why did he survey at night without telling anyone?
- Chapter 3
 - Look for more interesting tidbits from the people listed.
 - Look up what the various gates were used for.
 - Why is this list of people included in Nehemiah’s memoir?
- Chapter 4
 - Not only does this chapter get into the opposition they faced, but other challenges, as well. What are some of them?
 - Hint: see verse 10 for one example.
 - Talk about the various ways Nehemiah describes the actions they took to protect themselves.
- Chapter 5
 - Read more about how Nehemiah handled the internal strife described (Nehemiah 5:1-13)
 - Look who else worked on the wall (verse 16).
- Chapter 6
 - The ones who had opposed Nehemiah all along the way changed their tactics a bit in this chapter. How so?
- Chapter 7
 - What did Nehemiah do in Nehemiah 7:2-3?
 - Why was this important?
 - What does it say about our ongoing faith journeys?

- Nehemiah also lists a census of the Jews who returned from exile. Why do you think God wanted this list to appear in the Bible?
- Chapter 8
 - What role did Ezra play in this true story?
 - Why were the people so enraptured by the reading of God's Law?
 - How did they respond?
 - What did the people do in Nehemiah 8:13-14? What did they learn?
 - What have you learned from God's Word lately?

Next Step

My Next Step: ___ This week I will begin and end each day with this prayer:

"I praise you and thank you Lord for all you have done for me in the past, all that you are doing for me today and all you will do for me in the future. Fill me with your joy! In Jesus' name, amen."

What's Ahead

- **This week we begin a new Talk Series, "Immanuel: God With Us,"** as we celebrate together the Advent Season of Jesus bringing us God's Hope, Joy, Peace and Love. We'll culminate the Season on Christmas Eve. The registration page is up NOW for reserving your places for Christmas Eve (and for this coming weekend, as well). www.alivechurch.com/service.
- **Make a Difference** by serving at Alive Church. www.alivechurch.com/serve.
- **Are you new to Alive Church?** Then come to Discover Alive on Sunday, December 6, at 12:30pm. We'll feed you lunch, provide free childcare, and help you learn more about who we are, where we are going, and how you can be a part of what God is doing at Alive Church! (We also have a Zoom option to join in online.) Use your Connection Card to let us know you want to come. Or send an email to office@alivechurch.com and tell us there.

* The Life Transformation Bible is the New Living Translation of the Bible, including many useful tools to help you better understand God's Word, including our own Alive Church Life Transformation Discipleship Plan. They are available FREE. Let us know if you'd like to have one.