

Revival and Reformation

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Intro: After rebuilding the wall Nehemiah knew that the city could only prosper if they fortified themselves morally as nation, and found a purpose to exist.

Body:

1. Nehemiah started with the leaders. The leaders need to be consecrated.

- a. Nehemiah 7:1, 2 – Nehemiah appointed leaders that were faithful men and feared God.

“If the leaders in the cause of truth show no zeal, if they are indifferent and purposeless, the church will be careless, indolent, and pleasure-loving; but **if they are filled with a holy purpose to serve God** and Him alone, the people will be united, hopeful, eager.” Prophets and Kings, p. 676

2. The Word of God is fundamental for true revival and reformation.

- a. **Nehemiah 8:1** – The people requested their spiritual leaders to read the Word of God for them.
 - i. In those days the Word of God was not widely available for people to read on their own, and therefore they relied on public reading of the Word.
 - ii. As a people we must request our spiritual leaders to uplift the Word of God.
 - iii. The same should be in the family circle.
- b. **Nehemiah 8:2** – We must hear the Word of God with understanding.
 - i. Nehemiah 8:8 – We start with help of someone that can teach us the Bible, but we need to start assimilating the Word for ourselves.
 - ii. We should start with easier books, like
 - The historical books: Genesis, Exodus, Numbers, Acts of the Apostles
 - The poetic books: Psalms and Proverbs
 - The gospels: Matthew, Mark, Luke and John
 - Pauline epistles: 1 and 2 Corinthians, Philippians
 - General epistles: James, 1 and 2 Peter
 - Prophetic books: Daniel and Revelation
- c. **Nehemiah 8:13** – The fathers have greater responsibility to understand the Word of God because they have to teach it to their families.
- d. **Nehemiah 8:9, 12** – The Word of God brings godly sorrow (repentance) and joy.
 - i. **Nehemiah 9:3** – We see the combination of repentance and joy when we read the Word.

“**Every true turning to the Lord brings abiding joy into the life.** When a sinner yields to the influence of the Holy Spirit, he sees his own guilt and defilement in contrast with the holiness of the great Searcher of hearts. **He sees himself condemned as a transgressor.** But he is not, because of this, to give way to despair; for his pardon has already been secured. He may **rejoice in the sense of sins forgiven,** in the love of a pardoning heavenly Father. It is God's glory to encircle sinful, repentant human beings in the arms of His love, to bind up their wounds, to cleanse them from sin, and to clothe them with the garments of salvation.” Prophets and Kings, p. 668

- e. Nehemiah 9:6, 7, 9, 13, 23, 26, 27, 33 – Sacred history helps us to understand who God is and His will for our lives as well as our identity as a people.

3. Nehemiah 9:38 – The reading of Scriptures led the people to make a covenant with God. They wanted to remain faithful to God’s Word.

a. Specific reforms:

- i. **Nehemiah 10:30** – Not marry with people that are not believers of God.
 - **Nehemiah 13:26, 27** – When Nehemiah returns to the Jerusalem and find people again intermarrying with none believers in the Creator God. He rebukes them for sinning against God.
- ii. **Nehemiah 10:31** – Keep the Sabbath holy.
 - Nehemiah 13:15-19 – When Nehemiah left to Persia there was a need to reform again on the Sabbath area.
- iii. **Nehemiah 10:32** – Support the house of God with their income.
 - **Nehemiah 10:37** – They returned their tithes and offerings to the support of God’s work.
 - **Nehemiah 10:39** – They reason they were faithful in their tithes and offerings was not to neglect the house of God.
- iv. **Nehemiah 12:40** – They invested in the worship of God, specially in the areas of music and thanksgiving.
 - **Nehemiah 12:42** – They had someone in charge of the music.

4. Nehemiah 13:11 – After a few years the house of God was forsaken.

- a. There is a constant need to make sure that the work of God is not neglected by the departments of the church.

“There was a constant struggle with opposing elements, and **only by fasting, humiliation, and prayer was advancement made...** That which made their work most difficult was not the open hostility of the heathen, but the secret opposition of pretended friends.” Prophets and Kings, pp. 674, 675

5. Summary and Conclusion:

- a. Leaders of the church should be faithful to God;
- b. The daily reading of God's Word is essential to experience revival and reformation;
- c. The leader of the household should have the responsibility to instruct the family in the Word of God;
- d. The reading of the Scriptures should lead us to make a covenant with God:
 - a. A covenant to protect the marriage relationship
 - b. A covenant to worship the Creator by keeping the Sabbath holy
 - c. A covenant to support God's house and mission with our tithes and offerings
 - d. A covenant to use our personal talents and gifts to uplift the name of God in worship

Appeal:

- 6. Nehemiah 13:14 – May we be able to pray like Nehemiah, “Remember me... my good deeds that I have done for the house of my God, and for his services!”**