

Solid Rock Christian Church Manassas, Virginia

Bible Study - September 1, 2022

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Ten Steps to Spiritual Renewal

Lesson VIII - Step 8

Title: "Giving Thanks For God's Goodness"

Scripture Reference: Nehemiah 12:1-47

In this lesson we learn how thanksgiving results in thankful living. Here is the outline that we will work from, using the principle of alliteration.

- I. Purification**
- II. Procession**
- III. Proclamation**
- IV. Provision**

Overview

A. A review of the steps we have covered up to this point have included:

1. Getting Back to God's Word
2. Getting Serious About Obedience
3. Getting Concerned About Sin
4. Getting Caught Up in Worship
5. Becoming Accountable for Our Conduct
6. Taking a Pledge to Give
7. Offering Yourself for Service

B. Nehemiah's main task in Jerusalem was to rebuild the wall around

the city, which he did. "So the wall was finished in the twenty and fifth day of the month Elul, in fifty and two days." (Nehemiah 6:15)

C. After this reference to the wall, it is mentioned in Chapter 7:1, and not again until Chapter 12:27 when the wall was dedicated. But why?

D. The wall is not mentioned after Chapter 7:1 through Chapter 11 so that other aspects of "rebuilding" could be highlighted. The spiritual rebuilding that was necessary for a people who had been out of touch with God for a long time was essential. The people needed the spiritual protection that comes with walking in obedience to God.

E. Chapters 7-11 detail the spiritual revival that took place under the leadership of Ezra. He ministered the Word of God to the people so they could see what they had been missing. The wall was completed (6:15) and dedicated in Chapter 12:27.

F. The dedication of the wall (v27) was a time of great joy but it was more than just the completion of a project; it was the beginning of a new era in Israel's history and the history of Jerusalem.

H. We can identify four things that happened as a result of the dedication of the wall around Jerusalem, and here is where the outline given above will be expounded upon.

I. Exposition [Part I] - Purification (Nehemiah 12:30)

A. The Levites had been summoned from all over the land for the dedication (v27). Once there, "the priests and the Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, and the gates, and the wall." (v30)

B. That was a symbolic cleansing that spoke to God's desire for His people to be pure - even the gates and the wall!

Point: God wants everything with which He is associated to be pure.

C. Anyone who professes to be a follower of Jesus soon realizes that it is impossible to live like the world lives and remain pure in

God's sight.

D. The indwelling Holy Spirit came to convict the world of "sin, and of righteousness, and of judgment" (John 16:8). Therefore, every believer will be convicted of impure, unrighteous living, and will have a desire to be pure.

II. Exposition [Part II] - Procession (Vv 31-39)

A. The second part of the dedication was the appointment of two thanksgiving choirs led by the leaders of Judah, with Ezra following one choir and Nehemiah following the other.

B. One choir went in one direction (v31) around the wall (it was wide enough to walk on) and the other choir went in the opposite direction (v38).

C. The choirs were singing celebratory songs (psalms) giving thanks for what God had done.

D. This procession and the entire dedication service reflects a significant amount of planning on the part of Nehemiah and others. They were intent on praising God and celebrating what He had done. They were putting forth their best effort to honor God.

E. Everyone was represented - people, princes, and priests - because all had been involved in the project.

F. It is a sad thing when God's people watch the 80/20 rule play itself out in the body of Christ. Here is what this means: 80 percent of the work is done by 20 percent of the people.

G. The 80 percent who didn't give much of themselves to the project find little to celebrate.

Point: The more we invest in God's work, the deeper our cause and capacity for celebration.

H. If you want to be involved in the celebrations that your church has, whatever the occasion might be, you need to invest yourself in the process!

I. Don't live on the defensive, looking for reasons or excuses not to be involved. God's plans are moving forward, even if you don't want to participate.

Comment: Remember: The joy of Easter resurrection was possible only because of the pain of Good Friday.

III. Exposition [Part III] - Proclamation (v43)

"Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced; for God had made them rejoice with great joy: the wives also and the children rejoiced: so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off."

A. What does joy sound like? In this case, it involved singing, but if you can't sing because you don't have a great singing voice, you can still express joy in other ways. "Make a joyful noise unto God, all ye lands." (Psalm 66:1). "Let us come before his presence with thanksgiving; and make a joyful noise unto him with psalms." (Psalm 95:2)

Does anyone have more reason(s) to be joyful than Christians?

B. There is no wonder that the Jew's joy could be heard afar off. People who walk in the blessings of God have a reason to express joy at all times.

C. Remember, a joyful heart should be *normal* for those in a right relationship with God.

IV. Exposition [Part IV] - Provision (Vv 44-47)

A. Once the people were settled into the city, surrounded by the newly-dedicated wall, happy because of their covenant commitments and the joy that resulted, it was time to begin making practical applications based on their commitments.

B. It was time to turn their thanks-giving into thanks-living. They wanted to begin thanking God with their hands as well as in their hearts.

C. A part of their commitment was support for the Levites and this was the responsibility of all Israel. The Levites had been given no inheritance of land in the Promised Land, but as the "worship leaders" of the nation, the Levites were to be supported by tithes from the people.

D. As the people looked around, they realized that the Levites' stores needed to be replenished, and the people needed to fulfill their responsibility.

E. In this day and age of the modern church, if every Christian were faithful to make God a financial priority in their life, there would never be a request made for more money.

F. In Jerusalem, the people took it upon themselves to meet their financial obligations to their spiritual leaders. This action flowed out of Step Number Six, A Commitment to Give.

G. We as Christians should learn that we can trust God with our material needs and with our giving. Paul said the following to those who had given generously to him - "And my God shall supply all your need according to His riches in glory by Christ Jesus" (Phil. 4:19).

We have so much to be grateful for and we should not be ashamed to Give God Thanks for His Goodness!

It is once again interactive time. Please complete the following biblical passages by filling in the blank spaces. All Scriptures have been taken from the King James Version (KJV) of the Holy Bible.

"Oh how great is thy _____, which thou hast laid up for them that _____ thee; which thou hast _____ for them that _____ in thee before the sons of men!"

[Psalm 31:19]

"For the word of the Lord is _____; and _____ his works are done in _____ . He loveth _____ and _____ : the earth is _____ of the _____ of the Lord."

[Psalm 33:4-5]

"O come, let us _____ unto the Lord: let us make a _____ noise to the _____ of our salvation. Let us come before his _____ with _____, and make a joyful noise unto him with _____."

[Psalm 95:1-2]

"_____ are the pure in _____: for they shall see God."

[Matthew 5:8]

"I was _____ when they _____ unto me, Let us _____ into the _____ of the _____."

[Psalm 122:1]

"And when all the _____ of Israel saw how the _____ came down, and the glory of the _____ upon the house, they _____ themselves with their _____ to the ground upon the pavement, and _____, and _____ the Lord, saying, For he is _____; for his _____ for ever."

[2 Chronicles 7:3]

"Thou wilt show me the _____ of life: in thy _____ is _____ of joy; at thy right hand there are _____ for evermore."

[Psalm 16:11]

Thank you for joining in on another Bible Study session and my prayer is that you have been blessed. Above all, don't forget to give God praise and thanksgiving for all of His Goodness.

Jude 3

Pastor Austin