

the TAKE HOME 05.29.16

Today's Scripture Passage: Nehemiah 8:9-18 page 348 Pew Bible

⁹ Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, "This day is holy to the LORD your God. Do not mourn or weep." For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

¹⁰ Nehemiah said, "Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." ¹¹ The Levites calmed all the people, saying, "Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve." ¹² Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them. ¹³ On the second day of the month, the heads of all the families, along with the priests and the Levites, gathered around Ezra the teacher to give attention to the words of the Law. ¹⁴ They found written in the Law, which the LORD had commanded through Moses, that the Israelites were to live in temporary shelters during the festival of the seventh month ¹⁵ and that they should proclaim this word and spread it throughout their towns and in Jerusalem: "Go out into the hill country and bring back branches from olive and wild olive trees, and from myrtles, palms and shade trees, to make temporary shelters"—as it is written. ¹⁶ So the people went out and brought back branches and built themselves temporary shelters on their own roofs, in their courtyards, in the courts of the house of God and in the square by the Water Gate and the one by the Gate of Ephraim. ¹⁷ The whole company that had returned from exile built temporary shelters and lived in them. From the days of Joshua son of Nun until that day, the Israelites had not celebrated it like this. And their joy was very great. ¹⁸ Day after day, from the first day to the last, Ezra read from the Book of the Law of God. They celebrated the festival for seven days, and on the eighth day, in accordance with the regulation, there was an assembly.

Questions for Reflection & Discussion

1. What are the two responses to "understanding" the Word of the Lord recorded here?
2. How do you explain these two opposite responses? Are both necessary or expected?
3. What does the Feast of Tabernacles commemorate?
4. Why is this joy the people are experiencing referred to as the "joy of the Lord?"
5. How does this joy give strength?

Prayer

1. Your church leadership.
2. Pray for our nation and the effective work of the Spirit through the fifty capital city meetings.
3. Thank the Lord for those we "remember" this on this holiday weekend
4. Pray for opportunity among family, friends and neighbors to share the joy of the Lord.
5. Pray for wisdom for the Pastoral Search Team