



November 26
Sunday Sermon Study Guide
Lead Pastor Brian Bales
For Something Greater:
Fresh Start - Nehemiah 8:1-10

And all the people gathered as one man into the square before the Water Gate. And they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses that the Lord had commanded Israel. ² So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could understand what they heard, on the first day of the seventh month. ³ And he read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand. And the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law. ⁴ And Ezra the scribe stood on a wooden platform that they had made for the purpose. And beside him stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiiah, Uriah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah on his right hand, and Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbaddanah, Zechariah, and Meshullam on his left hand. ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was above all the people, and as he opened it all the people stood. ⁶ And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. ⁷ Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodiah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law, while the people remained in their places. ⁸ They read from the book, from the Law of God, clearly, and they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading. ⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn or weep." For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready, for this day is holy to our Lord. And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength." Nehemiah 8:1-10 ESV

A Life Application Study Guide

James 1:22-25 tells us to put into practice what we are discovering in God's word.

LESSONS TO EXPLORE

1. Listening to God's Truth
2. Understanding God's Truth
3. Finding Joy in His Truth
4. Finding Life in His Truth

DISCUSSION POINTS

1. *So the wall was finished on the twenty-fifth day of Elul, in fifty-two days.* The walls had been in ruins for more than 100 years, and then were rebuilt in only 52 days. We turn the page to a new chapter in Nehemiah 8 and Ezra has arrived on the scene to read The Book of the Law of Moses, the first five books of the Bible (Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy). This was Israel's instruction manual for how to live as God expected. The reading lasted 6 hours.
 - What is your first thought and response that the people of Israel listened to God's word read aloud for 6 hours?

- How do we see the people responding as the Holy Spirit moved throughout the gathering on that day?
- What did their emotions reflect? When have you been similarly impacted or convicted by God's word?
- Where in this story do you observe revival within God's people?

2. What did they grasp in that gathering about God's truth and their own reality?

- When have you read, studied or heard scripture in a way that moved you to think differently about God and to live differently as a result?
- What shifted for you in that discovery?

3. Our knowledge of our sin should never be bigger than our knowledge of who Jesus is as our Savior. We may have sinned greatly, but Jesus is a greater Savior.
- How have you allowed Christ to be *greater* in your life?

 - What is your view of punishment vs. discipline? What have you experienced in your own relationship with God as your Heavenly Father?

 - How would you explain the difference to someone who does not follow Jesus?
4. How does this passage inform us of God's heart for us? *And do not be grieved, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.*
- Where do you experience joy in both knowing God and better understanding His character? How does this intimate knowledge strengthen you?

 - Romans 8:38-39 reminds us of a promise. Read the verse out loud and replace the word *us* with your name. How does this offer you a security that cannot be broken?
- For I am convinced that neither death nor life, neither angels nor demons, neither the present nor the future, nor any powers, neither height nor depth, nor anything else in all creation, will be able to separate us from the love of God that is in Christ Jesus our Lord.*

MAKING IT REAL

1. We may have taken a detour in our spiritual journey requiring a heart and mind restoration. Dig deeper into God's word this week in Nehemiah and spend time in conversation with Him allowing that restoration to take place. Consider journaling that process.