

Text-Driven Preaching

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[0 : 00] Let me give you a review of the book of Nehemiah. It's been some time since we've been in the book of Nehemiah. Churches only allowed to preach to the book of Nehemiah when you're building a building, so we haven't been through the book of Nehemiah in a while.

I'm just kidding. Some of you know that to be true, though. You've probably grown up in a church that started a campaign, and we have a Nehemiah fund. We set money aside every month for a future building, but we're going to see here that it's more about building buildings and a wall here.

It's about making sure that the Word of God was central to a community of people. In Nehemiah chapter number one, we meet Nehemiah, and he has a holy discontent.

He hears from his brother that their hometown was in ruins, and there was affliction, and that the walls were down, and that bothered him. Before he turns and seeks help from the king, he turns to the Lord.

Something we often forget in the story is that he first takes the heavy burden, and he goes to the Lord. Then it's all over his face when he goes before the king. He's the cupbearer, which is a really great job, I would think.

[0 : 58] He gets to taste the food. It's either a really great job, but on one day, it's a really bad job, all right? And so he's tasting the food for the king and making sure it's not poisoned, or maybe it's to his liking, I guess.

But probably more than that, he's kind of helping inside of there, like maybe a butler, if you will. And so Nehemiah is doing his job, and it's just all over his face that his heart is burdened.

How many of you would say that you have a face that doesn't hide what you're thinking, okay? I'm glad that y'all know that, because from up here, I know that as well, all right? And he had one of those that was on his face that he was discontented.

And in chapter 2, the king hears what's going on, and God gives him favor through the king to go back. He has permission to leave his job. And not only to go back, but he has all the paperwork he needs to get through the territories, to get back to the city.

And then he gets the resources that he needs, and it's incredible. 52-day project, all right? The Georgia DOT could follow this, all right? Nothing happens in 52 days, right?

[1 : 57] But this wall gets rebuilt in 52 days. And in chapter number 3, there's a lot of next-to-him verses. This group was doing this, and next to him, and next to him.

It's a beautiful picture of them that's all working together. They have a sword on their side while they're doing the work, because we're going to see that there's some opposition. Chapter 4 deals a lot with that. Two guys, specifically, Sanballat and Tobiah, they're criticizing the work.

They're saying things like, if a fox ran across this wall, it would fall down. And that's some trash talk right there on wall building, all right? And he said, it's not going to work. And then there's, that's bad.

And then there's internal opposition. They start to default on some of their mortgages, and people are just upset. So they're selling their kids into slavery, or they're giving them over to the lender. And the things are just really bad.

And then chapter 6, when the opposition sees that it's about to be done, and the wall's almost done, they come in one last time. They pretend to be nice, but they're slander. And they say, Nehemiah, everybody knows that you're doing this because you want to be king.

[2 : 59] And he kind of spreads the rumor so that it would get back that he is trying to become the king. And they try to bait him into a discussion into the house of God that he knows that he doesn't belong in.

And he basically says, innocent people don't have to hide. Let's have the conversation right here. In chapter 7, the one before the one we're looking at today, a modern writer might take this and maybe make it an appendix at the end of a book.

It's a list of people. I call them the two percenters. They were the people that left the comfort of Babylon earlier, and they came back. It's similar to maybe a list of soldiers. So this is a hundred years, the first exiles that come in, and now is a list of all these people that had come back to rebuild the city.

Nehemiah knew that the current generation needed that same kind of resolve as the last. And as I said, Nehemiah was doing something much more than building a wall.

I want to make sure you see that today from God's Word. We get to chapter number 8, and it's called, this is a, it lands on a holy day. Okay, Ezra, a scribe priest, is reintroduced.

[4 : 03] There's a book before Nehemiah about Ezra. He got there 14, he was there 14 years earlier, and he had been teaching the Word of God. And Nehemiah now builds a pulpit for his co-laborer, that's in verse number 4 that we read, where Ezra is going to stand there, and he is going to read the Word of God.

And that's the picture we're going to get to look into as this happening. There's things that aren't prescriptive for us today. There's things we won't model in that moment that we have today inside of our church.

But three different ways I would like for us to see in this example. They'll put it up on the screen there for you. But through Ezra's work, we see a vivid example of how God renews his people with his Word.

They develop a reverence for the Word of God, which is so essential for us. Secondly, they daily respond to the truth of God's Word. And God is going to dial in precisely what it is that he wants them to do from his Word.

And then they're going to determine the rightly applied God's Word. And that's where the battle is won and lost when it comes to understanding God's Word, is in this area of application. So let's look at the first one here together.

[5 : 07] As they develop a reverence for the Word of God. The beginning of Nehemiah in chapter 1 to verse number 3, it speaks about the remnant that was left there and how there was a great affliction and reproach.

And the wall of Jerusalem, in Nehemiah 1.3, you'll see it says, And the wall of Jerusalem also is broken down, and the gates thereof are burned with fire. I want to bring that verse to you for attention because it says, And the gates also were burned down.

Because I don't want you to jump in the book of Nehemiah and think it's primarily about a wall. The wall was part of it. It was also part of it. But he was concerned about the great affliction and reproach.

And so Nehemiah knew that the renewal he hoped for required a rebuilt wall, but the people had to become a Bible-centered people. They had to center their lives upon the commands of Scripture.

And we're going to see that. What comes out of this standing and reading, they're going to immediately respond to it. Just a beautiful picture of what we should do when we gather around God's Word. And so the Word of God wasn't in its rightful place.

[6 : 09] By the end of chapter number 7, this is a great chapter on organizational structure. Everything's well-ordered. Things are well-defended. Things are well-governed. And this construction project had been completed, and the people are going to begin moving to their dwelling places.

But it wasn't enough that there was a well-constructed city, if there was little or no life inside of it. Charles Swindoll, he said this about churches. He said, Many a church is like an impressive machine I once read about.

It had hundreds of wheels, cogs, gears, pulleys, bells, and lights, which all moved or lit up at the touch of a button. And when someone asked, what does it do?

The inventor replied, Oh, it doesn't do anything, but doesn't it run nicely? All right? And so here, it wasn't simply about just getting everything in order. That city and those people had a purpose.

It wasn't about just a well-ordered city and a nice built wall. It's that they were to be the people of God that were living out the principles of God among the nations as a testimony of the wisdom of God.

[7 : 17] And so the question is, what does it do? And it says, it doesn't do anything. It just runs nicely. He wanted, Nehemiah wants to exalt the Word of God among the people. He wanted to build a community centered on the Word of God.

The first verse, first thing I want you to see here, if you're following along in the notes that are available in the foyer, it says, And all the people gathered themselves together as one man in the street, and that was before the water gate, and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses.

There was preparation was made for the preaching of the Word of God. I just love this. They get everything in place, they build a pulpit, and they say, bring the book of the law of Moses.

We're not a Jewish community a thousand years after Moses and 400 years before Jesus came, nor am I a priest or a scribe, but you should expect when I come up here that I bring the book.

And young people, when you go to a church, you get in a church that gets in the book. You're going to be in the situations in life where you have to decide, and they're not going to do everything the same way that we do things, and the buildings are going to look different, and the songs are going to sound a little bit different, and there's going to be things different.

[8 : 32] But one thing that you should expect, young people or any of you, when you move is to get into a church that gets in the book. I would love that someday. Come up here without the Bible and for you all to yell, get the book, all right?

Go and get the book. And whoever comes up here should bring the book with them. Not just here, though. There's a lot of places that the Bible is being taught, and when we stand and speak, we bring the book.

And the words that are being said here that talk about the reverence, it's the book of the Lord commanded, all right? That's verse 1. Verse 2, it says, It is the law of God's people. Verse number 7, it's going to show that these priests were scattered throughout the congregation to help people understand.

Preparation was made for that moment for people to understand. I had a special memory some years ago at a capital Bible church in New Delhi, and I was with a friend who hadn't been a believer very long, and he grew up in a church.

Well, he didn't grow up in a church, but when he started attending the church, he couldn't, the places that he went didn't show reverence to the Word of God. There was many things that were going on, but the Bible being taught wasn't one of them.

[9 : 39] But he knew that he needed to be studying the Word of God. And so there at that church, the pastor was teaching a series through Romans, and once the music got done and everything was done, everybody in the room, from the piano player to everybody, found the Scriptures.

And people moved throughout the room and made sure that everybody had found the Scriptures before the pastor began to read. It took a couple minutes. And my friend, which is, I was overwhelmed because I thought it was just incredible to be in a room full of people that were looking down upon the Scriptures.

But my friend was just so overwhelmed by seeing that because he knew that he was among God's people. He knew he was with brothers and sisters in a real special moment. It's one that I share with you every Sunday as we gather, just gathering around God's Word.

And so the teaching from the Bible was central to their meeting. It says in verse number four, that they had made for the purpose. The pulpit of wood that they had made was made for that purpose. And then it says that Ezra stood upon the pulpit.

All right, if I was younger and crazier, I might try to stand on this pulpit, but I'll let you know this isn't what it's speaking about here. All right? It says the platform elevated so that he could stand up there and so that the Word of God could be heard.

[10 : 50] That's what it said. He stood above everybody. That wasn't his position in society. It was that he was elevated above everybody so that they would hear. And then they stood in attention for six hours as the Word of God was being taught.

That reverence, that's something we continue with today. We can do that. I like standing for the reading of the Word, and we might do it more in the future. When I go to churches and they do that, I'm always excited because I'm thinking, this church is showing reverence to the Word of God.

Now, if I had you all stand for every Bible verse I read, it would be like aerobics or something. All right? Come to Vision Baptist Church and burn 3,000 calories of service. All right? And so that's the question. But I do like just giving, at the before the special, we have a time of Bible reading.

I like it to be a special event. The Bible tells us to give attention to the reading of the Word of God, that same reverence that all Scripture is given by inspiration of God, that this isn't just any book, that this is the Word of God.

We show honor to it by the way we handle it and speak about it. And that is the way in which the Bible is most often disrespected. It's not that people don't stand when it's read, but it isn't handled and rightly divided, comparing Scripture with Scripture.

[12 : 00] This morning, some students met to get the building ready, and Jacob prayed, and he prayed that there would be the distractions that would be removed from this building so that when we gather as God's people that the Word of God will be taught.

And then Nick came and caffeinated you with coffee. All right? Preparation has been made for this moment. Then preparation was made by the teacher, not just by the people, but by, or for the preaching, but by the teacher.

Ezra, who's the one reading the Scripture, says in Ezra 7.10 that he had prepared his heart to seek the law of the Lord and to do it and to teach in Israel statutes and judgments.

Before coming to the Word, he prepared his heart. That's what that special was so good about. It was helping us prepare our hearts for the moment of God's Word. This is a spiritual endeavor that we're involved in.

It's a spiritual endeavor. This is not a TED Talk. This is not a lesson that's just given from something that I've learned from, I'm not a life coach, but these are the words of the Word, these are the words of God, which means that it's finding its place in your heart is a spiritual battle, which means that you don't come in here like you're coming in the math class.

[13:06] You come in here like you know that you need to be prepared. You should probably pray before math class too, all right? I thought of that as I saw David on the second row here, okay? But you come in and you say, I want my heart to be prepared.

The teacher should do the same. He should prepare his heart. When I communicate the Word of God, I want to do it in a way that is honoring the hymn. And then the church in Acts chapter number six, if that's the first group of deacons or whatever the group of men were, they made decisions to make sure that the sacredness and the Word of God was protected.

The church makes decisions to make sure that the teaching of the Word of God is protected. And Ezra knew his responsibility to help them understand. Verse eight's our main passage for the day that really brings us all of our thoughts together.

It says, they read in the book of the law of God distinctly, and he gave the sense, and he caused them to understand the reading. They read the book of the law of God distinctly. I thought of that verse over and over again as I was trying to say the names of those characters in the Scripture here.

And they gave sense, they caused them to understand. Verse number two, it says, men and women understood what they had heard. And then in verse seven, as I said, others are helping them with the understanding.

[14:19] And so biblical exposition is just teaching the Bible in a way where it is clearly understood by God's people. Teaching the Bible in a way where it's clearly understood by God's people.

And so Paul, that's what he encourages Timothy to do. He tells them to preach the Word, be instant in season and out of season, reprove, rebuke, exhort with all longsuffering and doctrine.

And he tells them to preach the Word. He doesn't say, don't preach about it. He doesn't say, preach around it. He doesn't say, preach it while holding it in your hand. He says, preach the Word.

Be a mouthpiece for the Word of God. Let it communicate to the hearts of people. That's what Stephen shared with you the day in the offering devotion. That these aren't just ideas that a group of men have, but these are imperatives to be obeyed from the Word of God.

And so this is what we've asked of every Bible teacher in this church, is that when you speak, we're speaking the words of eternal life and we need to prepare our hearts to do it.

[15:18] Preparation was made by active listeners. Verse number three says that their ears were attentive, that they came ready to listen. They asked for them to get the book, their ears were attentive, they stood as the book was open, and then they lifted their hands and they bowed their heads and they worshiped, they responded.

And so this is a good reminder for you as you come into any Bible teaching, whether it be here, Bible study, at your home, you ought to prepare your hearts and be ready to listen and say, God, I want what you have for me today.

I want you to prepare my heart and I don't want to go unchanged by what you have. I want you to transform my life. It's also a strong case of personal Bible study.

It's largely neglected, even though it's easier than ever. I mean, we all have copies of the Word of God and we have access to it, but it's hard. So I was considering, you know, what are some of the reasons that personal Bible study, which is in context of showing reverence to the Word of God.

The people that come in ready on Sunday, most ready to hear the Word of God are people who have been studying it for themselves throughout the week because it's part of your daily routine and rhythm. It's like when the Word of God is open, whatever setting, if it's lunchtime at my job, I want to hear from God.

[16 : 34] If it's Sunday morning and somebody's up there preaching, I want to hear it. It's that when you, when the Word of God is open, you're ready to hear it. And so the common thoughts that I had were the first couple, which is, you know, just maybe this liberal or theology that's just apathetic towards the Word of God that it's not powerful, that it's just kind of there for you as maybe some life tips, but it's not the Word of God or biblical criticism that questions the authority of the Word.

But there's something I came upon that I think really sums up what I think is a problem in modern day. This is by J.I. Packer who says this, Our culture tells us that apart from technical, professional stuff, only a smattering of knowledge about anything is needed to see us through, so that it would be rather naive for a Christian to spend much time learning details of any sort about Christianity.

But the truth is that as the desire to learn what God has revealed in Scripture so that we may serve Him by response to His Word, His Spirit given and in living.

So a lack of willingness to do so is spirit quenching and deadening. What's being said is that we live in a time where you feel like a little bit of knowledge about anything is sufficient because there's professionals that will do that.

You know, I still am amazed. I've flown on an airplane a few times now, but I still want to sit by the window and I'm still like, Can you believe this? We're in the air, right? I'm amazed by it, but I don't know how it works, all right?

[18 : 03] Don't ask me how it works. I remember the first time I set an emergency room and they told me what you're going to have to do and I'm like, No, I'm good. I can't do that. Like, I heard everything you had to say, but in an emergency, I'm not the guy that you want for the job, all right?

And just, I don't know how everything works. Some of y'all look so disappointed in here, okay? Well, we would see in a crash how well all of us do, okay? But I just need, I don't have to know how everything works on an airplane.

I trust that there's other people that do. And so there's so many areas of my life where I just say, Well, I just need to know a little bit of that and then I'm going to leave it to another group of professionals or this.

All the information I ever need is so readily available. I'll just pull out my phone and Google it when I need it, but that is not how the Word of God is supposed to be hidden in your heart. When tragedy and life comes and decisions are being made, it's already predetermined by the conditioning of your heart.

You can't just say, How am I going to respond in this moment? Because it's not in a vacuum where you're just going to the Bible for the answer, but by living in the Word, your heart is prepared to live out what God would have you to do, which means you need to soak in it.

[19 : 10] You need to spend your time in it. You need to want to know everything that is available to it. When people start studying the Bible, it first starts to seem so big, but when you begin to read it, you just say, I'm thankful for every page of it.

I wouldn't want anything less. We want to know the Word of God. And the respond to it is life-giving and to not respond to it is spirit-quenching and it's deadening.

Second point here, as I said, daily respond to the truth of God's Word. I said it that way because it's alliterated, but it's not very precise. Let me fix this for you. I think it would be better to say this. Seek to be precise in our understanding of God's Word.

There's a way in which you hear something and you think you understand and you walk out, but you ought to be listening in such a way and say, I want to hear, I want to understand the passage better than Trent understands the passage.

I want to do more than understand what Trent's trying to say. I want to understand what God's Word is trying to say to me. And that happens. Some of you hear better messages than I preach. Good job, all right?

[20 : 14] Meaning that you're not listening to me, you're listening to what God's Word is saying. And so a speaker, a preacher, or a teacher can be sharing something and they may not even fully understand the magnitude of what they're saying, but you are listening and you want it to be dialed in and precise.

And here we have an example of people that are responding, there's an emotion that comes up and they think that's the right one, but then as they listen and have better understanding, they realize they're not supposed to be mourning, but they're supposed to be rejoicing, that their understanding was not complete.

And so you must remember that just an emotional response is not the answer. The appropriate emotional response is good, but not just any emotional response will do.

Verse number nine, at the very bottom, it says, For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Well, that sounds like that's pretty good. That sounds like a good way to end the day, except if you look right before it, it says, This day is holy unto the Lord your God.

Morn not nor weep. For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. Were they supposed to mourn and were they supposed to weep? The answer is no. It was told here in the word of God that that was not to be the response from it.

[21 : 26] But that's what they did. What happens after six hours of standing and reading the Bible? People are crying. I could see how that could happen, all right? Standing for six hours would make me mourn and weep. I have flashbacks of walking through Disney World with a kid on my shoulders, all right?

I feel like your legs are going to break. And so what happens here, it was not brought out by some sensational preacher but by simple exposition. Not a sensational preacher, simple exposition.

The word of God is read, the people are listening to it, and now they're going to respond. Let me tell you why they're grieved. Is there's a gap between who they should be and who they've become.

The Bible says that the Bible is for correction, 2 Timothy 3.16. That was what was happening in their lives. Correction was happening, which is going to lead the confession. Some 24 days later, in the same passage here, at the start of chapter number 9, we're going to see this confession that takes place.

It's a good recipe for believers to read the word together, make confession of sins, the God, and the worship in truth. Nehemiah 9.3, and they stood up in their place and they read in the books of the law, the Lord their God, one fourth part of the day and another fourth part they confessed and they worshiped the Lord their God.

[22 : 37] And then they mourn and they weep. And verse number 33 tells why they did this. How be it that art just and all that is brought upon us, for thou hast done right, but we have done wickedly.

After hearing the word of God and it was simply explained to them, they are moved to a response where they recognize that they are guilty and they need to confess and they mourn.

And that's where they would have stayed. But the word of God brings them past that. That wasn't a full understanding. So Nehemiah and Ezra and the Levites knew that on this occasion the people should not mourn or weep.

This day is holy unto the Lord your God. Mourn not, nor weep. See, each time that they say they give a reason for it. Like, if you'll follow with me, I'm going to look at verses 8, 9, 8, 10, and 8, 11 here.

It says, This day is holy unto the Lord. Mourn not, or weep. Verse 10. This day is holy unto the Lord for the joy of the Lord is your strength. Again, this day is holy, neither be ye grieved.

[23 : 42] And so they understood something correctly back in verse number 8, but evidently there's more to understand. They needed to have a better sense of what God was teaching here in the Word.

Not just any emotional response will do. Look at what it says in verse number 12. They were weeping in response to what they understood, but in verse 12, they stopped weeping and they rejoiced because they had understood what was declared unto them.

This was not a weeping for joy. This is a weeping for failure. They were grieved over having disobeyed God for so long. That is a proper response to the holiness of God, but it is not if the weeping lingers too long.

A holy response to the holiness of the merciful God of Israel was not simply weeping. God was giving them another opportunity to repent, to turn, and to walk with them.

And they needed to fully understand it. He was going to take their weeping and turn it into joy. And they didn't fully understand. Stephanie and I, when we were first married, we got pulled over.

[24 : 43] I was driving and she seemed to know what to do. She had been there a few times before, all right? And I was nervous and if I wasn't, I always pretend to be nervous because that looks like you don't do that a lot, right? And I got pulled over and I was at the police officer.

He, we talked a little bit and he said, I'm okay. I think I didn't, I didn't have some document that I needed and he said it like this. He said, well, I can either give you a ticket today or I can give you a warning and you can bring in your document to the courthouse next week.

Well, I was so scared. I sat there for a second and I thought, I don't know which one I want to do. And Stephanie said, we'll see you next week. All right? She understood what he was saying but I didn't understand what he was saying and so my emotion was not fully caught up to where I was at.

And then when my wife explained it to me, I'm like, oh, this is good, isn't it? She said, yes, it's good. All right? And we moved on but my lack of fully understanding the big picture left me emotionally not where I was supposed to end that day.

I wanted to be more precise in my understanding. I could preach a message today and tell you however one of us are sinners and deserve hell and that was true and that ought to bring conviction upon our lives and those of us that are here safe would still recognize that our sins hurt a God and quenched the Holy Spirit and we would feel guilty and mourn but that's not where the story ends, is it?

[26 : 03] Because I'd also tell you that Jesus Christ died in our place and that your mourning ought to go to weeping if you would trust the Word of God. That's what here is happening in Nehemiah chapter number 8 is that you all feel miserable because you're not where you should be in your mourning and weeping but the Word of God says not today.

Don't weep but rejoice and trust the Word of God. And so what do they propose as an alternative to weeping and grieving? I like this so much better. Verse 10 and 12 it says eat the fat and drink the sweet drink and send portions that anyone has nothing ready.

That's what they're supposed to do alright? They're supposed to go and they're supposed to have a feast and they're supposed to celebrate and you're supposed to go and find anybody who's lacking and make sure that they have and what's the reason in verse number 10 for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

The joy of the Lord is the rejoicing that replaces the grieving in their lives. The Word of God was taught and there was understanding. Not in a superficial where they understood it but they went precisely and understood what was happening and they were helping each other do this and they're going to respond.

This is my favorite part okay? I've loved every part but this is my favorite part right here. We're going to see the response to the Word of God in a very real way as they gather supplies for the feast of the tabernacles.

[27 : 19] Verse number 8 I want to read this to you again it says and so they read in the book of the law of God distinctly and gave the sense and they caused them to understand the reading. That is what was supposed to happen when the Word of God was open and then application will be made.

See application is where the battle is won. That shows an understanding of Scripture. Go with me if you will either in your mind or turn with me to Matthew chapter number 4.

This is a story where the devil takes Jesus up to the holy city and he said to them on a pinnacle of the temple and he looks out and he says if you are the son of God then cast yourself down for it is written he shall give his angels charge concerning thee and in their hands they shall bear them up unless at any time dash the foot against them and Jesus said unto him it is written again thou shalt not tempt the Lord thy God.

You see Jesus didn't debate Satan's translation of Hebrew Scriptures. The understanding of Scripture is going to be shown an application. He said something and then he made a wrong application and Jesus said it is written.

He showed what the Scripture compared with itself it was saying. He was pointing out Satan's misapplication of Scriptures because it's not just knowing mentally the verse the chapter and the verse and being able to quote it it's knowing how to apply it to your life that really demonstrates if you understand the Word of God.

[28 : 42] And so it says the Bible was read distinctly and they were given the sense and they were given understanding the question you would ask today is did I understand anything? Did I learn anything? That's something you'll ask your kids on the way home.

The question is did you learn anything today? And that means can you repeat anything that the teachers told you? But the real question is did you understand anything? Is can you make application into your life?

Are you going to apply this? And that is where it shows that you have understanding. Verse number 13 says this that the fathers they returned the second day they come back after they did that for six hours the chief of the fathers they come back that second day and this is what they say in verse number 14 and they found written in the law which the Lord had commanded by Moses that the children of Israel shall dwell in booths in the feast of the seventh month.

Look what we have found in scriptures we are supposed to be dwelling in these booths there is something that's supposed to be happening on the feast of the seventh month. What time is it? Well if you look at chapter 8 verse number 2 you can check your calendar they are in that moment and so they're saying the word of God says that at this time this is what we are supposed to do.

Leviticus chapter number 23 explains it to them and so what do they do? They go out into the hills of Jerusalem and they cut down branches and they immediately respond to what was happening.

[30 : 05] The time of the calendar year was the feast of the tabernacles. This historically imperfect people that God had made a way for them to be forgiven and even though in their tradition they did not learn to keep this feast of the tabernacles they hadn't done it since the days of Joshua they are now relying upon the word of God and not tradition and the feast of the tabernacles was all about remembering how God had blessed and provided for Israel in the wilderness during the exodus that this was a time set aside it was a holy day that they were supposed to be celebrating what God had done and taking them through the wilderness wondering and what do the men do?

They go out and they move on it. What a wonderful thing for a group of children to get to see as a community of people hearing the word of God taught and then immediately going out and acting upon it.

I won't read it for you but this little homework for you if you like it go to Nehemiah chapter number 13 and see what Nehemiah did to the dads who did not teach their kids to speak Hebrew and you'll know that Nehemiah thought application to the word of God was really really important and he does a few wrestling moves that I'm not allowed to do and you ought to check that out.

But let me just end with this it's just a beautiful sequence okay God uses Ezra and other teachers to help the congregation understand the scriptures that's all that they came to do is just to understand the scriptures people process that information and they go from mourning to rejoicing they hear the word of God but they don't know how to fully respond to it but as they listen and the answer is given to them they go from mourning to rejoicing and they submit their emotions to the word of God I feel like I should be mourning right now but the word of God tells me to rejoice because this is a holy day this is the day that we remember that God has forgiven their people and so this may be how I feel but the word of God says this is how I should respond to this truth and then the people responded to the word with obedience they just responded to the word with obedience and that's what we're going to do today as text driven people it's not just here but I pray that it's in our lives that's if you'll throw up this email

I'll just show this for the sake of humor but I get all these emails all the time where they're saying hey why does your church try this or do this and all these things will happen and this is my common response I think we'll just stick with the word please and thank you alright that is my answer to all the advertisements we get all the time about all the things that we should do as a church I think we're just going to stick with the word please and thank you that's just what my mom always said when you want to be nice alright please and thank you why don't we decide that as a church let's just stick with the word let's not let anything get so complicated and not so confusing that we're going to remain people that just simply want to live out the word let me read with me Nehemiah chapter number 8 verse 17 as we close here today or follow along if you will and all the congregation of them that were come again out of captivity made booths and said under the booths for since the days of Joshua the son of Nun until the day had not the children of Israel done so and there was very great gladness these people had not obeyed the word for all these years but now that they've read it and they're responding what did it bring to them it brought great gladness

[33 : 32] I can promise you the same as well if you find anything in scriptures like these men did and said hey it says we're supposed to be doing this if you find anything in this scripture that tells you that you're supposed to be doing it maybe not immediately but eventually you will find the gladness obedience to the Lord you ought to let it guide your life and here in a moment we're going to pray and ask my brothers and sisters in here to evaluate and say how do I make application am I showing reverence to the word of God when I come to Bible teaching have I prepared my heart am I taking something where I just take some superficial meeting or am I asking God to give me precisely what he would have for me today and am I looking to leave and make application and if you're in here today and you're not a believer the song that was sung right before it says show us Christ it is in this word that we love it so very much because from beginning to end we learn about the God of heaven and how he created us and because he was the creator he gets to decide what is right and wrong but as God's people as people in this world that were created by him we broke his law and he sent his son to die in our place and in dying in our place we now we put our faith and trust in him receive forgiveness of sins but not only did he come and die in our place but he rose again a third day all the most wonderful truth in the world is available to us because the word of God and because we love you we're going to make sure that the word of God stays central to who we are as God's people because if we do not protect

God's word then we will lose this life changing message of the gospel let's pray together heavenly father I want to thank you for your word that I get the hold in my hand today Lord father you know how many times in my life father that I have neglected it and I've allowed other things I have been emotionally driven I've been idea driven I've been opportunity driven but father with everything in me as much as ever I want to be text driven Lord in my life and Lord that is my prayer for my brothers and sisters in here with heads bowed and eyes closed and I speak to my my brothers and sisters in here more than just something we do as a church but as a family and as an individual will you see that there's gladness and finding in the scriptures what it wants for your life and then obeying it and recognize it maybe you're wrestling right now with something you know to be right and you haven't decided to do that right now you need to give in and you need to say father I will do what you have commanded in your scriptures because you know what is best for me maybe you haven't been reverencing the word of God like you should that's meaning that you make it part of your life then I also ask you in here to allow your emotions to be set by the word of God allow what he says about you to be true don't just determine based on what you feel but let the word of God determine how you should feel and today is a day of rejoicing for us it's wonderful that we are people with

God's word if you're in here today and you don't know Jesus today is the day of salvation we would love to share with you more about the message of Jesus Christ and help you have understanding about these things father I thank you for this opportunity to be with your people we love you and we love your word father we as a people renew our commitment to be led by your word in Jesus name I pray amen