

# Right Attitude Towards the Bible Brings Revival

*Disclaimer: this is an automatically generated machine transcription - there may be small errors or mistranscriptions. Please refer to the original audio if you are in any doubt.*

Date: 06 January 2019

- [ 0 : 00 ] Take your Bibles now, if you would, and go with me to Nehemiah chapter 8, Nehemiah chapter 8. And we'll start reading here in just a minute in verse 1. You know, all over America, people are trying to figure out what church is supposed to look like.
- And so they're trying to figure out, are we going to have a lot of music? Are we going to have a lot of, are we going to have a show, a skit? What are we going to do?
- And if you were in the religious world and followed all the blogs, you'd just be blowing your mind about all the ideas. But here God just explains flat out what he wanted. So read with me, if you would, in Nehemiah chapter 8.
- We don't have to wonder about what church ought to look like. We've got a good idea right here in the Old Testament as he explained to the nation of Israel. In Nehemiah chapter 8, if you would. I want to read with you verse 1, and I'm going to pray.
- The Bible says in Nehemiah 8, 1, And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate. And they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.
- [ 1 : 04 ] Father, I pray you'd do a work today. I pray you'd encourage us as we realize that we meet together to study your word, to learn more from you, to gain what you had to say.
- We're not here for a show. We're not here for a theatrical play. We're here to hear from the word of God. And I pray, God, that you would speak today, grow us, mature us, and help us to serve you.
- And I give you praise for all you do. In Jesus' name, amen. Well, if you've got your Bible open here in chapter 1, I want you to notice what ends up happening. And write this down somewhere. Here's the key.
- It's the importance of the book. How many of you got a copy of the book in your hand? Let me see your book. Let me see your book. It's supposed to have a book. You need a book because it's all about the book. Thank you. Put your Bible down. Half of you people had your phone up.
- Your book works better. Okay? So they brought the book. And I'm not against electronics, by the way, if you hadn't noticed. But anyway, Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 1.
- [ 2 : 03 ] The book was so important that all the people got together. And they go to Ezra and they say, we'd like to hear from that book. I want you to read the verse. It was the people. The Bible says, and all the people gathered together as one man into the street.
- And they spake unto Ezra. It wasn't like Ezra said, y'all need to get together. I'm going to read the book to you. It was like this. They were like, hey, we need to hear from the book. So get the book. Bring the book. We'll be there.
- You show up. You teach us the book. So that started with them. The people, all of them gathered to hear it. Look, if you went to Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 1. Nehemiah chapter 8. When they opened the book, the people stood up.
- You know, it doesn't seem that there was any kind of command. But if you'll read Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 5, Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people. He was above the people, so he's in the sight of all the people.

And when he opened it, all the people stood up. How many of y'all ever been in one of those churches where when they read the Bible, everybody stands for the reading of the Word of God? You know why we don't do that here, don't you? Because we read it the whole hour.

[ 3 : 02 ] So you'd be standing up the whole hour. So, I mean, we don't read one verse and say, sit down. I'm just like, if I did, I'm fixing to read 8.5. Y'all stand. Thank you. Now you can sit down. All right, stand back up. We're on 8.6. So that's why we don't do that here.

But here's what happened with them. They stood up for four hours. I mean, they got there. When they opened the Bible, when they opened the Word of God, they stood up and they stood up for four hours. They thought this book was important enough.

It was like, you be quiet. You pay attention. We're listening to the book. We ask them to bring the book, and we're here to hear the book. Look, if you would, in Nehemiah chapter 8, verse 3. Y'all stand. Not really. Nehemiah chapter 8, verse 3.

If you would, look what it says. And he read therein, before the street that was before the water gate, from the morning to midday, and before the men and the women, and those that could understand, and the ears of all the people were, and this is what I want you to underline, attentive.

They paid attention. They came and said, we're here to hear the book. Everybody be quiet. Y'all don't be talking over there. Hey, y'all don't be walking around, wandering around over there.

[ 4 : 02 ] Hey, you kids stand still and listen. We're here to hear the book. They were attentive to the book. I love this. In Nehemiah chapter 8, verse 1, the Bible says they knew where the book came from.

Just look at the last part of the verse, if you would. It says, they said, they spake to Ezra the scribe, bring the book of the law of Moses. And then they said, which the Lord had commanded to Israel.

They knew when they said, bring the book. They weren't bringing the book of Moses. It was the book of Moses. That was the title of the book. But now, I want you to look at the verse. If you're reading right here, they said, bring the book of the law of Moses, comma, which the Lord commanded Israel.

They knew Moses wasn't the one who did the talking here. They knew God did the talking. When we come together, we may be reading out of a Bible. We may be reading it in English. And we may be reading the book of Nehemiah. And you may be thinking, this is the book of Nehemiah.

But here's what they would have said. Yeah, read the book of Nehemiah, what God told Nehemiah to write down. That's what they were saying. It was what God said. They knew. Those people knew. Now, if you would, they were attentive.

[ 5 : 03 ] And they read to them and explained the Bible to them in Nehemiah 8, verse 3. He read therein from the morning to the midday to everybody that could understand. They weren't saying, our kids don't understand.

They were saying, they can understand. They can be quiet. They need to hear from God. And they brought them in, sat them down, and said, listen, you need to hear God. God's word. Number two, write this down somewhere.

Let's write down. Let's look at the preacher of God's word. The preacher of God's word. Nehemiah 8, verse 1, he brought the book. He brought the book. One of the saddest things about Bible preaching in most churches nowadays is the preacher will open the Bible.

He can read one verse, shut the Bible, say, you don't need to look at your Bible. Just look up here at me. I'm here to talk to you. Y'all pay attention to me. That's not Bible preaching. That's a man talking. And so when they did it, Nehemiah 8, verse 1, he brought the book.

I love that. I'll just be honest with you. I'm just an old guy who still gets excited about the Bible. And it says, he said in the, bring the book. You ought to underline that in 8, 1. Bring the book. Y'all bring the book.

[ 6 : 06 ] Bring the book. And let's hear what the book has got to say. And then he stood. The preacher stood where everyone could see him. Look at Nehemiah 8, verse 4. And Ezra, the scribe, stood upon a pulpit of wood.

Now, some people that don't know good English read that. I have actually known, pretty well-known preachers, that when they show up at a place, they go check out the pulpit and see if they can jump up on it.

And literally, he's kind of famous. And so he would come and he'd be like, y'all might get me a lower pulpit. That's not what he's talking about here. This pulpit, there's going to be at least 14 men sitting on the pulpit.

So the word pulpit here is the platform I'm standing on. And they just wanted him to get high enough, not to be better than the people, but we need the people to be able to see. People need to be able to see so they could hear and understand.

And they didn't have a PA system. They didn't have a PA system. And he's speaking to all those people, so he needs to be up there where he can get his voice out and where people can understand. Look at Nehemiah 8, verse 7.

[ 7 : 07 ] Now, I'm not going to read Nehemiah 8, verse 7, so you won't need to stand up. The reason I'm not going to read it, if you'll look at it, is all those names. I'm from Tennessee. That simply means I can't read.

Nehemiah 8, verse 7 says, all those names, and then it says, underlined in the last part of the verse, caused the people to understand the law. You know what he did?

He'd get up there to spout off some kind of political view, whether he liked the president or didn't like the president, whether he approved of certain bills that were going before the Congress or not. He didn't get up there to tell a bunch of jokes.

He didn't get up there to tell a bunch of stories and make everybody fall in love with him. He held up the book and said, I'm here to talk about the book, and here's what we're going to do. I'm going to read it, and I'm going to help you to look at it. Underline that in your Bible. Understand the law.

And the people stood in their place. He explained the law. I love chapter 8 and verse 8. Look at Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 8. Look at what it says. He read it carefully and explained the meaning.

[ 8 : 04 ] Look at Nehemiah 8, 8. They read in the book of the law of God. Now, you need to underline some things. They read in the book. I love that book, huh? They read in the book.

What book? The law of God. That would be Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy. And underline this word distinctly. Everybody be quiet. Pay attention. I'm going to pronounce the words.

I'm going to make sure you get it. I'm here to help you understand what it says distinctly. And then look at what it says. Gave the sense. Let me help you understand what it's saying.

Let me make sure you're getting it. And then it caused them to understand. Caused them to understand. You know what his job was? What's really interesting?

His job was to stand up here and say, now, let me read it to you. Here's what it says. Now, let me help you understand what that means. Now, here, I'm going to say it to you. Do y'all get what it's saying? Because I'm only here to be a voice for what this says.

[ 9 : 00 ] I'm going to read this to you and make sure you understand this. Because we're here to study this. We're here to know what this book said. Now, Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 4.

I just love this verse. Of course, I love them all. I guess you figured that out by now. But anyway, you can't show favorites with your kids. Amen. Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 4. Look what it says.

And Ezra, the scribe, stood on a pulpit of wood, which he had made for the purpose. And underline this. And beside him stood. On his right hand, there's six or seven on one side and seven on the other side.

Some of them are on his right hand and some are on his left hand. That's a crazy thing in the world. I just want you to imagine being here at church. And I get up to preach. And I got six guys on this side and seven guys on this side.

And we're all standing. Y'all are all standing. And I'm standing. You get the idea, don't you? Number one, all of those guys were Bible teachers and preachers. I think I'll get to showing you that before it's over. In other words, it wasn't like there was just one guy in the room that knew the book.

[ 10 : 03 ] There was a bunch of guys in the room that knew the book. And those guys are going to take the responsibility of telling everybody about the book. Everybody needs to understand the book. That's why we do discipleship here. That's why we study in Sunday school classes.

You might not be coming, but there's people in the Sunday school class this morning that held up the book and told some people about the book in the Sunday school class. And we're going to do that tonight. We're going to open the book, and we're going to talk about the book tonight. We're going to do that again on Thursday night.

We're going to talk about the book because we won't understand what the book says. They stood there to say they were in agreement. You know, they didn't have a copy. They didn't come in the room like you did this morning.

They didn't come in with their own copy of the Bible in their hand. They didn't come in. Some of y'all came in and said, I'm reading my Bible, but don't worry. I'm on the You version right now. I done got on the Internet and found me another copy of the Bible, and I'm reading the Bible.

They didn't do that, so all the people had to sit out there going, I wonder if that's what it really says. As he spoke, he was like 13. I'm going, that's what it says. Yep, that's what it says. Yep, he's right on that.

[ 10 : 57 ] So it wasn't like there was one guy. There was truth that was pretty obvious for everybody. Third thing I want you to say if you would. Go with me to see the people in the story. Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 2.

Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 2. Everybody came that could understand. Everybody came that could understand. You've got to understand, they believe that this is the Word of God.

They want to hear the Word of God. They want to understand the Word of God. And they want their kids to understand the Word of God. They want their children to know what God's Word says. Can I get an amen right there?

Can I just be honest with you? Some of you are too worried about you knowing what the Bible says. But you're not that worried about your kids knowing what the Bible says. If there is a hell, the Bible says there is. I believe there is. I've taken my life on it.

If there is a heaven, and I believe there is. I've taken my life on that. I want my kids to know what I know about that. I want them all to get to go to heaven. I want them all not to go to hell. I want them all to know the God of the Bible. If this book is true, there is a God.

[ 11 : 56 ] And if this book is true, there is a judgment. Look at 8.2. Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation. And all that could hear with understanding were there with him. All that could hear.

They responded. They didn't stand there like not so long. They didn't get to sit. They were standing. All day long. Four hours at least. Nehemiah 8, verse 6. Look what it says. And Ezra blessed the Lord and the great God.

And the people answered, Amen. Amen. With lifting up their hands, they bowed their heads. They worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground. So here's basically what happened there.

He said, Boy, God is good. No, that wasn't it. You didn't follow the scripture. Boy, God sure is good. It was two of them. Amen. In this passage anyway.

And God, the God of heaven created the whole world. He is the savior of the world. See, they were excited. Here's what y'all are like, man, we ain't Pentecostal. Calm that down.

[ 12 : 57 ] There weren't any Pentecostals in Nehemiah. Pentecost doesn't happen for a few hundred years after Nehemiah. They were already saying amen. They weren't just saying amen. They were lifting their hands. They were like, we're not here to hear Ezra.

He's just a guy out there talking. We're here for you. Hey, we're here for you. And then they were like, we're going to bow our heads. We're going to look towards the ground. We're going to humble ourselves. We're going to humble ourselves.

Because we've heard the word of God. Because all of a sudden, human beings are in a room hearing words from God and understanding them. They weren't in a room.

I said that wrong. They were outside. But thank God for air conditioning and seats. Could I get an amen right there? I'm the only one that has to stand up the whole time around here. Tell me if you would now to Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 12.

Then they got happy when they heard the truth. A little bit. They heard the truth and they got happy. Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 12. And all the people went their way to eat and to drink and to send portions and to make great mirth.

[ 14 : 00 ] You're like, what in the world is that? That's a big celebration. That's like having a blast. They were having a party. And look why. Because they had understood the words that were declared to them.

They got through hearing it and they're like, man, that's good. That is good stuff. Wow. God loves us. Jesus died for us.

We can be saved. We can have eternal life. Here's how you leave church. Glad that's over. Let's go to the house. Let's go find something to eat. They left going, woohoo.

Let's have a party. Y'all come over to the house. We're going to have steak and we're going to have no bacon because they were Jews. We're going to have steak and we're going to have Coca-Cola and we're going to enjoy ourselves. And we're just going to sit around talking about how good God is.

I'm going to have a party tonight. In fact, as I'll show you in this minute, they're actually going to be having, it's more like Christmas than the other thing in the Bible. When they did it, they all started giving gifts to each other. They got so excited. And they were told to by God.

[ 15 : 01 ] Now look, the scriptures bring great joy. Go with me if you would to Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 9. Excuse me. I skipped something I need to say to you. Go to Nehemiah 8, 16. They obeyed what they heard.

When they understood it, it's not about, now listen to me, it's not about learning. It's about putting into action. It's not about information. It's about transformation.

It's not about you knowing more. It's about you doing more. Nehemiah chapter 8, verse 16. So the people went forth and bought them and made themselves booze.

Everyone upon the roof of the house and the courts and the courts of the house of the God in the street, they all made booze. I need to explain that to you. See, they are returning from the Babylonian captivity.

Their nation has been slaves for 70 years in a foreign country. And they have been allowed to return to the nation of Israel.

[ 15 : 57 ] They've been allowed to return to their city. And they are now in their city. And the walls have been completed. The doors have been put up. Most everything is done. And all of a sudden, it's like we've been working hard for over 52 days.

Could somebody just bring the book to us and tell us what the book says? Because this is the city of the book. It's the city of God. It's the city where God spoke. And so they bring the book. And when they're reading in the book, they found out that when God wanted his people to celebrate, they would go out and build these tents, these booths, these tabernacles, these places to sit outside.

You just go to Kmart or Walmart. You don't go to Kmart anymore. You go to Walmart and you go buy you Sam's or Costco. And you go buy you a tent. So you go buy you one of them shades. And they all went and bought that.

And they went outside. And it was like, we don't have time for TV right now. We don't have time for sports right now. We don't have time for anything else. We're just going to be together as a family. And think about how good God was. You're going to find out in the passage that's what he told them to do.

And when they heard it, they said, okay, we'll do it. It's been hundreds of years since they'd ever done anything like that. But they were obeying God. You're going to hear what the word of God says. You come to our church. You're going to hear it over and over. What does God say?

[ 17 : 07 ] What does the Bible say? You're not supposed to just go home and say, well, that was pretty interesting. That's all right. I mean, it wasn't that bad. You're supposed to go home and say, I heard something. I'm supposed to put that in practice now. Amen.

Now, the scriptures bring great joy. Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 9. As soon as they heard the preaching, they got sad. That means I was preaching. They're going to bring the next guy up in a second. But look at Nehemiah chapter 8 and verse 9.

And Nehemiah and Ezra and the Levites that taught the people said unto them, This day is holy unto the Lord your God. Mourn not nor weep.

For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. See, they got there and they realized for the first time they're like, That's why our people were slaves in Babylon.

We broke God's law and God's punishments come on us. This is terrible. This is terrible. We failed God. And it broke their hearts. But the real story was that that had happened.

[ 18 : 12 ] But now God had given deliverance. And they were no longer slaves. And they were no longer in bondage. And they were no longer living in Babylon. They're now back in Jerusalem.

Their city. So the curse is over. The band has been lifted. Slavery is gone. Their walls are built. God has shown his power. Have fun. By the way, real Bible preaching ought to make you sad when you're living in sin.

Real Bible preaching, if you come to hear the Bible and you're not a saved person, it ought to make you sad. If you're not putting your faith in Christ, you've not believed in him, you're not trusting him as your Savior, the Bible ought to make you sad.

Because you need to get sad before you can get glad. You need to realize you have sinned against the Holy God. You need to realize that you have an eternal destiny of hell if something doesn't change. And so they wept.

They saw their sin. But see, God had already done the work. And they needed to realize that. They needed to find great joy in the Lord and what he had done. So they cried.

[ 19 : 10 ] But go with me to Nehemiah 8, verse 10. And look what he says. So the preachers say to them, Go your way and eat the fat, and drink the sweet, and send gifts, portions, right?

Gifts right there. Unto them for whom nothing is prepared. For this day is holy unto the Lord. No more being sorry, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.

You are to get excited. I won't say to you that John Pearson said he'd been over there eating the fat and drinking the sweet. And sending portions. And he's sad about that. These guys are getting glad about it.

So while John goes on a diet, I'm planning on eating the fat. Look at it here. As an inside joke. If you don't go to church here, but you'll figure it out later. The preacher got up there and he said, Stop crying, everybody.

God's already done a work in you. You're no longer living in Babylon, are you? You're not living in slavery, are you? Are you not sitting in the middle of Jerusalem? You're where God delivered you and built the walls around you.

[ 20 : 16 ] Let's get happy. Now here's what we're going to do today. This afternoon, we're just going to have a big celebration. Everybody go out and get the best food you can eat. Get the fat.

That was usually reserved for God and the offering. That was usually reserved for the priest. And he's like, Nope. Today God says you can have the best stuff. Go get the best. And go get the sweet stuff and drink it. You don't even have to drink Diet Coke.

You can have the real thing. And you can send portions. Don't be sorry. The joy of the Lord. This passage sounds more like Christmas. It's the only thing I see in the Bible. I mean, every time you talk about Christmas in the Bible, you know, you talk about how Jesus gets the gifts.

And then you talk about Christmas. For us, it's like Jesus gets no gifts and we get all the gifts. And we don't really even talk about Jesus. We just say we're talking about Jesus. But in this passage, a preacher said, Y'all going home?

Everybody get it. You're going to build some booze. We're going to go outside, outside. We're all going to get together out there in the parking lot. We're all going to set up our own tent. We're all going to bring our best food. And we're going to have a party of parties. And by the way, some of the people don't have enough food to have a big party today.

[ 21 : 17 ] So you just go ahead and get some of your food so you can share it with some of the people. Some of y'all are going to be bringing a big old ribeye. And that other guy's going to be overeating a chicken wing. Just one. So you cut off some of your ribeye and you take it over to him.

Because we're going to party today. And here's what we're partying about. The joy of the Lord is our strength. That's what it says. They were giving gifts. They were giving to others as they worshiped.

It's like an old-fashioned camp meeting where people got happy about what God had done in their lives. In our church, if anybody ever got happy, we'd all pass out and die. If anybody ever got happy at this church, we'd be calling 911, send some ambulances.

These people are happy. These people are happy. When's the last time you got excited about how good he is? Nehemiah 8, verse 11. Now, we're just reading the Bible.

So you can see it right in front of you. We're just reading it distinctly and giving the sense and making you understand it. That's all we're doing. They were commanded not to be sad. They were commanded to have a big party.

[ 22 : 16 ] They were to be celebrating their deliverance. Look at Nehemiah 8, verse 11. The Levites steal the people. These are like the deacons in the church. These men knew the Word of God.

They helped teach the Bible. And they're up to say, hey, hey, stop the crying. Y'all ain't getting the message, are you? You're still thinking he's upset. But he's not upset anymore. He put all his upset on Jesus.

And Jesus died for it. So there's a party now. You can be saved. And they're calming everybody down. They say, hold your peace. Calm down. The day is holy. This is God's day.

Don't be grieved. Neither be grieved. Verse 12. The people went their way to eat, to drink, to send portions, and to make great mirth.

Because they had understood the words that were declared unto them. So all of a sudden, they were like, okay, we'll stop crying. And they were starting to talk and chew the fat together. And saying, hey, I'm going to run at the house.

[ 23 : 13 ] I got a big old ribeye at the house. I got enough to feed my family. I got one left over. I noticed you didn't have. That's all right. I got something for you. You don't have to worry about it. They ran over there. And they got all their stuff. And they got everybody outside.

And they're having a party. And I want you to underline in verse 12. Why? Because they understood the words. You know what these words are about? You know what these words are about? You know why these words make you happy?

Because in these words, you find out you've sinned. And in these words, you find out you deserve to go to hell. And in these words, you find out that unless some miracle happens, you have no hope.

And then God says, but I'm giving you hope. And he sends Jesus to die on a cross and to pay every man's sin debt. And so everybody can be saved. And he does all that. And the whole book is about how we messed up and how he's fixing up all the mess ups we made.

And so we read it. We're like, I could have never got out of my sin. I could have never had a new life. I could have never expected blessings on earth and in heaven. I could have, man, I'm happy. I'm hearing about God.

[ 24 : 12 ] That's what's going on in the verse. Great mirth. What they had been missing was they didn't understand the Bible. Look at Nehemiah chapter 8 verse 13. So they spent four or five hours on the first day reading and explaining.

And then they said, we need to get together tomorrow. They're going to do it like seven days in a row. They're having a party week. Party week is like you drive around Georgia. You'll see these camp meetings. That's where all the people used to come and sat around.

And then somebody would get up and preach to them half a day or all day. And so they got together. Verse 8, chapter 8, verse 13. The chief of the fathers of all the people, the priests and the Levites, they went to Ezra to understand the words of the law.

They said, we need to know what God says. I don't mind that. We need to know what God says. To understand the words of, well, we need to know what God says. I've heard Dr. Phil. I know Steve on TV.

He's got lots of answers. I know Oprah has answers. But could I hear what God's got to say about it? Could somebody just get out the book and explain to me what the book says? That book, it stood the test of time.

[ 25 : 14 ] Verse 14. And they found written in the law, which the Lord had commanded by Moses, that the children of Israel should dwell in Booth in the feast of the seventh month.

They're like, it's the seventh month. Reading this, reading this, make Booth in the seventh month. Have a big party. Think about how good I've been to you. They said, that's saying, in the seventh month, we're supposed to set up some booths, some tabernacles, and celebrate how God delivered them.

In the days of Esther, you'll learn about that later. How God delivered it was a celebration time. And they said, that's what it says. And somebody looked around and said, well, if that's what it says, I think we ought to do it. If that's what it says, I think we ought to do it.

They hadn't understood what the Bible was saying. But now they did. Chapter 8 and verse 15. And that they should publish and proclaim in all their cities, go out and make Booths.

Go out and celebrate the goodness of God. With Jonah 9 and verse 15, they ought to publish and proclaim. That meant make a big noise and let everybody know there's a God who saved us.

[ 26 : 21 ] There's a God who delivered us. There's a God who's done great things. And we're going to celebrate his goodness. So they decided to do what God told them to do. In chapter 8 and verse 16, they went out and all of them started making booze.

In chapter 8 and verse 17, they did it. I wish you'd look at the last three words in chapter 8 and verse 17. There was very great gladness. Years ago, a friend of mine named Dale was married to a girl named Kay.

And Kay had never been saved. And Dale was just a country bumpkin preacher up outside of Rome, Georgia. Out in the country. Sweet man. Great man. Pipe fitter. Hard working man.

Good guy. And, but his wife wasn't saved. And he prayed for her. And he prayed for her. And he prayed for her. And I prayed for her. And we all prayed for her. We were friends of theirs.

We went over to their house. But Kay was not really ready to just trust Christ. She had been raised religious. She had been raised in a Christian home. She had been going to a formalistic, ritualistic church.

[ 27 : 25 ] And she just didn't feel like she needed to trust Christ. And some preacher, priest one night, one Sunday morning, I believe it was, I still remember it vividly. And all of a sudden, Kay got out of her seat and walked up to the front and got on her knees.

And somebody opened the Bible and they were showing her how to trust Christ. And all of a sudden, it about scared the whole, we all about died. This is Southern Baptist Church. You don't do that in that. And Dale started to go, whoa, yes!

And he ran down to the front and he was hollering. And I mean, everybody's looking. We're supposed to be praying, but nobody's praying, buddy. We're checking out the guy that's happy. Look at him. He's down there and she got saved.

She stood up. He's hugging her. He's crying. Big old, big old husky guy had been a Marine. Man, he was excited. That's what's going on in this book.

Very great gladness. In chapter 8 and verse 18, they kept reading and learning every day. And day by day, from the first day to the last, he read in the book.

[ 28 : 21 ] They said, man, one day and enough. By the time this is over, they got like 28 hours of Bible reading time going. They've been reading the Bible. God's word should bring great joy in our lives as we obey and put it into practice.

So let me just real quickly give you some decisions you ought to make based on Nehemiah chapter 8 today. Number one, you ought to be a student of the word of God. Huh? I mean, if God in heaven said something, you wouldn't listen?

In this religious world, if they think they've seen an apparition of Mary, if they think Jesus showed up someplace, they flood that place to find out, I don't need to run anywhere. I got a copy of what he said.

I don't need to see him in a rock or a tree or a cloud. I can read about him in the word of God. Get to being a personal student of the word of God. Be present every time the Bible's taught.

You really want to know what's going on? Some of you, man, you're just like wine tasters. You're just sipping it. That's pretty good putting it down. You're not getting drunk on what God's got to say. You're not excited about it.

[ 29 : 28 ] You just get a little bit. You've got just enough of a dose to get through next week. We've got a lot of services going on around here. Hey, we're doing this a bunch. You say, well, you sure are excited about the Bible. I'm not the only one.

I don't have seven men. I started to get them all to stand up here. And then I thought this platform's a little bit small for that. But we've got a bunch of people who would be glad to teach you the Bible. Come prepared to learn. Go to bed early.

Get to church early. On Saturday nights, you can't stay up bleary-eyed and drag into church. You can't wait because you watched TV or played some dumb computer game. Come in and be here.

Come expecting to hear God speak to you. Get an open Bible. Get an open Bible and a notebook and an ink pen and come in and say, start talking, buddy. You say it.

I'm going to learn about this stuff because I want to know God. That ought to be your attitude. Listen correctly. Lay aside your pride and all the excuses you make. Every time somebody says something from the Word of God, you're like, eh, I don't like that.

[ 30 : 23 ] You're making up excuses. Don't do that. Lay aside your pride. Listen and believe and stop talking during church. Resist distractions. You know, just because somebody's got to get up with a baby don't mean 500 people got to look at her and figure out what she's doing.

She don't even want you looking at her. She's like, I don't really. That makes me uncomfortable. So stop looking at her. Some poor girl gets up with her baby, heads from the bathroom, and they go. And the poor girl's like, good night, man.

It's just me and my baby. Say, man. Go to the bathroom before church starts. So you don't have to get up and go to the bathroom. You grown men. Can't hold it in an hour. Something wrong with you. You might ought to go to the urologist.

I lost a kidney. Maybe we can find it for you. Y'all mad yet? Get a right attitude towards the Word of God.

You need to believe this is really from God. I'll be honest with you. I open it and study it. I study it hours every week, and I don't study it because I like studying. I study it because I like what I hear God say. Look up every reference.

[ 31 : 22 ] Mark your Bible. Respond. Be sensitive and submissive to the Holy Spirit of God. You ought to come to church and say, God, speak to me. They were lifting their hands up to heaven.

They were saying amen. They were bowing their heads. They were saying, Ezra may be the guy doing the talking, but I'm not listening to Ezra. I'm listening to God speak to me through his Word. I want God to speak to me.

Ask questions. Make the changes that the Word of God calls for. Enjoy your salvation. Just to be honest with you, worship ought to be the highlight of your week. What, you going to talk about the book again?

Then I'll be there. I love this part. It's time for me to quit, but I love this part. Ezra wasn't going around and said, now y'all come. They were like, Ezra, get out of your office and bring the book.

Read that Nehemiah chapter 8. It's like, oh, Ezra's back there with the book. And they came in and they said, look, hey, what are you doing back here in the office with the book? I've got the people out there.

[ 32 : 18 ] Now you get out there and talk to them. Ezra's like, well, me and my 13 buddies was back here studying. And they're like, well, get out there. We want to hear. We already got you a platform built. And Ezra walks out and takes a Bible. And when he opens it, they all stood up.

And Ezra's like, what in the world? They want to hear from God. Now what's wrong with you today that you don't want to hear from God? Hmm? Every church in the country shutting down services.

Like we don't need so many services. We don't need to hear from God so much. Why don't we need to hear from God so much? We're getting to be a real good place, huh? Everything's really good nowadays, right? That's why you need less God.

I'm like, we need more God. I'm like, the country's in bad shape. I need a lot more God. Can I get an amen right there? You can even go, amen, amen. You don't know Jesus.

You can today. He loves you. Down on a cross for you. You can be saved. You can have joy. You can feel like old Dale Fincher did that day when Kay got down.

[ 33 : 18 ] Dale's in heaven today. Let's trust him. Let's look for him. Let's serve him. Let's get excited about the book. By the way, tonight we'll be in the book again.

Ladies will be separated from the men. Different sections in here. This room in here. We're going to talk about what the Bible says about alcohol. But don't come. Because you've been listening to a lot of people about that. You want to hear what God says?

Show up. But put on your big boy pants. And we'll talk about a bunch of other stuff like porn and anything else that might be tied up to one of your addictions. And then Sunday morning next week, there's going to be guys standing all over this building.

They've got a room. They've got a Bible. And they're going to be like, come in here and let me teach you more about the Bible. Huh? And then come Thursday night, we're going to do the same thing. And by the way, all during the week, people will meet with people all over the city talking to them about what the Bible says.

We want to talk about the book. You know, the center of our worship is Jesus. But the only way we know Jesus is the book.