

Great Joy in their Worship

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[0 : 0 0] in Nehemiah chapter 12 verse 43 if you want to turn in your Bible there again. When you read that verse you may say well how in the world or why did they have such great joy? So I was thinking about what I think you might consider some great news and I thought about the you know when you read or see old newsreels of the end of World War II and all the people are out in the streets and they are they're celebrating everywhere. The war is over. Their children are coming home.

The country has been saved. Europe has been saved. England has been saved and everybody was having a blast. That's a lot of what's going on in this passage. The nation of Israel has been out of their country living as slaves in another country. They've been there for 70 years and God in his mercy and under the leadership of Nehemiah has gone into that country and brought those people out to their country has built their city back has put the walls around their city and they are coming to the end of this book of Nehemiah and they're like man God has been good and they're going to have this big worship service and they're going to just praise God for how he rebuilt their country. They're going to praise God for how he rescued them from slavery brought them out of slavery brought them back to their country put walls of protection around them gave them back their worship gave them back their land. God was good to them. Can I get an amen right there? I'll give you one better than that.

Sometime somewhere in the past you were on your way to hell. Some of you were sinking in deep sin and if you're honest and you thought back to who you were and what you did you know your life was a mess and God reached down and God spoke to you and God saved you and God brought you out of that. Makes me think of the story of my dad's getting saved. I never knew my dad but as a good Christian I never knew my dad but as a guy that took me to church was a deacon in a church and a servant in a church but to hear him tell the story later on he had been in every kind of sin you can imagine. His mother had died of the infections from an illegal abortion when he was six years of age. He lived on the street. He'd been from one foster home to another foster home. He had he had lived in orphanages. He had run away. He had stolen. He'd lived on the streets and he'd gone into the United States Navy and he was a functioning alcoholic and he came home from the military and he moved back into the sticks the country like none of you even understand that word. I was explaining what it was like to live there this morning and

Latasha was looking at me like dude what but that's where my dad moved back to the little farm on the river and they moved back to that farm and daddy wanted to meet the girls so he just went to any church that had girls and so he went to the church of Christ and he went to the Methodist and he went to the Baptist and he showed up and met my mother and my mother was such a country bumpkin she didn't know what alcoholism looked like and so daddy went to church and according to daddy he would grab ahold of the pew to stand up. He said I wasn't under conviction. He said I couldn't even understand the guy.

I was lit and he said but I sat there sweating and my knuckles turned white and the preacher and my wife or his girlfriend at the time thought he must really be under conviction. He doesn't want to go forward. He's trying to keep from going forward and he said I wouldn't try to keep going forward. I try to keep from falling down and he got married to my mother and they got pregnant with me and the preacher was preaching and he said it's a you know it's a little big room but he said that guy had the longest finger and no one knew she was pregnant and he pointed straight at me and said man you're going to die and go to hell your wife's pregnant right now going to have a boy he's going to grow up and do something for God you're never going to see it. He's like mad at my mother said what'd you do telling him you're pregnant nobody knows you're pregnant. Of course that preacher didn't know that he was just preaching and he said that and dad got saved that day and that brought great joy. No longer a drunkard no longer no longer trying to fake through life God changed him overnight. Now look at the verse with me if you would Nehemiah chapter 12 verse 43 and then also that day they offered great sacrifices big worship service they were offering a lot of bullocks and a lot of lambs and a lot of animals are being sacrificed by the way they're feasting with all of that for God had made them rejoice with great joy. The wives also and the children rejoice so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard even afar off. I was talking on Marco Polo with Ed

[4 : 37] De La Reyes in China and he was telling me what's going on and what's happening there and all of a sudden all these explosions took place and he said hold on Chinese New Year firecrackers going off and he waited a few minutes he turned back on and there's more noise he's I'll be right back and finally so there's joy heard everywhere and and so Jerusalem is so excited if you'd have been way out in the fields you'd be like what in the world's going on in there those people are really happy the joy was heard. I want you to talk about worship today and I want you to find great joy in worship from the lessons we can learn from this set of scriptures. Turn with me to Nehemiah chapter 10 and verse 31 that's where we are in our study of the book of Nehemiah. Nehemiah chapter 10 and verse 31 and you're going to find this little verse right here I want you to understand it but it's kind of not in our it's kind of not in the program today but it's really important so we're going to look at it Nehemiah 10 31 and if the people of the land bring where or any victuals so if the people bring food or merchandise on the Sabbath day Saturday to sell it we will not buy it of them on the seventh day or

Saturday or on any other holy day that we could leave the seventh year and the extraction of every debt. Now if you have your Bible open I want to help you understand what's going on there. You know when you read the Bible it'll make a whole lot more sense if you've got a kind of a general grasp of what's happening and sometimes when you're reading the Bible you'll see terms but because you don't know how God's been using those terms that verse doesn't mean a lot of sense. This verse I think is one of those verses it said the Sabbath day and so let's talk about that real quickly. What's this Sabbath day? Open your Bibles to Exodus chapter 31 and verse 16. The Jews were commanded to rest on the Sabbath day. That is if you just want to write it in the margin the seventh day. Seven T-H put that in the margin. Seventh day or Saturday and it was a symbol of their relationship to God. There are several symbols that the nation of Israel has that are really their marks that anybody could see them and say you're a Jewish person. So come Friday afternoon they're going to shut down everything and they're going to because Saturday starts on Friday at 6 p.m. and that's the Sabbath day and they're going to start worshiping. They're going to start the Sabbath day rest on Friday afternoon at six o'clock and it'll be over at six o'clock the next afternoon. You say well why in the world six o'clock? Well let me ask you a question. Why in the world midnight? So in our country it's midnight.

When I was a kid I used to not get that at all. I mean they used to say it's tomorrow and I'd say it's the middle of the night. It's not tomorrow yet it's still nighttime. It can't be tomorrow until it gets up in the morning. So I felt like new days ought to start at 6 a.m. That's just a country boy's logic. I mean how do new days start in the middle of the night? I'm like new days can't start night because night's not day. Well Jewish days start at six o'clock in the afternoon and the evening and the morning were the first day. That's a very Jewish thing. But I want you to read with me Exodus 31:16. You ought to make a note of that in Nehemiah. The Bible says wherefore the children of Israel, that's Israelites, Jewish people, shall keep the Sabbath to observe the Sabbath. They ought to keep Saturday and observe Saturday throughout their generations for a perpetual covenant. This is an agreement, a long-term forever covenant or perpetual covenant. Verse 17. It's a sign between me and the children of Israel. Circumcision was a sign. Keeping the Sabbath was a sign. It's a sign between me and the children of Israel forever. For in six days the Lord made the heaven and the earth and on the seventh day he rested and was refreshed. Now you got your Bible open underlined in that verse and I hope you have your Bible open. A sign between me and the children of Israel. So let me ask you, the Sabbath was a sign between who? The Sabbath was a sign between who? God and Israel. So it's a sign between God and the children of Israel and they were to keep it. Now listen to me, the church and Israel are distinct or different groups. So we don't worship on Saturday. We don't observe the Sabbath day. We actually meet on Sunday, the first day, and we do that because Jesus arose on the first day and so we like the fact that it celebrates that he arose. The Sabbath day is not Sunday. I was raised where it was

Sunday by the way. I could milk a cow. I could feed the pigs but I couldn't go swimming. I couldn't play baseball. I didn't play baseball anyway but it was against the rules. But I could, I could ride the horse and so the horse could work but I got to ride the horse and so all the kids from the church used to come over to my house and say, you want to play baseball? I said, oh no, you can't do that. Can we go swimming? Oh no, no, no, no swimming on Sunday because Sunday's Saturday. I mean the Sabbath. See, this is not what it's saying. I want you to look at your Bible there. It's the Sabbath is a sign between me and Israel. Now there are principles, no doubt, that every Christian ought to learn. We need rest. God worked six days making the world but he didn't need rest and he set aside a day of rest. Time for God ought to be set aside. Time for God ought to be made a priority in our schedule. But we're under no law that says we must keep the Sabbath or the New Testament Sabbath Sunday. In this passage of Scripture, they're not going to allow people of the land to do business on that day. So they're in the city of Jerusalem. They got the city set up. There's foreigners that live out there that aren't Jews.

And so here they come and they're bringing pots and pans and beans and potatoes and they're going to set up and sell. And when they get to the gates on Saturday, they say, on Friday afternoon, they say, you can just park your little wagon right out there. We'll talk to you after Saturday night at six o'clock because we're going to respect the Sabbath day. No businesses will be open. No businesses will be open. We're not doing that. And by the way, on any other holidays that we are setting aside to worship God, they won't be open. That's the Sabbath day. I want you to look at another part of that verse if you would. Go back if you would to Nehemiah chapter 10 and verse 31. Here's another one that I don't know if you would catch if you're not studied up. Not saying you're not, but let's say maybe you're not. Look at Nehemiah chapter 10 and verse 31 and underline the word seventh year. Seventh year. And that's an important one.

[10:59] Okay. So the Jews had a, they were told by God that they were to set aside one year out of every seven years that they didn't work the soil. The seventh year refers to letting the land rest after working it for six years. So when Jewish people went into a piece of property, they worked this field. They could plant cotton or soybeans or potatoes or beans or whatever they want to plant.

But at the end of six years, they had to pull away from that land and do no work. That was a big deal because they had to have enough money to make it for a whole year without working their fields. That meant they'd have to trust God. It's another form of the Sabbath. It was like, don't work on this day, trust God. Do you remember in the old Testament when they had the manna, they got manna on, uh, on a Sunday, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday, and Friday, Sunday through Thursday, they could only pick up, uh, they could only pick up one day's worth of manna on Friday. They were to pick up two days worth of manna. If they picked up extra manna on other days, it rotted or had worms in it because God wanted them to know I'm in charge and you're not. Well, we don't like that. Do we? I don't want God in charge. I want to be in charge. Now God says, well, your land is not your land. It belongs to me.

And I want you to work your land six years. And I don't want you to work it a seventh year. Uh, let me just throw this one in, uh, right quick. Uh, let me take you first to 2nd Chronicles 26, uh, 36, 20. Look at that. Look at 2nd Chronicles chapter 36 and verse 20. Do you know why they went into captivity according to the Bible? Do you know why God took them out of their land and put them in captivity for 70 years? Because for 490 years, they ignored God. For 490 years, they said on the seventh year, we'll do exactly what we want to do. And you don't get to tell us what to do. And you can get away with doing what you want to do for a long time. But sooner or later, God's going to come calling for accounts. You can do what you want to do and you can ignore God and you can think you're God and you can say you're above what God wants. But the truth of the matter is God's God and God means he's a King and he's in charge. And so after 490 years, he came and got the nation of Israel. Look what it says in 2nd Chronicles 36, 20. Look what the Bible says.

And then that escaped from the sword carried he away to Babylon where they were servants to him and his sons and to the reign of the kingdom of Persia to fulfill the word of the Lord by the mouth of Jeremiah, no underline this, until the land had enjoyed her Sabbath. Until the land had enjoyed her Sabbath. For as long as she lay desolate, she kept Sabbath to fulfill 70 years. Two or three things I really wish you'd learn here. You know that you got, when you hold this book in your hand, you hold the very word of God and it is far more advanced than science. No, no, no, no, no. You just said that, but you know, it's far more advanced than science. Nobody knew about crop rotation.

Nobody knew that if you came to the Southeast of the United States and planted cotton, that you would eventually destroy the ground and somebody would finally come along and say, we're going to have to plant some soybeans and replenish the earth. God already had a plan. You'll work my land six years and leave it alone one year. It'll rebuild itself and then you'll be ready to use it again for another six years. And you know, when a people read that, they must have thought, boy, God's kind of dumb there, isn't he? But I grew up on a farm and my daddy said, we'll work that field doing this and this and this. And then after a certain number of years, they said, we can't do that over there anymore. You got it. We can do it over here, but we got to take care of it. If not, we'll ruin the land.

[14 : 30] Scientists figured that out a few hundred years after God told Moses. There's this guy walking around in the desert in a robe and sandals, no cell phone, no internet. And God's like, crop rotation, son.

They'll figure this out in a few hundred years. You'll be long gone, but they'll figure it out. But I'm God and I know. Amen. I love that. I know people in church get tired of this, but you know, nobody knew about sanitation rules and New York city about died on their own poop. But the Jews were told to dig holes and bury it because you can't have the nasty mess around because God was way ahead of the time. Say amen. Did you know God said, I don't want you leaving the food out. If you leave the food out, bugs will get on it. It'll make you sick. If something dies, don't eat it. It died for some reason. Don't eat it. It ain't FDA approved. It took hundreds of years for people to figure out God already knew. You serve a great God. You ought to be excited that God, I mean, Moses, I'm like, Moses, who are you most like? PhD from Harvard. Nope. Nope. He knew God and he got God's word. You like to think, you like to think the Bible is not very smart. But the truth is you don't want to be very smart. I mean, you're a hundred two years behind, buddy. I read an old book, no stuff that they don't know. Amen. Now I'm going to show you another one that's going on. If you go back to verse 43, excuse me, Nehemiah 10 31, he said Sabbath day, seventh year. And then he said extraction, exaction of every debt. That's another rule that God put in there. God said, man, debt will kill people. There needs to be a way to handle debt. So God said, every 50 years, we're going to reset the whole clock. Every 50 years, all debts are absolved and everything's over. And so what they would do is,

I mean, they start here and you could, if you loan money, you know, you couldn't loan it for 50 years and then the 50th year would be canceled. And you couldn't loan it for 51 years. You couldn't just steal stuff. Fact is, if you loaned it and they lost their property to you at the end of 50 years, God said, you give him his property back. I'll let you have it for 50 years, but you give him his property back because we're not going to use money to abuse people. Democrats, they'll read the Bible.

Republicans too. They all think they got a plan, but God already had a plan. But anyway, I just want you to know God's smart. Can I get an amen right there? God is God and he is smart.

Before I leave this point, I need you to understand something. You're probably getting away with it right now. When you really think God doesn't exist because it doesn't seem to have any consequences in your life. That's what they thought for 470 years. For 470 years, some preachers step out here and say, you're supposed to let God have the land every seventh year. And they'd be like, foolish, foolish.

[17 : 29] God will take the land someday. He wants the land to rest. And they'd have been like, oh, drop dead preacher. That's old fashioned stuff. Doesn't work. Doesn't have anything to do with my life. Preachers said, no, God said it. And I'm pretty sure when God says it, God means it. And it was 490 years.

One day and Babylon moved into town, picked them up and took them out. And the preacher stepped up and said, you know why you're in captivity? You robbed him 70 years. Now you're paying him. You think you play with the God of heaven and you can fool me and you can fool your family, but you can't fool the God of heaven. And there is an almighty God out there. You might say, I don't want to believe that. I don't care what you want to believe. I don't care what you want to believe. He is God. I want you to see how great he is. On this verse, I told you it wasn't really the goal of the message, but it's a good verse. Say, man, they're all good verses. You know what? His plans are perfect. He knows how to take care of his people. I mean, if you take the word of God and realize how smart God was, crop rotation, taking care of his people. If you see that God knew long before scientists figured it out, they embarrass you at school. They embarrass you at work. Like that's an old book that doesn't know anything. But if you even knew what it said, you'd be like, oh buddy, you obviously hadn't read it. You just think that because you're ignorant.

I'm not trying to be ugly, just the facts. His word is divine. He knew about credit being crippling and he taught his people not to use debt to extort people. Now go with me if you would to Nehemiah chapter 10 and verse 32. Before I read this verse, you ought to sit back and say, wow, what a God.

You ought to be like, what a book. You don't read this book because you think it's archaic and it doesn't make sense and it only has to do with Jewish people. And yet hundreds of years later, scientists are going, we thought of something. If you don't cover up poop, people get sick.

And a Christian that went to the old fundamental church goes, duh. We read that a long time ago. By the way, if you bleed somebody too much, they'll die. Fundamental Christian goes, oh yeah, that's in Leviticus. You didn't read that either, huh? And then they say, well, you need a little crop rotation. You can't work the land and just keep working land. You'll get in trouble. And we're like, yeah, we read that. Scientists figuring out stuff God already told us. Amen. Well, you don't know, you don't know how good he is or you'd be more excited than that. The next thing I want you to see is they're going to get excited because they're going to learn to take care of their responsibility of taking care of the house of God. Chapter 10, verse 32. Chapter 10, Nehemiah chapter 10 and verse 32. Now they had to take care of all that went on in the, in the, in the temple.

[20 : 12] They'd take care of all that went on in worship because somebody's got to pay the bill. Nehemiah 10, 32, it says, also we made ordinances, rules for ourselves to charge ourselves yearly with a third part of the shekel for the house of our God. And if you like reading the Bible, you should go through Nehemiah chapter nine and underline all the house of our God.

Just that phrase, house of our God. Anytime he repeats something, it's kind of important. He goes, house of our God. It's like five times house of our God, house of our God, house of our God. It said it here. I'll read to you more than one of them right now. In verse 33, that money was going to take care of all the offering stuff. I skipped to the very last part of verse 33. Nehemiah chapter 10 and verse 33, look at the very last part. And it says, for all the work of the house of our God. Underline that in your Bible, for all the work of the house of our God. They recognized that there was a God in heaven that was directing everything that was going on. There was a God in heaven who had brought them out of slavery. There was a God in heaven who had built their city. There was a God in heaven that had provided all the leadership and the guidance. And they said, boy, we got to recognize our God. We got to take care of God's work. You see, the reason you aren't faithful to church and the reason you're not a giver is you don't think God's stuff's real because you don't think God's real. These Jews knew, boy, God had done something and they made a plan to take care of it.

Look at Nehemiah chapter 10 and verse 35. They honored God with their first fruits. You ought to underline that in verse 35. And to bring the first fruits of our ground, the first fruits of all of the trees, year by year, bring the first fruits. God got his first. They were recognizing that if anything grows in my ground, God made it grow. If anything happens, it's God doing the work.

Now listen to me real quick. I need you to understand something. You know why you would take anybody, the first fruits, the most precious fruits, because they're important. I grew up on a farm, working a garden. I remember planting watermelons. I am a watermelon fiend. I'm a watermelon eating fiend. If there ever was one, I'm a watermelon connoisseur. You don't believe that? Ask my wife.

I love watermelon. So we planted watermelon. I remember I was a little toddler and daddy said, there's watermelon there. Boy, there's going to be watermelon. I went out the next day and I was like looking for my watermelon. There was no watermelon. There wasn't any little ground sprout.

[22 : 34] green sprouts there. And then finally it grew up. And then daddy came in one day and said, there's a watermelon out there. And I went out there, it's about the size of the end of your finger. I'm like, I can't eat that thing. But you know what happens? Finally, those things grow and every day you're like, dad, can we eat that? He said, not ready yet. Can we eat that? No, not ready yet.

And buddy, that first watermelon. Now, you know, when I was a kid, they didn't ship food in from Florida and California. You ate what you raised. And so man, watermelon, you need your watermelon when it comes time. Say amen. First fruits. You know what you do? These guys are going into God and saying, God, this is the first watermelon I picked. You're so important. I want you to have the first. You first. You know what you tend to do? You tend to think, I'll take me first. Me, my wife and my kids. Fooey on you, God. I don't care about you, God. But these Jewish people were bringing God their first fruits. Chapter 10 and verse 36. They're also giving God the firstborn.

Look at verse 36. And the firstborn of our sons and the firstlings of our herds to bring it to the house of our God. The house of our God. Remember that phrase? And then the next part, unto the priests that minister in the house of our God. Ever since they left Egypt, God got the firstborn.

You remember what happens in Egypt, don't you? They're in Egypt and the death angel passes over and God said, I'm going to kill all the firstborn in the nation of Israel. If you don't want yours to die, you take the blood of a lamb and you put it on the door. And when the death angel comes to your house, he will pass over and your people won't die. And so on that night, the lamb died. So their firstborn didn't die. And they realized that every time anything was firstborn, it belonged to God.

Their firstborn kid, they were like, well, I wouldn't even have him if God hadn't been good to me. I wouldn't even have him if God hadn't done great things. Their firstborn animal. I wouldn't have that animal if it wasn't God being good to me. They wanted to honor God. You know why you don't do that? Because you don't recognize even the children you have came from God. It wouldn't have freaked them out if their firstborn wanted to serve God. They'd have been like, hey, you was his from the time he was born. And so were the rest of them. Chapter 10 and verse 37, if you would.

[24 : 44] Along with that, they brought a tithe. Look, if you would, in chapter 10 and verse 37, they brought the firstfruits of their dough to the house of our God, underline it in that verse, and the tithes of our ground to the Levites. In verse 38, the priests were going to be with the Levites getting the tithe.

And in verse 38, the Levites take the tithes. These are the workers in the church who are going to live off the tithes. And then the workers in the nation of Israel are going to tithe of the tithes for the house of our God. So what God had done when he brought them out, there were 12 tribes.

Joseph had 12 sons, and God brought them out, and he made 12 tribes. But then God said, I want one of those tribes to serve me, and me only. They won't be herdsman. They won't be craftsmen. They won't go work somewhere else. They're just going to serve me. They're going to move the tabernacle from one spot to the other. They're going to set up the temple. They're going to lead in the worship. They're going to be the guys that are going to work with the priest. The priest, basically like pastor and deacons, and they're going to be doing the work here. And so then he took one of Joseph's kids, and he took both of Joseph's kids, and he made them tribes. So now you still got 12 tribes, but one whole group lives totally off the offerings of others. One whole group in the nation of Israel lives totally off the offerings of others. So the people are bringing their shekel, and a third of a shekel, half of a shekel at other times. The people are bringing their first fruits. The people are bringing their sacrifices. The people are bringing their tithes, and they're taking care of that group for the work of the house of our God. Verse 37 and verse 38, if you would. Now go down to verse 39.

The reason was the house of God ought to be so important to you. Look at verse 39. For the children of Israel and the children of Levi shall bring the offering of all these things, and underline the last part of the phrase in your Bible, and we will not forsake the house of our God. We will not forsake the house of our God. We will not leave the house of our God in disrepair. We will not leave the men of God in the house of God without their things. We will make sure our singers and our ministers and our doorkeepers, we'll make sure all the needs are met. We'll make sure. We will not abandon the house of our God. What's your attitude towards the work of God and the house of God?

That is seriously a very good question. You say, well, this is Old Testament, brother. Oh, hang on. It's in the New Testament. Everything in the New Testament is built on the Old Testament. What's your attitude? Are you giving and supporting the work of God? Have you determined to never forsake the house of God? Do you put him first? Now go with me, if you would, to Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 1.

[27 : 21] Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 1. Now they're doing the work of God. So one thing was money and offerings, but now we're going to get people involved in doing the work. Money and offerings, and now people involved. And this is going to have some really strange stuff taking place here. Hang on to this. Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 1. And the rulers of the people dwelt at Jerusalem, and the rest of the people cast lots to bring one of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine parts to dwell in other cities. So God said, now I want 10% of your people living in my city, in Jerusalem, my capital. So you got your own farms and you got your own lives, but I need you to give me one out of ten to live in the big city. And here's what they did. The Bible says in Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 2, they willingly offered themselves to give up living with their family, to give up living where their family lived, and to serve God in Jerusalem. What in the world would happen if 10% of our people said, I'm going to serve God full-time away from home? What in the world would happen if 10% of our, you see a church like Vision almost gets a bad reputation. That's a missionary church there. Everybody goes to that church, a missionary. But if you'd come to this church, it'd be like one out of every ten, buddy. One out of every ten. And they said, all right, we need one out of ten. Y'all started volunteering. They said, I'll do it. I'll obey God. I'll follow God.

Some people were set over the work in Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 16 outside the house of God. Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 16, the outward business of the house, the outward business of the house of God. Some were in charge of thanksgiving prayer. Look, if you would, at Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 17, Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 17. And I just want you to outline, I just want you to outline this part in there, the principle to begin the thanksgiving in prayer. The principle to begin the thanksgiving in prayer. Now listen to this. The work of God is so important and they're dedicating the walls around the city of Jerusalem and they got people and they're assigning works.

They got an order of service and they're saying, all right, you're going to be playing the piano. You're going to be taking up the offering. You're going to be, you're going to be, you're going to be singing a special because we're going to praise God today. And we got a plan to do that.

We don't just come here willy nilly and figure out what's going to happen. We know our God is worthy of some preparation and we have come to pray. So, Hey, you get up there and you start off on the thanksgiving in prayer. That means you start saying, thank you, Jesus in prayer. Nehemiah chapter 12, verse eight over the thanksgiving. They put some people over the thanksgiving.

How much are we giving thanks to the Lord? Hmm? And we ought to be coming in here. Everybody in this room ought to be like, man, I'd be in hell if it wasn't for him. My family would have fallen apart if it wasn't for him. My health, my finances, everything about my life is Jesus. We ought to live him and breathe him. He ought to be who we are. Jesus. Boy, the singers had an important part. Look at Nehemiah chapter 11 and verse 22. The overseer and the singers over the business of the house of God. Look at you, you have to skip around a little bit. I'm flying through here. Can I tell you, when you sing in that choir or you sing a special song like Jessica standing up here to sing a minute ago and a sweet little piano player playing here and the choir singing here and the group leading and singing. And you think that's just prelude?

[30 : 52] Not in the Bible, is it? In the Bible, it's like, hey, we love God. We planned this. God, hear us sing for you. They're going to sing at the top of their lungs. They're going to be excited about it because we're here to praise our God. Us preachers sometimes like singers ought to get out of the way.

But you read this chapter and be like, sing. Sing. Sing some more. And thanksgiving. And praise. It's important stuff. Look at Nehemiah chapter 12, verse 24. With their brethren over against them to praise and to give thanks. They had people whose job was to praise and give thanks. Nehemiah chapter 12 and verse 27. The dedication of the wall. Let's skip on down a little bit. To keep the dedication with gladness, with thanksgiving, with singing, with cymbals and psalteries and with harps. That's a lot of work. That's a lot of work. It's really going to be funny. They're going to end up with two choirs.

It's almost going to be the, not dueling banjos, but dueling choirs in this thing. They're going to have a choir on this side of the wall and another choir on this side of the wall. They're going to both be singing out the top of their lungs. Praise God who brought us here. But it wasn't a game because you didn't need to be in that ministry unless you purified yourself. Look at chapter 12, verse 30. You're doing holy stuff here. You know, the preacher ought not walk in the pulpit if he's living in sin. Well, neither should the singer or the piano player. Could I get an amen right there?

Nehemiah chapter 12, verse 30. The priests and the Levites purified themselves and purified the people. Here's our two companies. Look at this. 12, 31. I brought up the princes of Judah upon the wall and appointed two great companies of them that gave thanks. One goes on the right hand toward the dung gate. They headed up on the gate where the sewer system was. The other's on the other side and they're singing. Can you hear it there? Can you hear it? Praise God. You are so good. The other side, praise God. You're so good. Everybody in the room, all they can hear is he's a good God.

That's what ought to be going on in our hearts. You can come here today just to learn Bible. You should have come here because you love God, because you recognize that he is above all. They were using all the musical instruments. Chapter 12, verse 36. Musical instruments of David.

[33 : 15] Chapter 12, verse 38. It was loud and it was from different sides of the city and wall. Chapter 12, verse 30. And the other company of them that gave thanks. Chapter 12, verse 40. Two companies that gave thanks. Chapter 12, verse 41. With trumpets. 42. The singers sang loud. I'll get you on the line there. Singers sang loud. You know, when you sing, you ought to just open your mouth and let us see your tonsils flopping. Say amen. I mean, honestly, because you're not, you say, well, I'm not singing loud because I don't want to embarrass myself. We're not here about you, buddy. We're here about praising Jesus. We ought to be singing to the top of our lungs. I love him. I love him. I love him.

They sang loud. Chapter 12, verse 43. Chapter 12, verse 43. They worshiped like this because God made them rejoice. They offered great sacrifices for God had made them rejoice with great joy.

Who's been good to you? Who saved you out of sin and slavery? Who's answered your prayers? Somebody prayed this week and said, God, I need this. And within hours, they told me this morning, within hours, God was answering that prayer. Somebody else said to me this morning, we've seen God answer a lot of prayers about that. God made me rejoice. I'm in the house of God. I said, God, you are good. You changed my life. They were excited to give and take care of God's servants.

In chapter 12, verse 44, they're giving offerings and first fruits and tithes and taking care of the priests and the Levites. And I love this part of the verse. They rejoiced for the priests and for the Levites that waited. When I read that verse, I thought to myself, God, can the people of vision rejoice that we are their leaders? Can they say, boy, God's given us good? Because these guys were excited because they had good priests and Levites. In chapter 12, verse 47, they took care of the men of God. They gave the portions of the singers and the porters or the gatekeepers or the ushers.

Every day is portion. They sanctified holy things to the Levites and the children of Aaron. God's work is important. It's easy for you to come to church today and to walk in here like, oh, ho, hum. Sunday morning again. Austin's pretty good though. He'll get us out on time.

[35 : 53] We're just here doing our duty. Crank her up, get her going and get us out of here. We like getting out at 1130. We get the restaurant first. These people were like, boy, we came because he made us rejoice. They said, let's sing.

They've been preparing for weeks. How do you get a company to climb that side of the wall, another company to climb that side of the wall, and then everybody be singing and making all that noise, playing them instruments, carrying those instruments up on the wall, carrying those flutes and carrying those trumpets and carrying those harps and going up. It's a lot of work.

It was like, boy, God demands us and our love. We ought to take the work of God seriously. You ought to come to church, not because it's duty and not because it's habit, but because he's God and he is good and he is worthy of it. I know you give and sacrifice and do all that, but this is just a good old reminder. We're in the book of Nehemiah. He's a good God. Now, for some of you, he's not that good. If we're honest, you're not even born again. You don't even know that you go to heaven if you died. You say, God ain't never done nothing for me. Well, actually, he has. He got you here where you could hear the gospel. He's got you to a place where you could make a decision, but maybe you're kind of got a bad attitude. I want you to know he loves you.

I want you to know he's already died and paid your sin debt. I wanted you to know that you have the free gift of salvation if you will but trust him. The wages of your sin is death. You keep sinning.

You will die physically and you will die spiritually. The Bible calls it a second death. And that second death is a lake of fire. You'll be cast there forever to suffer with the devil and all of his demons. But he loves you and he took all of your punishment on him and he paid your sin debt so you could be saved. He died so you could know for sure your sins are forgiven and you got new life. He'll give you a new past. He'll give you a new present. He'll give you a new future. He will make all things new. He will take your sin and put it on him and he'll take his righteousness and put it on you.

[38 : 02] You don't know that yet. That's why you can't be happy. And I want to ask you to get saved today. I want to ask you to trust Jesus. I want to ask you to know, man, he died for me and he loves me and he wants to save me. He's done all for you to be saved. Would you trust him today? Christians, have you grown kind of chilly, cold, withdrawn, lazy, bad attitude, dragging the church, saying half with your mouth shut, don't really care because you forgot who he is? Think about who he is today. Come back to him. Get close to him again.