

THE REAWAKENING OF WORSHIP

Nehemiah 9:5b-7a

I. INTRODUCTION-

- a. The steps to revival that we have looked at so far from the book of Nehemiah are ... #1, Getting back to the Bible ... #2, Obeying the Bible ... #3, Desiring holiness.
- b. Today we look at step #4... A reawakening of worship.
- c. Nehemiah 9 records a remarkable worship service... by the people of Israel.
- d. None of the people of Israel... who had returned from foreign exile ... had ever been in such a service.
- e. This worship service marked a new beginning in the life of Israel... in which the true worship of God became a renewed priority.

II. WORSHIP AND REVIVAL-

- a. Every great revival that has occurred among the people of God ... has resulted in a reawakening of the importance and priority of worship by God's people.
- b. This is the most important thing I will say in this sermon this morning ... a person's attitude toward worship... and a church's attitude toward worship... reveals their attitude toward God.
- c. If worshipping God is unimportant to a person...if they rarely worship God personally and individually ... if church worship to them is a dull duty and routine...if their worship is mechanical and thoughtless... rather than a joyful expression of love, devotion and commitment to God
- d. Then something is seriously wrong... with that person's relationship with God.

- e. And when a church family loses their joy and passion for worship ... then that church needs revival.
- f. A lady once asked Albert Einstein... to send her a short definition of his theory of relativity.
- g. He wrote to her saying... “If you sit on a park bench with your best girl for two hours... it seems like two minutes... but if you sit on a hot stove for two minutes... it seems like two hours... that Madam,” said Einstein “is relativity.”
- h. If we apply Einstein’s definition of relativity to church services... it might go like this.
- i. “For many people attending a ball game for two hours seems like two minutes ... but for many of those same people...attending a church worship service for two minutes...seems like two hours... that is the reality of spiritual relativity.”
- j. One reason why many people find church worship boring... is because they are not saved.
- k. They may have a connection with the church... they may have a relationship with the church... but they don’t have a real relationship with God.
- l. Worship is something these people endure rather than enjoy because they don’t know God... it is hard to worship a God you do not know.
- m. But even for many true Christians... church worship services can seem like they are “two hours” long...and secretly they can’t wait for them to be over.
- n. One reason for this is that many Christians see themselves as spectators in worship... rather than participants.
- o. And many Christians really don’t understand how to worship God... in private or in public.

- p. In Nehemiah 9... we can find principals that help us to understand what true worship is... and we can understand how important it is for God's people to worship God together... in a way that honors and glorifies Him.
- q. In Nehemiah 9... the Israelites spent four hours confessing to and worshiping God... and then they spent another four hours listening to the Word of God being preached and taught.
- r. No... spending that much time in a church worship service today is not practical... unless the Spirit of God moves in a great way... and wouldn't that be great!
- s. The important thing from this passage is not the amount of time the people spent in worship ... but their realization of how important worship is... their reawakening to the importance of worship.
- t. That is the lesson...we need to learn today.

III. THE PRIORITY OF WORSHIP-

- a. One of the earliest... and most important Christian confessions of faith... is a document called the Westminster Larger Catechism.
- b. The first article in that confession declares that the worship of the Creator-God ... the God of the Bible... is the chief and highest purpose for every person.
- c. That Confession gives several scriptures... to support this declaration.
- d. *1 Corinthians 10:31 (NKJV) "Therefore, whether you eat or drink, or whatever you do, do all to the glory of God."*
- e. *Romans 11:36 (NLT) "For everything comes from him and exists by his power and is intended for his glory. All glory to him forever!"*
- f. *Malachi 1:11 (NKJV) "For from the rising of the sun, even to its going down, My name shall be great; In every place I shall be*

worshiped; For My name shall be great among the nations," Says the LORD of hosts."

- g. Our worship of God is not to be confined to one day... at one particular hour ... in one place.
- h. For Christians... worship is to be a way of life... for God's people... every day is a day of worship... every day... we are to worship the Lord in acts of worship and service... we are to worship God in all that we do.
- i. But for the Christian... while private, individual and daily worship is important and vital to our walk with God.
- j. It is just as important to our Christian life... that on the Lord's Day we assemble with other Christians to worship the Lord.
- k. Hebrews 10:25 commands Christians... that we are not to forsake the assembling of ourselves together.
- l. Too many Christians today treat attending church... and worshiping with God's people... as if it is unimportant.
- m. But if you want to be a growing Christian... if you want to be a Christian that God can use in His service... nothing could be further from the truth.
- n. Of all of the things a church does... none is more important than its worship.
- o. Worship is the heart of the church... worship is the purpose of the church ... everything a church does... is dependent on and flows out of... the quality of its worship.
- p. A church that is weak in worship will be weak in evangelism... a church that is weak in worship will be weak in service ... a church that is weak in worship will be weak in power... a church that is weak in worship will be weak in unity.

- q. For a church to be a strong church... it must be a church that makes worship a priority.
- r. Those who want to replace worship with other things... do not understand the importance of corporate worship to the life of the church.

IV. THE LEADERS OF WORSHIP-

- a. The names of the leaders of this amazing worship service... are found in verses 4 and 5.
- b. For a church to be strong in worship... it must have leaders who have been called by God... who have been gifted by God... leaders who love God... and leaders who love those they are leading.
- c. And for a church to be strong in worship... it must have leaders who are committed to excellence in worship.
- d. I don't know which one of these leaders wrote the prayer that was prayed in verses 5-38... maybe all of them had a hand in it.
- e. But that prayer is one of the most beautiful, touching and powerful prayers in all of the Bible... it is actually a sermon in a prayer...and it is excellent... and God used it to touch the hearts of the people.
- f. Those who lead a church in worship cannot be perfect... but they can be excellent.
- g. When worship leaders stand before a church to lead in worship... they must give the Lord the very best they have... the Lord deserves their best ... and so do the people they lead.
- h. Personally... when I go to a church service and I sit in a pew to worship ... I want a worship service that has been prayed over ... and one that is well prepared.

- i. You will hear people say sometime... “We don’t prepare for worship ... when it comes time we just let the Holy Spirit lead us.”
- j. I’ve heard preachers say... “I don’t prepare my sermons... when it comes time to preach I just let the Holy Spirit lead me in what to preach.”
- k. Believe me... the Holy Spirit would much rather people pray, plan and follow His leadership in preparing for worship...and I know the Holy Spirit wants preachers to pray, plan, work and follow His leadership in preparing their message.
- l. Instead of worship leaders waiting until the last moment to throw something together...and then blaming Him for the mess they make.
- m. Personally, I can’t stand a sloppy worship service that has been thrown together 15 minutes before the service begins with no thought and no prayer... the Lord deserves better that...and so do the worshippers.
- n. And when I sit in a pew and listen to a sermon... I want to hear a message that has been prayed over and prepared... a message that actually has a point to it... a message that comes from the Word of God ... a message that is true to the Word of God... a message that is scripturally accurate ... a message God can use to teach me something and to touch my heart.
- o. I am not interested in how loud a preacher can be... in how funny a preacher can be... in how innovative a preacher can be... in how non-traditional a preacher can be... in how impressive a preacher can be ... I want to hear a word from God.
- p. I am thankful that those who lead our church in worship... who are committed to excellence... and you should be thankful too.

- q. I am thankful for Tracy Fowler who plays our piano so beautifully and with such heart... I am grateful for Virginia Simmons who plays our organ with such devotion to God.
- r. I am grateful for Cheryl Dorsey who prays and plans and puts her heart into leading our church in worship each week... I am grateful for our choir ... and for all those who may lead us in worship... for giving their very best.
- s. And I can promise you this... I know that I am not the best preacher in the world... but week in and week out... on Sunday morning and on Sunday night... I am going to give the very best I have in what I do for the Lord...it may not be better than others...but it is going to be the best I have.
- t. The Lord deserves our best... and so do you.

V. EXCELLENCE IN WORSHIP-

- a. Not only is it important that worship leaders give their best in worship ... it is equally important that in worship... you give the Lord the best you have.
- b. Worship is a verb not a noun...worship is not something that is done to you... worship is not a spectator sport... worship is something you give to the Lord.
- c. The job of worship leaders... is to lead you to worship the Lord.
- d. To use a sports analogy... when it comes to worship... you are not a fan sitting in the stands... you are a player on the field.
- e. Sitting on a pew like a knot on a log... going through the motions ... putting no heart... no thought... no passion... and no soul into what you are doing... looking at your watch wishing the preacher would hurry up ... is not the worship God deserves... it is not giving the Lord the worship He wants ... it is not giving the Lord your best... it

is not giving the Lord your God who loves you and who has saved you ... the worship He is worthy of.

- f. When you come to church... to worship the Lord... the Lord deserves ... and He expects...the best you have.
- g. So how do you give the Lord your best worship?... #1, You pray ... you pray for the worship leaders that God will direct their hearts and fill them with the Spirit... you pray for yourself... and for others... that God will speak to you in worship.
- h. #2, You prepare... *Amos 4:12 (NKJV) "Prepare to meet your God." ... you get yourself ready ... spiritually... physically... financially.*
- i. #3, You participate... you sing... you give ... you listen... you respond to what God is saying and doing in your life.
- j. #4, You remember the principals of worship... (a) To worship God as we should...requires us to repent of our sins... and get right with God and with others.
- k. *Psalm 24:3-4 (NKJV) "Who may ascend into the hill of the LORD? Or who may stand in His holy place? He who has clean hands and a pure heart."*
- l. *Matthew 5:23-25 (NKJV) "Therefore if you bring your gift to the altar, and there remember that your brother has something against you, leave your gift there before the altar, and go your way. First be reconciled to your brother, and then come and offer your gift."*
- m. (b) Worship is not about you... it is about God... the worship of the people of Israel in Nehemiah 9 was all about God.
- n. *Nehemiah 9:5-7 (NKJV) "Stand up and bless the LORD your God Forever and ever! "Blessed be Your glorious name, Which is exalted above all blessing and praise! You alone are the LORD; You have made heaven, The heaven of heavens, with all their host, The earth and everything on it, The seas and all that is in them, And You*

preserve them all. The host of heaven worships You. You are the LORD God.”

- o. The purpose of worship...is to express our love and devotion for God,
- p. In 1977... during the 25th anniversary of the coronation of Queen Elizabeth II... Pastor Jack Hayford and his wife were on vacation traveling through England, Scotland and Wales... the enthusiasm, love and devotion of the English people for their monarch was obvious and infectious... Pastor Hayford began to realize that Christ wants His church to have the same sense of loyalty, loyalty and devotion for Him ... hearing the English people refer to their monarch as “her majesty”... made Hayford consider the majestic presence of God... and his “regal nature”... and the love and devotion that He deserves from His people...one day as they were driving... Hayford asked his wife to right down these words... “Majesty, worship His majesty ... Unto Jesus be all glory, honor and praise!... Majesty, kingdom authority... Flows from His throne, unto His own, His anthem raise... So exalt, lift up on high the name of Jesus... Magnify, come glorify Christ Jesus the King... Majesty, worship His majesty... Jesus who died, now glorified, King of all kings.”

VI. CONCLUSION-

- a. God honors true worship... and He will send revival to those who truly worship Him.
- b. Make a commitment today... to be a true worshiper of God.
- c. Any attempt to worship... by those who have refused to receive Jesus Christ as their Savior and Lord... will not be accepted by God.