

Summary

Pastor Mike Sigmund preaches from Nehemiah chapter 8, focusing on how God's people responded to hearing His Word after the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt. The sermon emphasizes that while Nehemiah successfully completed the physical reconstruction, he recognized the greater need for spiritual revival among God's people. Through Ezra's public reading of Scripture, the people demonstrated four key responses: they read God's Word attentively from daybreak to noon, they revered it by standing and worshiping when it was opened, they studied it to understand its meaning, and they immediately obeyed what they learned by celebrating the Feast of Tabernacles.

The pastor challenges the congregation with personal questions about their own relationship with Scripture, noting that only 10% of Americans read the Bible daily according to recent surveys. He emphasizes that revival comes through loving, reading, and obeying God's Word, and that every local church should be a place where Scripture is taught with clarity and power. The sermon concludes with practical encouragement to use tools like the YouVersion app and a reminder that consistent Bible reading cleanses and transforms lives, even when we don't remember every detail.

Intro Prayer

Heavenly Father, we come before You this morning grateful for Your Word and the power it has to transform our lives. As we gather together in this small group, we ask that You would open our hearts and minds to receive what You want to teach us today. Help us to be honest with ourselves and with one another as we examine our relationship with Your Word. Holy Spirit, guide our discussion and help us to not just hear Your truth, but to apply it in our daily lives. We pray that You would use this time to draw us closer to You and to one another. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.

Ice Breaker

What's one book (other than the Bible) that has had a significant impact on your life, and why did it make such an impression on you?

Key Verses

1. Nehemiah 8:1-8
2. Nehemiah 8:9-12
3. John 15:13
4. Hebrews 4:12

Questions

1. In Nehemiah 8, the people listened attentively to God's Word from daybreak until noon. What

does this tell us about their attitude toward Scripture, and how does it compare to our typical attention span when reading the Bible?

2. The people stood up when Ezra opened the Book of the Law and responded with 'Amen! Amen!' while raising their hands and bowing down. What does this reverent response teach us about how we should approach God's Word?
3. Pastor Mike mentioned that we don't worship the Bible itself, but rather 'the God of the Word.' What's the difference, and why is this distinction important?
4. The Levites made sure the people could understand what was being read by 'making it clear and giving the meaning.' How important is it for us to not just read Scripture but to study and understand it? What tools or methods help you comprehend God's Word better?
5. When the people heard about the Feast of Tabernacles, they immediately obeyed and began building booths. What does their immediate obedience teach us about the proper response to God's Word?
6. The sermon mentioned that only 10% of Americans read the Bible daily. What are some of the barriers that prevent people from regular Bible reading, and how can we overcome them?
7. Pastor Mike shared the illustration of pouring water through a sieve - even if we don't remember everything we read, the Word still cleanses us. How does this encourage you in your personal Bible reading, especially when you feel like you're not retaining much?
8. The people in Nehemiah's time experienced revival through hearing and obeying God's Word. What would revival look like in our church, community, or personal lives today if we truly became 'people of the Book'?

Life Application

This week, commit to reading God's Word daily for the next seven days. If you don't already have a Bible reading plan, download the YouVersion app and choose a plan that fits your schedule. Set aside a specific time each day, settle in without distractions, and ask God to speak to you through His Word. At the end of the week, reflect on how this consistent time in Scripture has impacted your thoughts, attitudes, or actions.

Key Takeaways

1. God's Word is powerful and life-changing when it is read, revered, studied, and obeyed
2. True revival comes through loving, reading, and obeying the Word of God, not just through external accomplishments
3. We should approach Scripture with reverence, understanding it is the inspired, infallible, and inerrant Word of God
4. The goal of Bible study should be understanding and application, not just completion
5. Consistent Bible reading cleanses and transforms us even when we don't remember every detail

Ending Prayer

Lord God, thank You for giving us Your Word as a lamp to our feet and a light to our path. We confess that too often we have neglected this precious gift or approached it casually. Help us to develop a deep love and reverence for Scripture like the people in Nehemiah's time. Give us the discipline to read Your Word daily and the wisdom to understand and apply what we learn. Transform our hearts through Your truth, and help us to be people who not only talk the talk but walk the walk of obedience. May our lives be changed by Your Word so that others might see Jesus in us. We commit to being people of the Book, and we ask for Your strength to follow through on this commitment. In Jesus' name we pray, Amen.