

'Bring out the Book' - Fellowship Group Notes – Nehemiah 8 – 13th/14th May 2015

As a church, Surrey Chapel places a strong emphasis on the teaching and declaration of God's word; it is the foundation for all we do. As we come to know Christ in God's word more and more we grow more and more in knowledge and likeness of Him. **But**, we mustn't rest on our laurels. A passage like this has some key reminders for us, and may well challenge us to consider our teaching, listening and response to God's word more seriously.

We see hear that the people are **eager to listen**, they **listen attentively**, and they **respond properly**.

V1

- Who initiates this public reading and teaching of scripture? Do we have the same attitudes today? How many of us would shout out 'BRING OUT THE BOOK!'
- Who is there listening? ('Others who could understand' may refer to children who were old enough to understand). Look also at Deuteronomy 31:12-13. Do we follow these principles today? Do we need to do more 'whole family' teaching as one body? In what ways is it helpful to split into different age groups and genders?
- What does it say about these people's attitudes that they gathered as 'one man'? (Note, we can see that from 7:66-67 there were probably an awful lot of people!).

V3

- How do the people listen? How might we listen to the teaching of God's word more attentively? What can help? How many of us pray before coming to church that we might be helped to listen to God's word attentively? How can note taking both help and hinder?

V6, v9-17

- In what ways do the people respond? What specifically do you think they are responding to? Although kneeling isn't 'compulsory', shouldn't it sometimes be our natural response? When was the last time you truly rejoiced or wept at some bible teaching? When was the last time you reacted like this in your own bible reading?
- Do we allow opportunity for direct response like this in church? Or in our own study? What could we do to change this? What might need to change in Sunday services? Do you keep journals or notebooks of your own personal study? If so how have you found it's helped?
- After directly reacting like this to hearing God's word explained how do they respond next?
- Chapters 9-10 in a sense are the 'response' to the events of chapter 8.

Three challenging and helpful quotes to discuss:

"If you mean your hope of salvation should rise to any strength and solidity, study the word of God diligently. The Christian is bred by the word, and he must be fed by it." William Gurnall – a Puritan born in Kings Lynn and ministered across East Anglia.

- Why's this true? For *whom* do we find in all the scriptures?

"Whatever you learn from the word, labour to put it into practice. No wonder they get little insight into the bible those who make no conscience of practising what they know." Thomas Boston.

This one is little wordy but incredibly challenging if you persist! (With updated language).

"Shall God leave one book to his church's care and study and shall it not be read? We are told there are great riches laid up in this mine of a book, yet we carry on with little knowledge of it, without taking the pain to dig these riches out of it. The dust and rust on our gold and silver, which is earned with much harder work than is required in digging in the bible, shall rise up against us in judgement. Our gold and silver will say; "You worked harder digging us out that are now turned to dust and rust and yet you could walk on by a mine of incorruptible, incomparable riches in God's word; just because you were too lazy to dig it out." William Gurnall

- Do we prize the word of God and the teaching of it as we should?

Pray that we may be men, women and children of the *one* book.

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