

Sermon Outline

PREACHING OF THE WORD AT THE WATERGATE

Nehemiah 8.1-12

I. Introduction

- A. Review on “See how they are doing” Acts 15.36
- B. Building on John Stott’s BST Commentary on Acts 2.40-47, we saw briefly how we might conduct a spiritual audit individually or corporately as a church in the following areas - the preaching of the Word, prayer, praise, partaking of the ordinances, participation in church life and the proclamation of the gospel.
- C. Reasons and the indwelling motivations for “seeing how we do”
 - i. From Jesus “Not everyone who says to Me, Lord, Lord shall enter the kingdom of heaven, but he who does the will of My Father in heaven.” Matt 7.21
 - ii. From Paul “Therefore, my beloved, as you have always obeyed, not as in my presence only, but now much more in my absence, work out your own salvation with fear and trembling, for it is God who works in you both to will and to do for *His* good pleasure.” Phil 2.12-13
 - iii. From Peter “Therefore, brethren, be even more diligent to make your call and election sure, for if you do these things you will never stumble: for so an entrance will be supply to you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.” 2 Pet 1.10-11
- D. God willing, we shall take a tour through the Scriptures to take a peek into how the people of God did in each of the key areas; that we may learn one thing or two from them (1 Cor 10.11) in the weeks ahead whenever I am call upon to preach from this pulpit.

II. Gather around the Word.

⁸ Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded Israel.

- Mandatory but more than mandatory
- “wise *for* salvation”

III. Attentive to the Word

³ Then he read from it in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law.

- An attention deficient generation?

- “lest we drift away”

IV. Honour for the Word

⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was *standing* above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. ⁶ And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. Then all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

- “Draw near to Me with their mouth”?

V. Clarity of the Word

⁸ So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

- Clear or Closed?

“The Law was not only read but explained, to ensure the people grasped the meaning. There may also have been translation from Hebrew to Aramaic. The doctrine of the clarity of Scripture is that the things necessary for salvation can be understood from the Bible without special techniques or higher education. This truth does not eliminate the need for faithful exposition of the Scriptures by person trained for this (Ezra 7.6-10)”
Reformation Study Bible Notes on Nehemiah 8.8

- “He will guide you into all truths”
- “He Himself gave some to be...pastor-teachers”

VI. Respond to the Word.

⁹ And Nehemiah, who *was* the governor, Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day *is* holy to the LORD your God; do not mourn nor weep.” For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

¹⁰ Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this* day *is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the LORD is your strength.”

- Godly emotions not to be missed out
- Godly actions not to be ruled out

VII. Christ invites us to the Word