



Life Group Sermon Study Notes

“Unbroken Promise: Worship”

Sr. Ps. James Lowe – December 8, 2019

Warm Up (10-15 minutes)

Choose a question below to answer, or ask another. No right or wrong answers.

- What phrase or quote comes to mind that helps you when you are stressed?
- What is a memorable gift-opening moment from your childhood?

Word (10-15 minutes)

Sermons can be heard online at www.bethelworld.org

Nehemiah 8: 9 -12 ESV

⁹ Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and teacher of the Law, and the Levites who were instructing the people said to them all, “This day is holy to the Lord your God. Do not mourn or weep.” For all the people had been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

¹⁰ Nehemiah said, “Go and enjoy choice food and sweet drinks, and send some to those who have nothing prepared. This day is holy to our Lord. Do not grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.” ¹¹ The Levites calmed all the people, saying, “Be still, for this is a holy day. Do not grieve.” ¹² Then all the people went away to eat and drink, to send portions of food and to celebrate with great joy, because they now understood the words that had been made known to them.

God is faithful to keep his promise

For the holiday season, Pastor James used an Old Testament text to remind us God has always been in the business of rescuing humanity from sin. God didn’t wait until the arrival of Jesus. He also showed his faithfulness through people like Nehemiah. The book of Nehemiah was written after the Jews had been in exile for 70 years because of their personal and corporate sins. Some Jews decided to return to Jerusalem, the Promise land. They had hopes for rebuilding the temple and reestablishing spiritual foundations, yet the tasks looked like insurmountable problems.

God used Nehemiah to organize and encourage the people to rebuild the temple. It was accomplished in fifty-two days! Nehemiah shows us how an awareness of problems around us should not diminish our view of the faithfulness of God to his people.

Worship can lead to grief or joy

After the rebuilding of the temple, the people gathered on the Sabbath to listen to the Law. They wept because they were reminded of their sins. Nehemiah, Ezra, and the Levites taught the people how to contextualize the Law. Although they had sinned, God had promised to be the one to rescue them. The Law was not meant to have them stuck in grief over sin but to show their need for God and his strength to rescue. Instead of mourning, the people were told to have a feast celebrating what God had done throughout the history of Israel.

Worship lived out equal Christmas every day

Nehemiah teaches us the power of worshipping God. Nehemiah knew very well the problems of the Israelites were due to their personal and corporate sin. He also knew God's promise to rescue his people wasn't contingent on how well they obeyed the Law. God used Nehemiah to restore hope to the Israelites by rebuilding the temple. Then Nehemiah reminded them of the Law, which included a promise that God would always be with them. He would help them obey as they were set apart to him. This is a powerful example of how God's loving kindness that draws us back to him. God's ultimate act of love was shown in sending Jesus Christ. Jesus was beaten, scorned, and rejected on the cross to pay for our sins. We can face every problem by focusing our eyes on Jesus who has rescued us. It's our privilege to worship and obey Christ every day because of the price he paid on our behalf.

Discussion (10-15 minutes)

Choose one of the points below, and discuss how the lesson applies to our lives.

- Does the holiday season heighten your concerns about problems in your life?
- Is it easy for you to remember what God has done for you in the past?
- What does worship "lived out" look like for you?

Prayer (10-15 minutes)

Pray for any of the following, as well as other requests you may have.

- Thank God for his faithfulness to rescue us from sin.
- Ask God to soften our hearts to the problems of the people around us.
- Ask God to incline our hearts to delight in his Law