

Revival Or Survival?
Next Steps Devotional Guide — Nehemiah 10-12
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Sermon Series > Nehemiah: Repair, Rebuild & Restore
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1. If you have ever studied early American history, 56 men signed the Declaration of Independence. The signers knew that rhetoric would not win the revolution and war. It would take sacrifice, commitment, personal finances and lives. In some way the Declaration of Independence was a declaration of dependence — dependence upon each other and the providence of God. How would you describe your dependence on God and why?
2. We live in a time where joy is almost a rare experience. Read Philippians 4:4 and Nehemiah 12:43 in your sermon outline. Nehemiah 8:10 says, “For the joy of the Lord is your strength” (NLT). How would you describe your joy and those around you?
3. When you were growing up, did you attend a church that had revivals? If so, what would you say is your experience? What is your understanding for what a revival is?
4. A revival is a movement of the Holy Spirit in a believer’s life which produces both private confession of sin and public obedience to the Word of God. How does this describe you?
5. And when revival happens, there is a creation of an inward attitude and an outward action that desires to bring glory and pleasure to God, that without question, impacts one’s personal relationships, finances and lifestyle choices. This means that revival is not a once-and-done event.
 - a. Based on this, how would you rate yourself on bringing glory and pleasure to God in your relationships, finances and lifestyle choices?
 - b. True revival could be likened to remodeling your kitchen. It takes longer than you planned, makes a bigger mess than you ever thought possible, and costs more than you initially calculated. Revival is incredibly inconvenient. It will up-end one’s entire life. Revival is rare today because we want God to work by our schedule rather than we work by His. How does your schedule show you want revival or really do not want it?
6. It is common to see on some church sign or marquee, “Revival” with the dates and times. This is very wrong and misleading. You cannot orchestrate or announce that it is going to happen on a certain date. This means you cannot plan for revival; you can only pray for it. Why do you think we plan for revival rather than pray for revival?
7. Read Psalms 85:6 in your sermon outline. Revival is not so much about emotion as it is about action. If anything, the emotion of revival is soon followed by the action of revival. For many churches, it is all about emotion or an emotional experience. Why is this alone dangerous?
8. For revival to take place at any church and at Southside, those attending must rededicate their love to follow God’s Word. Read Nehemiah 9:38 as well as Nehemiah 10:28-29. If you remember in our series, these Jews had never heard the Word of God in the Old Testament Law & Scriptures until Nehemiah 8. For six long hours they stood with their children hearing God’s Word for the first time. What was their reaction? They were broken, repentant, confessional and humbled.
 - a. They actually swore a curse on themselves if they did not obey the Word of God. When you hear the Word of God, what is your reaction and why?
 - b. If there was a New Testament counterpoint to Nehemiah 10:28-29, it is Colossians 3:16a. Read this in your sermon notes as well as the explanation for the Greek New Testament words translated as “dwell” and “richly.” In what ways have you put out the “Welcome” mat for the Word of God in your heart and life?
 - c. Read Nehemiah 10:29b in your sermon notes. They made a promise, a covenant to do whatever God said in His Word. They said they were going to let the Word of God have full reign in every compartment, department, and segment of their lives. Does this describe you with God’s Word? Explain. Are there any areas of your life, whether private or public, that are outside God’s Word? If so, what are they, why and what would you need to do to bring them under God’s Word?
9. For revival to take place at any church and at Southside, those attending must rededicate their personal lives and personal family to biblical purity and holiness.
 - a. When you hear the word “purity” and “holiness,” what do you think? This is more than sexual or moral purity and holiness. This also involves our language, our attitudes, our thoughts, what we watch in the media — whether it is on TV, cable, satellite, streaming, music and etc. What guidelines do you have for this? In other words, where do you draw the line for yourself and your family?
 - b. Read Nehemiah 10:30 in your sermon outline. This means we must be careful who we allow to be our closest friends. It means we accept the importance of godly relationships. Who would that be for you and why?
 - c. 2 Corinthians 6:14-15 is the New Testament counterpoint to Nehemiah 10:30. The Bible uses the idea of a yoke — what you put on oxen — as a way to express the importance of making sure your closest relationships honor God. A yoke that is unbalanced creates friction on the necks of the oxen, which creates sores, which can get infected and cause sickness and even death. Would you say that your closest friends use God’s Word as their guide for making decisions? Do they ask, “WWJD”? — what would Jesus do? The Bible says in 1 Corinthians 11:33, “*Bad company corrupts good character*” (NLT). Parents are often concerned about who their children choose as their closest friends and for good reason. If an outsider looked at who your closest friends are, what would be their conclusion? Honors God? Dishonors God? Pushes you to be more like Christ? Does not?

10. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 5:13-16 in your sermon notes:
 - a. One of the reasons revival has been hindered in our generation is because we, as believers, no longer agonize over the issues of godly distinction. We have condemned convictions of holiness as legalism and have become strangely compatible with the world and its lifestyle. Do you agonize over godly distinction? Why or why not?
 - b. Can you name at least five things you do that nearly everyone else around you does not do? Can you think of five things you do not do that, if asked for the reason, the answer would be, "Because I am a follower of Christ and do not believe it would please Him"?
 - c. What do you think of these two quotes? — Christian pastor and author W. A. Tozer writes: "*Revival will come when prayer is no longer used as a substitute for obedience.*" Christian pastor and author Leonard Ravenhill writes: "*In revival God is not concerned about filling empty churches, He is concerned about filling empty hearts.*"¹ Do you agree or disagree with these statements and why?
 - d. Read 2 Corinthians 16:17a again in your sermon notes. How is your life different from an unbeliever? How do you apply godly separation in your walk with Christ?
 - e. Christian author Keith Miller writes: "*It has never ceased to amaze me that we Christians have developed a kind of selective vision which allows us to be deeply and sincerely involved in worship and church activities and yet almost totally pagan in the day in, day out guts of our business lives and never realize it.*" Where have you seen this in the church and even in your own life?
 - f. Christian pastor and author Chuck Swindoll says we should make this promise to God: "*We won't care if anyone else in the world lives by godly standards. We will live by them. We won't shrug our shoulders, yawn, and say, 'It doesn't matter,' when our kids want to mix and mingle with the crowd. Our homes will be distinct. Our philosophy of life will not be like that of those who live outside the walls of the Church. This is our promise to You, O God.*"² What would it take for you to make this promise to God and why?
11. For revival to take place at any church and at Southside, those attending must rededicate their personal faith in God's providence.
 - a. Providence means that we trust that God, in His omniscience (all-knowing), love, purpose and care, is directing everything in this universe by to His omnipresence (all present) to an ultimate end through His omnipotence (all-powerful). Do you trust God like that? Why or why not?
 - b. Read Nehemiah 10:31 in your sermon outline. Now take your Bible and read Deuteronomy 15:1-11. This is why they made this promise. They heard God's Word read to them and without question decided to obey it. Can you imagine wiping every loan off your books that others owed you? Do you think you would be inclined to loan anyone anything during the sixth year? How about in December of the sixth year?
 - c. Let me ask you: Do you trust God like that? Do you? When things are not going the way you want, do you leave it with God, or do you take matters into your own hands?
12. For revival to take place at any church and at Southside, those attending must rededicate their finances to acknowledge God's priorities. Read Nehemiah 10:32-33, 39 in your sermon notes.
 - a. What did these Jews promise to do that proved this?
 - b. Christian pastor and author Warren Wiersbe writes: "*True revival will always reveal itself in the way we support God's work, beginning in our own local church. Frankly, I am convinced that the most sensitive nerve in a person's body is the nerve that runs from his heart to his back pocket. What people do with their money profoundly reveals their soul's condition.*" Do you agree or disagree with his statement and why?
 - c. Read Jesus' words in Matthew 6:21 in your sermon notes. Jesus' point in this verses is that we do not put our money where our mouth is; we put our money where our heart is. Where is that for you and what does that say about the potential for revival in your heart and soul?
 - d. Do you agree with Winston Churchill, who said this: "*We make a living by what we get, but we make a life by what we give*"? If so, what life are you making by what you give?
 - e. Read Nehemiah 12:43 and Psalms 51:12 in your sermon outline. One of the major results of putting our hearts right for God so that revival happens is — joy. Nehemiah 8:10 says, "*For the joy of the Lord is your strength.*" It doesn't say money is, retirement is, an education is, a great paying job is — not even having great health. Out strength to live in this world comes from the Lord and Him only. According to the Apostle Paul in Galatians 5:22-23, one of the "Fruit of the Spirit" — the Holy Spirit — is joy. We cannot create real joy; only God can. In what ways have you attempted to get or manufacture joy in your life apart from the Lord? Why did you do this and what was the results?
 - f. We all have a choice. We can either simply survive life or be revived by God. To get revival in your life, what do you need to do to get it so that you do not simply experience survival — but real revival?

¹ <https://www.preceptaustin.org/revival>.

² Charles R. Swindoll, Hand Me Another Brick, p. 97.