



## May 4 – Too Serious for Joy?

Have you ever met someone who takes EVERYTHING SO SERIOUSLY? It's hard to get them to laugh or play. It's hard sometimes to be around them because life feels so...heavy... all.the.time! Sometimes we get this way with our faith as well – it's so important we must be serious about it at all times. Is this really true? Come this weekend as we celebrate what God has been doing in the midst of the FAITH community and be reminded that while faith is a serious thing – Jesus also calls us to have a darn good time living in faith together!

### Scripture:

#### Nehemiah 8:2-12 NLT

<sup>2</sup> So...Ezra the priest brought the Book of the Law before the assembly, which included the men and women and all the children old enough to understand. <sup>3</sup> He faced the square just inside the Water Gate from early morning until noon and read aloud to everyone who could understand. All the people listened closely to the Book of the Law. <sup>4</sup> Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform that had been made for the occasion... <sup>5</sup> Ezra stood on the platform in full view of all the people. When they saw him open the book, they all rose to their feet. <sup>6</sup> Then Ezra praised the Lord, the great God, and all the people chanted, "Amen! Amen!" as they lifted their hands. Then they bowed down and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

<sup>7</sup> The Levites - then instructed the people in the Law while everyone remained in their places. <sup>8</sup> They read from the Book of the Law of God and clearly explained the meaning of what was being read, helping the people understand each passage.

<sup>9</sup> Then Nehemiah the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who were interpreting for the people said to them, "Don't mourn or weep on such a day as this! For today is a sacred day before the Lord your God." For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law. <sup>10</sup> And Nehemiah continued, "Go and celebrate with a feast of rich foods and sweet drinks, and share gifts of food with people who have nothing prepared. This is a sacred day before our Lord. Don't be dejected and sad, for the joy of the Lord is your strength!"

<sup>11</sup> And the Levites, too, quieted the people, telling them, "Hush! Don't weep! For this is a sacred day." <sup>12</sup> So the people went away to eat and drink at a festive meal, to share gifts of food, and to celebrate with great joy because they had heard God's words and understood them.

#### Luke 18:15-17 NLT

<sup>15</sup> One day some parents brought their little children to Jesus so he could touch and bless them. But when the disciples saw this, they scolded the parents for bothering him. <sup>16</sup> Then Jesus called for the children and said to the disciples, "Let the children come to me. Don't stop them! For the Kingdom of God belongs to those who are like these children. <sup>17</sup> I tell you the truth, anyone who doesn't receive the Kingdom of God like a child will never enter it."

### Questions:

- When was the last time you played? Who were you with? What were you doing?
- When you think of your faith – do you think in terms of seriousness and solemn? Do you think in terms of joy and laughter? Which way do you lean more?
- Remembering that joy isn't a feeling, but rather a fruit of the Spirit – in what ways are you feeding, nurturing and intentionally growing the joy inside you?

### Reading for the Week:

**Monday:** Ecclesiastes 8:15

**Tuesday:** Colossians 3:17

**Wednesday:** Acts 2:46

**Thursday:** Hebrews 10:25

**Friday:** Psalm 16:11