

Nehemiah 11-12

Why do Birds Sing?

Have you ever wondered why birds sing ?

A) I love to wake up to the sounds of birds singing outside my window?

B) But have you ever thought about why they sing ?

1) Think about that for a moment: Think about what they are up against on any given day –

C) In reality they are concerned about the same things we are – **Provision – Protection – Safety**

1) Each day they have to deal with their **need for Provision**. Taking care of themselves and their families

D) Parent Bird goes off to work – search for food.

1) They are concerned about Shelter – making sure the nest is in good condition

E) They are concerned about protection for themselves and their families

1) To them it is a **Bird eat Bird world out there !** – Struggle for position

My neighbors Eucalyptus trees – Hate it. Leaves drop in Pool -

A) The only redeeming value those trees have in my mind is **that they are the home** to two different kinds of birds - **Tiny Sparrows and the Big Black Crows**

B) The **Sparrows sing – Crows Cawk** – {don't get along

Not uncommon to see one of those Big Crows Chasing a little sparrow

A) And every now and then – You can see a couple of little sparrows chasing after a big black Crow

B) So in the Bird world something they have to deal with on a daily basis is Provision – **Protection – Safety** –

1) **Protection from outside influences**

C) And they are concerned about their young – Is Jr. ever going to make it out of the nest –

1) Is he ever going to fly on his own / provide for himself - **Or is he going to be in our nest for ever!**

D) When the baby birds finally leave the nest –

1) I wonder if the parent birds deal with their own version of **“the empty nest Syndrome!”**

My point is this – when you consider the birds – their challenges and responsibilities are not that much different from ours

A) Like us they deal with **Provision – Protection – shelter – caring for and training their young**

B) They even have a Pecking order -

C) But what is interesting **is despite all of that – they sing**

1) Daily they sing – there seems to always be a song in their hearts ! Why?

Perhaps the words of Jesus give us some insight Matthew 6:26

26 Look at the birds of the air, for they neither sow nor reap nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feeds them

A) Maybe that is why birds sing – they innately realize – our lives are in God's hands.

B) That is exactly why Jesus used this analogy –

1) He wants his followers to realize – our lives – in God's hands

Matt 6:26-27 Are you not of more value than they? 27 Which of you by worrying can add one cubit to his stature?

C) Birds don't worry – so why should we!

1) You are important and special to God

What does this have to do with our Study tonight in the book of Nehemiah?

A) As we come to chapter 11 we are given another example of the fact that people matter to God!

B) What we have here in Ch. 11 is another list –

1) This time it is a list of people who were occupying the city and **working there to get things together.**

C) Lesson: Ministry involves serving in the Sphere in which God calls you to serve.

1) He chooses to work through People

RD V.1-2 Now the leaders of the people dwelt at Jerusalem; the rest of the people cast lots to bring one out of ten to dwell in Jerusalem, the holy city, and nine-tenths were to dwell in other cities. 2 And the people blessed all the men who willingly offered themselves to dwell at Jerusalem.

A) What we see here is that they are re-populating the city – Draft of those who would live there in

1) 1 out of every 10 families was randomly chosen

B) Most People preferred the country – grow their own food – **more peaceful** –

1) but they needed people in the city – so this Draft was initiated.

C) But it is here that we are introduced to our first group

1) **V.2 Those who came willingly chose to dwell there / Volunteers**

D) Yes there was a draft – but in the mist of the draft there were those who said we want to be here

1) **Those people are special to God !**

E) Those who just were willing to show up – be a part of what was going on.

Our Church has an amazing group of volunteers

A) Small Staff – Crazy ministry happens – volunteers

Some who have to be here – volunteers want to

B) God was blessed by this group that volunteered to be a part of the rebuilding process.

C) Our Church plant in Oregon – Applegate family

1) We hit it off – Kids were the same age.

D) We can't come to your church – too many needs

1) They needed to just sit – Soak – Ok

E) Sometimes people just chose to not get involved – they miss out on a blessing.

{ TONIGHT After Service – some will –

1) Set up chairs and tables – or creating an environment – ladies come – seek the Lord

SO THE 1st group – Volunteers

V.3-9 the heads of families in Jerusalem

A) Always a blessing when the heads of families the men are leading the charge –

B) Thankful that we have a strong group of men who serve and lead the way in our church.

V.10-14 the priests {822} / V.15-18 the Levites {284}

A) Blessed by our team of Pastors – those who serve and wear many hats –

B) Elders who not paid lead home groups – and counsel - provide leadership

C) **V.19-21 the gatekeepers and temple servants**

1) Ushers and Deacons serve – Practically.

D) V.22-24 Singers – Those who helped in Worship.

❖ V.25-36 the people who lived outside the city.

Each served in his respective sphere for the effective operation of the city and the nation.

A) Those who lived outside of the city had to farm the land to provide food for those in the city.

B) Each had a different role, but each role was vital to the entire cause.

C) In the body of Christ, God has gifted us in different ways, but every part is vital for the overall functioning and health of the body (1 Cor. 12:12-30).

When the body is functioning properly – it is a thing of beauty ever part doing it's part.

A) When one group isn't doing it's part – you have deformity.

B) Or when one groups looks down on others you have schisms

C) But when everyone is valuing each other and the diversity – you have UNITY!

We learn two things from this section:

#1 Your ministry is marked by God – Hebrews 6:10

¹⁰God is fair; he will not forget the work you did and the love you showed for him by helping his people. And he will remember that you are still helping them. NCV

So first lesson we are reminded that God Doesn't forget our service

#2 Your rewards are determined not by fan fare – but by faithfulness –

“Well done, good and faithful servant; you have been faithful over a few things, I will make you ruler over many things. Enter into the joy of your lord.” – Matthew 25:23

Now as we move into Ch.12 – We see that there is yet another Celebration that is going on here

A) It is time to Dedicate the Wall !

B) The wall is built. The gates are hung. It is a well defended, beautiful city, filled with people

1) **It is time to Celebrate !**

C) Our Lord is into Celebrations –
1st Miracle – Wedding Feast

D) First activity after Rapture is going to be a **wedding celebration** { Not a Funeral

Picture a wedding reception: Party music / dancing / food / fun / fellowship – whole atmosphere is festive

A) I think that Church should resemble that to a certain degree – CELEBRATION

B) Been in Some Churches where they **never clap during worship** – and yet the Scriptures declare

Oh, clap your hands, all you peoples! Shout to God with the voice of triumph! For the LORD Most High is awesome; Psalm 47:1-2

A) Did you know that in the scriptures we are encouraged to

- ❖ Sing out 116 times
- ❖ Rejoice 195 times
- ❖ Praise 267 times
- ❖ Be glad 48 times
- ❖ Shout 48 times

Listen – the Lord likes to see his people celebrating!

WE HAVE MANY REASONS TO.....

A) We saw in Ch. 8 – People were exhorted to not weep – conviction – *rejoice because the Joy of the Lord was their Strength*

B) Ch. 9 After more confession – Exhorted in v.5 *Stand up and bless the Lord your God forever -*

1) Next 33 verses – given reasons why

C) Here again in Ch. 12 – Dedication service – Rejoice – Celebrate – **get loud**

D) That is what is happening here in C.12 –

1) V.1-26 list the names of the Priests and Levites

We will pick it up in V.27

27 Now at the dedication of the wall of Jerusalem they sought out the Levites in all their places, to bring them to Jerusalem to celebrate the dedication with gladness, both with thanksgivings and singing, with cymbals and stringed instruments and harps. **28** And the sons of the singers gathered together from the countryside around Jerusalem, from the villages of the Netophathites, **29** from the house of Gilgal, and from the fields of Geba and Azmaveth; for the singers had built themselves villages all around Jerusalem. **30** Then the priests and Levites purified themselves, and purified the people, the gates, and the wall.

31 So I brought the leaders of Judah up on the wall, and appointed two large thanksgiving choirs. *One* went to the right hand on the wall toward the Refuse Gate.

{He names everyone who followed them}

V.35 Trumpets – V.36 the musical instruments of David the man of God.

v.36b And Ezra the scribe *went* before them. ³⁷ By the Fountain Gate, in front of them, they went up the stairs of the City of David, on the stairway of the wall, beyond the house of David, as far as the Water Gate eastward.

³⁸ The other thanksgiving choir went the opposite way, and **I was behind them** with half of the people on the wall, going past the Tower of the Ovens as far as the Broad Wall, ³⁹ and above the Gate of Ephraim, above the Old Gate, above the Fish Gate, the Tower of Hananel, the Tower of the Hundred, as far as the Sheep Gate; and

they stopped by the Gate of the Prison.

⁴⁰ So the two thanksgiving choirs stood in the house of God, likewise I and the half of the rulers with me;

NEHEMIAH LIST THEIR NAMES

I want us to note 4 things that marked this worship service ! #1 Purification

#1 Before they started they purified themselves ! v.30

A) There was a ritual of purification that would have involved the offering up of a Sacrifice !

B) They Purified themselves **so that** they could worship & rejoice !

C) We on the other hand can Worship & Rejoice – because we have been purified

1) The Work of Christ – Positionally Purified – Righteous today in God's eyes

D) Practically – we still sin – But God has made it so simple for us to be cleansed again –

E) It is not by ritual of Sacrifice but by confessing our faults and believing that God has forgiven them.

1) It is that simple.

F) Confess your failings, your sins, your mistakes. Admit them. Do not hide them.

1) Do not blame somebody else for them. Do not gloss them over. Confess them. Faithful to forgive & cleanse

The 2nd aspect of their Celebration is that it was marked by Joy !

A) In Verse 27, "The Levites were. . .brought to Jerusalem to celebrate joyfully."

B) Note that the emphasis was on *joyful praise* on the part of all the people.

1) *Singing* is mentioned eight times in this chapter, *thanksgiving* six times, *rejoicing* seven times, and *musical instruments* three times.

C) One of the primary elements of true celebration is the expression of joy.

1) A general attitude of joy ought to characterize all Christians.

D) But It is amazing to me how many Christians never appear to be joyful.

I am reminded of what a little girl said upon seeing a DONKEY for the first time: "I don't know what you are but you must be a Christian because you look just like grandpa!" – EYORE

A) There are a lot of long-faced Christians around. The little girl and the Preacher –

1) Jesus a man of sorrows acquainted with grief - *Looked like you – wouldn't come*

B) The German philosopher Nietzsche said, "*If the Christians expect me to believe in their Redeemer they have got to look a lot more redeemed!*"

C) There are times of sorrow and sadness, of course,

1) but Christians ought frequently to exude a sense of joy because we have something to be joyful about.

D) We have been set free – We are Purified !

E) LISTEN They were joyful that the wall of the city had been built

1) We can and should be joyful that the wall of SEPARATION has been brought down !

F) HEAVEN – NOT HELL -

1) We know how the Story ENDS

The 3rd aspect of their celebration was Faith - THEY marched on and around the wall – v.31-40

A) Two Choirs one led by Ezra / the other by Nehemiah

B) They split up and go in opposite directions singing on the wall – marching – ending up at the Temple

C) By marching on the walls, the people had an opportunity to see the results of their labors

1) They had a Chance to see what God had done –

Let me suggest another reason for this march around the walls:

A) It was a symbolic act by which they “stepped out by faith” to claim God’s blessing.

B) In that day, to walk on a piece of property meant to claim it as your own. God said to Abraham, “*Arise, walk through the land...for I will give it unto you*” (Gen. 13:17);

D) He said to Joshua, “*Every place that the sole of your foot shall tread upon, that have I given unto you*” (Josh. 1:3).

E) This joyful march around the walls was their way of saying, “*We claim from our God all that He has for us, just as our forebearers claimed this land by faith!*”

Worship is symbolically an act of the same thing!

A) In worship we are saying – Lord I trust you – I adore you – my life belongs to you

B) – Song Yes Lord – Yes Lord Yes Yes Lord – I am believing that your promises are true

C) As I worship and acknowledge your greatness and wonder –

1) I am saying yes to all that you are and want to do in my life !!!

Pick up in V.43

⁴³ Also that day they offered great sacrifices, and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and the children also rejoiced, so that the joy of Jerusalem was heard afar off.

⁴⁴ And at the same time some were appointed over the rooms of the storehouse for the offerings, the firstfruits, and the tithes, to gather into them from the fields of the cities the portions specified by the Law for the priests and Levites; for Judah rejoiced over the priests and Levites who ministered. ⁴⁵ Both the singers and the gatekeepers kept the charge of their God and the charge of the purification, according to the command of David and Solomon his son. ⁴⁶ For in the days of David and Asaph of old *there were* chiefs of the singers, and songs of praise and thanksgiving to God. ⁴⁷ In the days of Zerubbabel and in the days of Nehemiah all Israel gave the portions for the singers and the gatekeepers, a portion for each day. They also

consecrated *holy things* for the Levites, and the Levites consecrated *them* for the children of Aaron.

#4 Giving - As a part of their worship to the Lord – they Sacrificed and gave of their tithes and offerings.

A) Tithe = tenth of your increase.

B) An offering is over and above that.

C) So once again we see that giving was a part of their worship.

Some of you are thinking – Pastor Rob you have talked about this – the last several weeks.

A) What is up? GIVING DOWN at CV?

B) Answer it two ways: - #1 It has been in the text Every week – seen as a part of the Worship life of the people of Israel

C) Not going to shy away – makes people uncomfortable!

As your pastor – Obligation to the Lord – Whole counsel of Scripture.

A) I don’t want you to miss out on any blessing

B) Paul in speaking to the Church – in Corinth Flourishing in many ways

1) He said: I want you to abound in this grace also

C) The Grace of giving!

Answer the question: Is Giving down!

A) Giving is always down – in every Church

B) See the statistics are startling – In most Churches in America – Only 10%-25% of the congregation actually gives

C) And 80% only give 2% of their income.

D) So the work of God in most churches is only being supported by a very small segment of the congregation.

Christians are only giving at 2.5% per capita, while during the Great Depression they gave at a 3.3% rate

A)Numbers like that can invoke a lot of guilt, which isn't really the point.

B)The larger point is what would happen if believers were to increase their giving to a minimum of, 10%

C)There would be an additional \$165 billion for churches to use and distribute.

D)The global impact would be phenomenal.

Here's just a few things the Church could do with the kind of money:

- ❖ \$25 billion could relieve global hunger, starvation and deaths from preventable diseases in five years.
- ❖ \$12 billion could eliminate illiteracy in five years.
- ❖ \$15 billion could solve the world's water and sanitation issues, specifically at places in the world where 1 billion people live on less than \$1 per day.
- ❖ \$1 billion could fully fund all overseas mission work.
- ❖ \$100 – \$110 billion would still be left over for additional ministry expansion.

A)Staggering statistics - that illustrate why we are missing out on so much that the Lord wants to do

IN OUR LIVES – THROUGH OUR LIVES

D)The People of Israel saw giving as a Blessing – not a burden – became a part of their worship

1)Why we use and include giving as a part of our worship experience in Our services

E)We give – God gave – We give – been so blessed

1)We give as expressions of gratitude – God allows us to be a part of His Work in the World.

**Close tonight – Celebration – Worship
Why do birds Sing – The Father has got them – and Us**

A)We can Praise God for our Salvation – His provision

B)Opportunities to partner with Him!