

What do you think of when I say Water Gate? Do you think about how one man and a few others did something that had a major effect on a nation of people? Do you think of a tragic event that changed the course of a nation's history? An event that made a nation's trust in authorities change? When I hear of Water gate, I think about how one man and a few others did something that strengthened a nation of people. I think of a wonderful event that changed the course of a nation's history. And I think of an event that made a nation trust in their authorities more than ever before.

I'm not talking about the Watergate Scandal here in America, I am talking about the Water Gate Revival in **Nehemiah 8**.

**Context:** This is about the same time as what we talked about last Sunday night with Zechariah. The remnant returns to Israel just the way they left it for captivity. The walls are torn down, the temple is destroyed, and the city is burned. The people are extremely discouraged and they are unprotected from their enemies while the wall is down. Nehemiah is the cupbearer to King Artaxerxes and he hears about all that is not being done in Jerusalem that should be done. So, he goes to Jerusalem and the first really 7 chapters of Nehemiah are all about rebuilding the wall. We probably know that story very well. But maybe a less familiar story is this Water Gate Revival in **Nehemiah 8**. When we hear the word revival we may think it has a negative connotation to it, but the idea is your faith has been down in the dumps and it is time to revive it. That's a really wonderful idea.

Let's read **Nehemiah 8**.

This is the Water Gate Revival! The people of Israel repenting of their sins and turning to God! What I want to do is look deeper into some of the specifics of this revival. We're going to look at 7 things that had to happen for this spiritual revival to take place:

#### EXPLORED THE LAW

1. The Israelites' whole revival revolves around the Law. **8:1** Ezra brings the book of the law out and he reads and the Levites explain and interpret to the people in **verses 7-8** so everyone can understand! When they understood what the law said, it really affected them! They were crying and mourning because they knew they weren't following it! So, this made them want to know what they needed to do and they learned! In **verse 10** The Levites tell them today is supposed to be a feast day! And they did it! Without the knowledge of the Law they would have never done what they were supposed to do! Notice **verse 18**. They were searching through it daily so they would know what they were to do! They found out they had another feast to celebrate so they do it! And look at what was important to them while they were fasting in **9:3**. For  $\frac{1}{4}$  of the whole day they read and listened to the law! It didn't end there either! Look over in **10:29**, they made an oath to walk in God's law and observe the commandments of Moses! Knowledge of the Law is what set this revival in motion.

#### CHANGED THEIR ATTITUDE

1. With the improper attitude, reading the Law would have no impact on the people. Notice **8:1**, *the people* asked Ezra to bring the book of the law! They were hungry for the word! They wanted to know! Also look at **8:3**, the Bible tells us that the people were attentive the whole time! We don't know exactly how many hours it was but I'd guess it was probably more than 4! And they were staying with Ezra the whole time because they wanted knowledge!
2. Also notice their attitude when they heard what they should be doing. Look at **8:9**. They were weeping! They could have hardened their hearts when they heard they'd have to change, but instead their hearts melted! Their attitude is exactly what is needed for a revival to take place! Most of **chapter 9** is this heart-felt prayer to God. And in this prayer the people repeatedly are praising God and thanking God, but the whole time they do so they are acknowledging their shortcomings! Their attitude brought about this revival.

#### ATTENDED ASSEMBLIES

1. Israel did this all together. Notice **verse 2**, they gathered ALL who could listen with understanding. And in **verse 8**, the Levites translated so that EVERYONE could understand. They weren't going to leave anyone behind. They wanted to make sure that everybody knew what the Law said. There's so much wisdom in that! That way everyone is on the same page, and they can hold each other accountable, and as a result of this look at **verse 17**. The ENTIRE ASSEMBLY did what the Lord commanded of them!
2. I also want you to notice **9:1**. They all assembled with fasting, but this was 23 days later! Remember chapter 8 was the 1<sup>st</sup> day of the 7<sup>th</sup> month! They kept assembling together! Assemblies are encouraging to people! Since they all knew and understood the Law, there was absolutely strength in numbers and they could devote their time and praise toward God! The power of assembling together affected this revival.

#### INITIATED WORSHIP

1. The Israelites learned more about who God is in the law and they worshipped him! Look at **8:5-6**. There is an obvious connection between hearing the Word and Worshipping the giver of that Word. They changed their attitudes and assembled themselves and they bowed with their faces to the ground in worship! They realized they were in the wrong and they realized the might and power of God and did exactly what they should have done, worshipped him!
2. Not only did they realize who God was, but now they knew how they were to worship him! They realized they needed to celebrate the feast of booths and notice **verse 17** again. It was the greatest since the time of Joshua! They learned and they went all out! That's exactly

what they should have done! Now look at **9:3**. While they were fasting ¼ of the day was spent reading the law and another ¼ was spent confessing and worshipping God. They realized who God was and that he deserved their worship. Worship is a part of revival.

#### EXAMINED THEMSELVES

1. They heard the law and they had great attitudes toward it. This made them look at themselves and know they had problems in their lives. Look at **8:9**, why do you think they were weeping? They knew they were sinners. And they wanted to make themselves right with God so they confessed their sins. Look at **9:2-3**. They were not only confessing their own sins, but the sins of their fathers and their ancestors! While they were fasting ¼ of the day was spent confessing. They wanted to get it all out of them. They wanted it gone!
2. Let's look at some of the prayer in **chapter 9**. In **9:16-17**, they confess the sins of their fathers. In **9:26**, they are still confessing the sins of their fathers, and in **9:34-35**, they say that no one have kept the Law. They confess all their shortcomings because they want revival.

#### CONSIDERED FAMILY

1. Like most people, Israel was thinking about their families. Notice **8:13**. It was the fathers and the heads of the households that went to Ezra to learn more! They wanted to make sure they could lead their families in the correct paths! And if you remember from the book of Ezra, the people had gotten into unlawful marriages with foreigners! But look at what the people do in **9:2**. They were separating themselves from the foreigners. They were turning away from the sin they had committed. Look at the extent they had to reverse speaking of families. Look at **10:28, 30**. They were willing to split up their family if they had to, to serve the Lord fully. So, they were doing two things, 1) The heads of the households were learning more about the law to prevent their children from sin, and 2) they were making radical changes in their lives to be what God wants them to be! Thinking about the souls of our families can and should start a revival.

#### ACTED ON KNOWLEDGE

1. This last one is very important and key to why Israel had this revival. Not only did they hear the word and understand it and know what they should do, but they acted on it. This is such a simple concept that we often overlook it. Knowing what to do and actually doing it are two completely different things. Notice **8:12**, they understood what had been taught and they knew what to do, so they celebrated the feast! Also in **verse 15**, the people had just heard this is what they were supposed to do and they did it **Verse 16 and 17**! And with what we talked about in **chapter 10**, they knew their marriages were wrong, but they actually did something about it! There can't be a revival if the people don't do anything. They could have all the knowledge in the world but if they didn't put it in to practice then there would not be a revival.

These are the seven things that had to happen for Israel to have a successful revival. Revival is all about repentance. When our faith is low and we need help, what we need is revival. And we all want it! We want revival in our personal lives, we want revival in our families, we want revival in our congregations, and we want revival in this country! We all need revival because we go through the roller coaster of life! And this is how! We see example after example all over the NT that we need this for revival in our lives, and to show you that, we are only going to look at one book.

#### **Ephesians.**

EXPLORE THE LAW – **Ephesians 2:19-20** – The apostles and prophets are the NT, and the NT is the very foundation that makes us citizens of God's household. We can't have revival without the Word of God. So, I will challenge you, just read a little bit every day. Let it mold you!

CHANGE OUR ATTITUDE – **Ephesians 3:20-21** – God is able to do anything and everything and he does! We need to be grateful for that! You want revival? Change the way you see God and the world. So, I'll challenge you, start looking at the positives in life more. Count your blessings.

ATTEND ASSEMBLIES – **Ephesians 4:14-16** – Every joint supplies something. Each individual has an important role! What is your joint supplying right now? You can cause growth of the body in love or not. You want revival? Attend. I'll challenge you to attend worship and group meetings.

INITIATE WORSHIP – **Ephesians 5:15-16, 19** – Make the most of your time by worshipping God. Yes, worship God in the assembly, but do you sing on your own? Do you pray on your own? Want revival? Initiate worship to God anytime! I'll challenge you to worship God in free time!

EXAMINE OURSELVES – **Ephesians 5:22, 25** – This is specifically to husbands and wives but the focus is you as an individual do what God says. Look at how you treat your spouse and change if you need to. You want revival? Examine yourself honestly. Reflect every day, see what to fix.

CONSIDER FAMILY – **Ephesians 6:1-4** – It is the children's responsibility to listen to parents and it is the Father's responsibility to instruct children in the way of the Lord. You want revival in your family? Look to the Lord. I'll challenge you to start Bible studies with your family.

ACT ON KNOWLEDGE – **Ephesians 6:10-13** – Can you say that you have done everything to stand firm? If we have knowledge that is wonderful, but we have to do something, we have to put on the armor of God! You want revival? Act on your knowledge. Challenge – Invitation.