

“Celebrate!”
Nehemiah 12:27-43

5/17-18/08

6 pm; 9 & 10:45 am

Last message in the series, “*Life Rocks!*”

INTRODUCTION

Celebration!

There are times in life when you just *have to celebrate!*

Photos:

1. “Kiss” photo: famous photo of a sailor kissing a nurse in Times Square on Aug. 14, 1945, during the celebration to mark V-J Day, the end of World War II.
2. Wade and Sharon wedding photo ... eating cake
3. Janelle at one year; glasses (recovery from meningitis)
4. Jon’s college graduation
5. Ryan and Sarah’s wedding
6. Sarah in wedding dress, flexing
7. Brandon returning from second tour in Iraq ... and 60 days from being released from the Marine Corps!
8. Reyna’s birth: Wade outside new-born room; Ryan and Reyna in background

There are times you just *have to celebrate!*

And that’s what we find today, as we come to the conclusion of our series in Nehemiah. This *great story* of *great accomplishments* concludes with a *great celebration!*

The people of Judah are celebrating because their city and their lives have been rebuilt and reconnected with God.

It came as a result of saying “Yes” to God’s call to rebuild the wall and to rebuild their lives:

- When God called Nehemiah to go to Jerusalem and lead the rebuilding of the wall, he said, “yes!”

- when the people of Jerusalem heard all God had done for Nehemiah and for them through King Artaxerxes, and Nehemiah challenged them to begin the great project of rebuilding the wall, they said, “*yes!*”
- when they were being threatened by their enemies, enduring spiritual warfare and facing all kinds of discouragement, they didn’t quit or run away and hide, but they persevered to complete the wall. They continued to trust God and say, “yes!” to His call.
- when the wall was completed and Nehemiah called them together to hear the Word of God, and discover the root causes of their broken-down lives, they said, “yes!”
- when Ezra the priest read the Word of God, they were convicted of their sin, and through their mourning and tears the people said, “*Yes! We will obey the Word of the Lord!*”
- and when they were fully restored and living for God once again, they said, “yes” to giving God all the glory as they dedicated the wall ***He built through them*** and celebrated what ***He had accomplished in their lives.***

There are times you just have to celebrate!

Key idea: We must celebrate because through celebration we honor God’s place among us and His accomplishments through us.

OPEN to Nehemiah 12:27 (**PAGE** 771)

I. Prepare for the Celebration! (Nehemiah 12:27-30)

READ Nehemiah 12:27-30

v. 27-29:

The choir prepares: Levites found and gathered together; rehearsals under the direction of Jezrahiah.

v. 30:

Ceremonial purification: priests and Levites purify themselves, then the wall

The date is set

Sacrifices are prepared (we see this later)

Other details are attended to (see later)

All the bases are being covered; every detail thought through and arranged.

This is a very special celebration ... a once-in-a-lifetime event. There are times for spontaneous celebrations, but not this time.

I find myself already day-dreaming about what the dedication and celebration should be like when the multi-purpose building is completed!

All the planning is done, and now the day has come!

II. Rejoice in What God Has Done! (Nehemiah 12:31-43)

v. 31-39: The celebration begins!

READ v. 31; 36b

- The leaders and choir are divided into two groups
- The choirs and leaders march on top of the wall

READ v. 37-39 **AND** Show picture of wall of Jerusalem

- They are walking on the wall, celebrating God's goodness, dedicating it to His glory.
- It was His project, His wall, His strength at work in His people; He built it.
- They are praising Him for all He has done in changing their hearts, and bringing them back to Him.

To God be the glory!

READ v. 40-42:

- The two choirs descend from the walls and become one great choir in the temple courts. The leaders and all the people gather around.

- The choir sings, likely from the book of Psalms:

Psalm 48:12-14 “**Walk about Zion (*Jerusalem*), go around her, count her towers,
13 consider well her ramparts, view her citadels, that you may tell of them to the next generation.
14 For this God is our God for ever and ever; He will be our guide even to the end.**”

Maybe they sang Psalms 105 and 106 that recount God’s faithfulness and forgiveness when His people confessed their sins ... throughout the centuries they had known the Lord.

v. 43a:

- The priests offer sacrifices (*likely* thank offerings) giving God extravagant offering on the greatest day of their lives!

v. 43b:

- All the people rejoice! So great is the rejoicing, it can be heard for miles around.

There are times we just have to celebrate!

Key idea: We must celebrate because through celebration we honor God’s place among us and His accomplishments through us.

Transition:

Just as the wall reminded the Israelites of God’s faithfulness to reach out to them and meet them at their deepest point of need ...

... so, for us today, when we take the *Lord’s Supper* together, we are reminded of God’s unswerving faithfulness to reach out to us and meet us at our deepest point of need.

Romans 3:23 “**For all have sinned; all fall short of God’s glorious standard.**”

Romans 5:8 “**But God demonstrates His own love for us in this: While we were still sinners, Christ died for us.**”

Romans 6:23 “**For the wages of sin is death, but the gift of God is eternal life in Christ Jesus our Lord.**”

Romans 8:1 “**So now there is no condemnation for those who belong to Christ Jesus.**”

1 John 3:1 **“How great is the love the Father has lavished on us, that we should be called children of God! And that is what we are!”**

This is something to celebrate!

Celebrating the cross of Jesus, celebrate His forgiveness, and celebrate everything that has come into our lives because He adopted us into His family!

“Father in Heaven, thank You for all You have done to save me and rebuild my life! Thank You for Your willingness to receive me, while still far from You! In Jesus’ Name, Amen.”

If you have not opened your life to Jesus, ask Him to forgive you for living a self-centered life instead of a God-centered life. Ask Jesus to enter your life and lead you. He will!