

Nehemiah 8:1-12 Reading

People are reading the Bible less than ever before - it's a radical choice that most people don't make. Nehemiah 8 shows us how wonderful and life-changing reading and hearing and obeying God's Word can be.

We don't do this to earn His love or access to Him - Jesus has done all this - but it will do us so much life-changing good.

1. They read the word of God (verses 2, 8, 18)

Most of the people would not have had access to God's word whilst they were in exile, so this might have been the first time they'd heard it read word-for-word. We can get used to having easy access to the Bible without actually taking the time to read it. Reading requires time and effort but there is such power in it - and God will sometimes speak to you directly through it.

2. They realigned themselves with God's word (verse 10, 13-17)

There was weeping among the people because they realised they hadn't been obeying what God had said. They began turning this into action by celebrating festivals which God had commanded but they had forgotten.

The storms of life are coming - those who obey His Word will be able to endure (Matthew 7:24-27). Our best guesses and intuitions will not help us actually know God and live for Him - we need Him to tell us and to take Him at His Word, literally.

3. It brought them joy (verse 10)

Covid and everything that's happened with it has sapped so much joy from all of us. We need fresh and true joy, which only comes from God. Psalm 112:1 says that the people who delight in God's commands (not just reading or even obeying) are blessed.

Questions:

Have you had moments when God has used what you've read in His Word to speak directly to you, as Dave described?

What are your Bible reading habits?

How can you give the Bible a platform in your life? (As Ezra did, Nehemiah 8:4)

Dave took us through a three stage process: reading God's Word, obeying it, rejoicing in it. Which of these do you find most challenging?

How can we encourage one another in this?

Do you need to add anything to your Christmas list or New Year's Resolution list (!) to help you read and hear God's Word?

We've been using a Bible reading programme at King's for the past three years; if you've engaged with that at all, Luke would love to hear from you through this five-question survey...
<https://forms.gle/k2Bbqjemf4dtdXUE6>