



Finding Courage to Unite
July 19, 2020

Sermon Discussion Guide

In 605 BC, the Babylonians destroyed the city of Jerusalem and the temple of God. Israel's land was taken over, and the Israelites were exiled to Babylon. Ezra and Nehemiah tell us the story of how God enabled the nation to be rebuilt (the temple, the walls of Jerusalem). And in Nehemiah 8-10, we read of the courageous steps that the nation of Israel took to reunite under the love, blessing, and authority of Almighty God.

In many ways our church is divided. In even more ways, our nation is divided. Yet, we have an expectation that our nation should think, behave, and make decisions like Christians. But how can we expect that when it is full of lost people who have no relationship with God in Jesus Christ? Our nation doesn't need a behavior change. It needs a character change. A heart change. But true change like that cannot happen apart from the Gospel, the good news of Jesus. And the Gospel isn't heard and seen unless there is light, love, and truth coming from the church.

If we are church divided, then what hope does our nation have? Yet there is hope that we can be unified! But, it will take courage. In Nehemiah 8, we learned that the first step in uniting as a church is to have bold devotion to the Word of God which involves yearning (8:1), attentiveness (8:3), reverence (8:5-6), understanding (8:8), and strong spiritual leadership (8:13). In Nehemiah 9-10, unity also requires bold repentance which involves confession of sin as individuals and corporately (9:1-3), and the resolution to walk in the ways of the Lord now and in the future (9:38; 10:28-29).

HIGHLIGHT

- **Read the Text.** Nehemiah 8:1-13; 9:1-3; 9:38; and 10:28-29.
- **Look for Highlights** - As the text is read, tell the group to be looking out for the highlights (a particular verse, something new learned, a reminder, a question, etc.)

EXPLAIN

- To whom was it originally written? Why?
- How does it fit with the verses before and after it?
- What is the Holy Spirit intending to communicate through this text?

APPLY

- What does this mean today?
- What is God saying to you personally?
- How can you apply this message to your life?

RESPOND

- In what ways does this passage call you to action?
- How will you be different because of what you've learned?
- What is a prayer to God in response to what you read today?