

Ministry & The Work of God: 11

The One Necessary Thing

Nehemiah 8-10

Phase 2 of his building project:

- the restoration of worship and the spiritual state of God's people.
- more important than the physical structure of the walls.

In **Nehemiah 8** we read of the restoration of worship and Godly practices. This leads to the people's repentance, dealt with in **Nehemiah 9**
Nehemiah 10 records the peoples pledges of re-committment to God

For many years the public worship at Jerusalem had been neglected and allowed to become of no-importance to the point that many things were no longer observed.

- The people had departed from God and had gone after other gods, serving wooden idols (Hosea 4.11-13)
- They had neglected God's House so that it became broken down and a place of ruins; yet the people themselves were living in luxurious homes (Haggai 1.4)
- Their offerings and sacrifices were repugnant to God, they were offering blind and lame animals on the altars (Malachi 1.7-8)
- They had withheld their tithes from God's House, and in doing so had held in contempt the support of the priesthood (Malachi 3.8-11)

In **Nehemiah 8** we see a programme of restoration of some of these things that had been neglected and were missing from worship for the people of God.

- Reintroduction of public reading of the Law (Nehemiah 8.1-3)
- Public Exposition i.e preaching - by Ezra, the priest (Nehemiah 8.4-8)
- Worship & prayer, the people respond prayerfully and worshipfully (Nehemiah 8.6)
- Praise & rejoicing – day of joy, celebration of God (Nehemiah 8.9-12)
- Re-institution of the Feast of Tabernacles – this had not been observed since the days of Joshua (Nehemiah 8.13-18)

Often, lots of emphasis is placed on doing the work and fulfilling the ministry that we neglect the weightier, more necessary matters – that is our service to God in worship, our own personal religion.

Luke 10.38-42

Martha was distracted with much serving (vs40).

- To distract is to be 'drawn off' or pulled away from doing something.
- Her service 'for the Lord' was distracting her from something far more important.
- she had neglected something far more important than the service itself.

- “Martha, Martha, you are worried and troubled about many things except the one thing that is needful” (vs41-42, paraphrased)

The pressures of ministry can pile up (vs40)

- “Lord, do You not care that my sister has left me to serve alone”
- If the pressure is so great, I would say that either:
 - i. it is not of God. His yoke is easy and His burden is light (Matthew 11.30)
 - ii. we are trying to accomplish something in the flesh. All our efforts are to be 'by the spirit' and not by our own might or power (Zechariah 4.6)

The one necessary thing was that which Mary had chosen (v42)

- to sit at Jesus' feet (v39)

Above all God wants our fellowship.

- Ministry is birthed in that place of prayer and it flows out of our relationship and fellowship with God.

Lessons:

1. Do not neglect your own personal religion
2. If things are not right, give yourself a spiritual check up
 - check your fellowship time with God
 - check your offerings are pure
 - check your motives are pure
 - check that you've heard from God correctly
 - are you sensitive to the spirit's leading