

Celebration

n/a

Ready:

On that day they offered great sacrifices and rejoiced because God had given them great joy.
— Nehemiah 12:43a

Set

The Israelites had not had a reason to celebrate for a very long time; they had lived in slavery to other nations for about one hundred fifty years. In fact, Nehemiah's brother called his people, the Israelites, a disgrace (Neh 1) But now, God had done a new work in their midst, and the people of Israel were thankful and filled with joy. Nehemiah 12 describes a national celebration in which they dedicated the rebuilt wall and celebrated the victory of God. To make sure they celebrated with gusto, Nehemiah brought the best musicians and singers to lead them in worship with "thanksgiving and singing accompanied by cymbals, harps, and lyres" They celebrated joyfully, because "God had given them great joy" (Neh 12:27, 43).

Celebration and joy go hand in hand. Too many Christians have missed out on the joy of celebration, and for that reason, this story in the book of Nehemiah should be an encouragement to us to celebrate our salvation in Christ with abandon. The Israelites celebrated so loud that the rejoicing in Jerusalem could be heard from far away. There are at least four keys to lasting joy found in Nehemiah 12:27–47. First, the Israelites purified themselves before celebrating. Sin will always rob us of joy. Confess and repent of your sin, and watch the joy return. Second, the people celebrated on top of the wall because they were not ashamed of their association with God. Has the fear of persecution robbed you of joy? Read Matthew 5:10–21 and then discover that joy will inevitably follow boldness for Christ. Third, the Israelites celebrated the victory of God and counted their blessings. Have you taken time to celebrate your salvation and other victories in Christ? Finally, the people gave cheerfully. Proverbs 11:25 says, "A generous man will prosper; he who refreshes others will himself be refreshed" Giving refreshes the soul.

The Israelites knew firsthand the anguish of a broken spirit, but they were living in a new day, and they approached it with a joyful heart. Is today a new day for you? It certainly can be if you will walk with Jesus and celebrate His salvation.

Workout

Extra Reading: Psalms 70:4; 92:1–5; 94:18–19; 95:1–8; Proverbs 15:13

Overtime

Lord, renew in me the joy of Your salvation. Amen.

Bible Reference:

Matthew 5



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