

## Singing for Joy, Unspeakable Joy – Nehemiah 12:27-43

Did you enjoy singing this morning? Singing in 2 parts? It was intentional!

We wanted to encourage greater participation by the congregation & I wanted to set the stage for the reading of Nehemiah 12:27-43.

In verse 27, it says that there was a gathering in Jerusalem to dedicate the wall, & they gathered **“with gladness, with thanksgiving and with singing.”**

This was a time of great joy, & that joy was manifested in the singing of two great choirs, as they paraded around the city in opposite directions on top of this newly built wall!

Remember Sanballat and Tobiah (Neh. 4:1-3). **I guess they were wrong!**

This was a day of great celebration for what God had done! The people recognized this as a work of God, and they responded to Him accordingly!

**Verse 43 – “And they offered great sacrifices that day and rejoiced, for God had made them rejoice with great joy; the women and children also rejoiced. And the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.”**

The same root of the Hebrew word for “joy” or “rejoicing” occurs 5 times in just this one verse! I would say Nehemiah is trying to make a point here!

This scene reminded me of Pastor Don’s celebration service. A time when a great multitude of people gathered w/ great joy & rejoicing. For God had done a great work through His servant & the people responded with praise.

One of the things I remember most was a statement Don made when we first started planning out that service. He said that he wanted the service to be about God, & not about him! **He wanted God to be the one celebrated!**

The same was true here in Neh. 12. This celebration was not about Nehemiah & his work, but about God & all He had done to bring restoration.

Nehemiah chose to even take a backseat in the parade. Vs 38 says he followed behind. This wasn’t a parade for Him, it was a celebration of God!

We tend to celebrate people & their accomplishments very well, but what about how we celebrate God? *Would you consider what we do here on Sunday’s to be true celebration?* **Does our worship reflect a true joy in God?**

*Are we here to truly rejoice in Him for all He is & all He has done?*

In soliciting some feedback about the Good Friday event, we’ve heard that one of the most moving parts of the night was the singing during the communion service, with all the people facing one another.

**It was seeing & hearing others worship God with such authenticity and joy that inspired others to engage as well.** This was also my hope this morning.

It’s not all about the singing, though singing is an important part of how Christians express their praise to God, it’s more about our expression of joy and gratitude towards our God.

*If I were to ask you about your joy level this morning, what would it be?*

**Remember true joy is found in God, not in ourselves or our circumstances!**

*If I were to ask you whether you truly worshipped God this morning during our time of praise, what would you say?*

**Remember it’s not about how good you sound, it’s about an overflow of joy!**

*If I were to challenge the way you worship God, how would you respond?*

We can worship w/variety, but there are certain essential unifying aspects to Christian worship – preaching, singing, sacraments, giving – but with joy!

**We worship on Sunday’s because it’s resurrection day!** We have much to celebrate, much to rejoice in, much to express gratitude for to our God!

The response of worship, by the people of God here in Neh. 12, was far better than the response of worship by God’s people at Mt. Sinai in Ex. 32.

**Sometimes God’s people worship well, but they worship the wrong things!**

And sometimes God’s people get it right and they worship God as He should be worshipped! Neh. 12 is an example of that! *But what about us/today?*

God has done for us in Christ, incredibly more than what He did for these Israelites in Nehemiah’s day. *How do/should we respond to Him in worship?*

**Does our worship this day reflect the appropriate response to our God?**

*Vs. 43–“The joy of Jerusalem was heard far away.” Is that true of us today?*

### **Sermon Based Questions for Nehemiah 12:27-43 – April 8, 2018**

- 1) Did you enjoy the singing on Sunday morning, singing in 2 different parts? Why or why not?
- 2) What role does/should singing have in our corporate worship services?
- 3) Read verse 43 again. The same Hebrew word for “joy” and “rejoicing” is used 5 times in this one verse. Why do you think Nehemiah emphasized this so strongly?
- 4) Name a time when you experienced, or you witnessed, a time of great joy and celebration that could be heard from far away (sporting event, concert, graduation, wedding, etc). What was being celebrated? How does that compare with Sunday mornings at BRC?
- 5) Why do you think we often celebrate people & their accomplishments well but we struggle to celebrate God when we gather for worship?
- 6) Give an honest self-evaluation of how you worship God on Sunday mornings? Why do you worship that way? What could change in your approach to worship to make it more authentic and joy-filled?
- 7) What circumstances negatively affect your ability to truly worship God on Sunday mornings?
- 8) Every Sunday we gather together to celebrate the resurrection of Christ, that’s why we meet on the first day of the week, how should that change the way we approach corporate worship?
- 9) How do we fall prey to worshipping the wrong things well, and worshipping the right thing inadequately? How can we change this?

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