

Nehemiah 8 : When God restores his people

Start by reading over Nehemiah 8:1-18, what do you find most striking or confusing about the passage?

- Focussing on v1-12
  - What clues are there that show us how the Israelites felt about the word of God?
  - The strength of reaction in verse 9 is remarkable (and perhaps a special case!). Does scripture move us to grief or joy in the same ways?
  - Why can they react with joy rather than grief? (v10-12)
  - Which parts of this passage would you want to see reflected in our church's culture?

- Thinking about v13-18… If you want to know a bit more about what the festival of tabernacles was meant to be you could skim over Lev 23:33-43 (and Deut 16:13-17, Numbers 29:12-40 if you want more detail)
  - Why does this festival matter… what is its purpose for them? What does the fact it had been mostly forgotten tell us about the way Israel had lived in the land before the exile?
  - Most Christians don't keep the festival of tabernacles! What are the ways we do remember and teach ourselves the story of our salvation? Is this something we do well as a church? How could we do it better?

- Look ahead to Acts 2, and Revelation 21-22
  - How does Nehemiah 8 point us towards the modern church, and towards what is yet to come?