

Devotional from Pastor Ho
January 20, 2021

Nehemiah 8:12, *“And all the people went their way to eat and drink and to send portions and to make great rejoicing, because they had understood the words that were declared to them.”*

I still remember vividly one of the scenes when I was interviewed as a pastoral candidate back in January 2010. Toward the end of the interview, the co-chair of the church board asked, “What kind of church do you look for?” By God’s grace, words came out from my mouth without a moment of hesitancy, “A church that takes the Bible seriously.” This has also become a reminder for me as I navigate through church life since I began ministry in this church almost ten years ago.

No doubt, to “take the Bible seriously” is a church-wide effort, though it generally begins with the church leaders, and it launches with the church being in love with God’s Word, even as that Word is faithfully preached and taught from the pulpit Sunday after Sunday. To see the church “take the Bible seriously” is to call for the church to delve into the Bible itself, not just watching or listening to Bible expositions by a favorite Bible teacher. They may be edifying, but they definitely cannot substitute for the very Word of God. All they do is to shed light on difficult passages, while there are also parts of the Bible that are accessible even to little ones.

This is what we see in Nehemiah 8 leading to our passage, when the Book of the Law was first read before the people, and only after that did the Levites help the people to understand the Law...they gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading (8:7-8), mostly because the Law was written in Hebrew, while most of the people spoke Aramaic. The effect was no less than dramatic: “all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law” (8:9b) but as they went their way they “[made] great rejoicing because they had understood the words that were declared to them” (8:12b). If we vow to “take the Bible seriously,” the rejoicing comes not the least from the Lord’s promise that “[my word] shall not return to me empty, but it shall accomplish that which I purpose, and shall succeed in the thing for which I sent it” (Isa 55:11), and we can be sure he purposes it for our good.

Prayer: Our heavenly Father, you give us your Word so that we may know you through it and benefit from it. Help us to “take your word seriously,” so that our life reflects it. For Jesus’ sake, Amen.

何牧師的靈修

2021 年 1 月 20 日

尼希米記 8 章 12 節：“眾民都去吃喝，也分給人，大大快樂，因為他們明白所教訓他們的話。”

我仍然清楚地記得 2010 年 1 月當我作為牧師候選人面談時的一幕。在面談結尾時，執事會主席問道：“在找什麼樣的教會？”靠著神的恩典，我毫不猶豫地從口中說出：“一個認真對待聖經的教會。”從大約十年前我開始在這個教會服事以來，在教會生活中航行時，這也一直成為我的提醒。

無疑的，“認真對待聖經”是全教會的努力，儘管通常始於教會領袖，並且因為教會愛上了神的話而受的啟發，即使神的話每主日在講台上被忠實地傳講和教導。要看教會“認真對待聖經”，就要呼召教會深入鑽研聖經本身，而不僅僅是觀看或聆聽一位心儀的聖經老師的聖經解說。他們也許很有造就性，但他們絕對不能代替神的道。他們所做的只是闡明困難的經節，同時聖經中也有些部分甚至連小朋友都可以理解的。

這就是我們在尼希米記 8 章看到引向我們這段經文的，當神的律法書第一次念給眾民聽，之後利未人才幫他們明白律法……講明意思，使百姓明白所念的 (8:7-8)，主要是因為律法是用希伯來文寫，而大多數人講的是亞蘭語。效果非常戲劇性：“眾民聽見律法書上的話都哭了” (8:9 下)，但當他們離去時，他們“大大快樂，因為他們明白所教訓他們的話” (8:12 下)。如果我們發誓要“認真對待聖經”，那喜樂最低限度來自主的承諾，即“[我的話]決不徒然返回，卻要成就我所喜悅的，在我差他去成就的事上必然亨通” (以賽亞書 55:11)，而我們可以確定他成就是對我們有好處的。

禱告：我們的天父，你賜給我們你的話讓我們可以通過它認識你並從中受益。請幫助我們“認真對待你的話”，使我們的生活體現出你的話。奉耶穌的名，阿們。

何牧师的灵修

2021年1月20日

尼希米记 8 章 12 节：“众民都去吃喝，也分给人，大大快乐，因为他们明白所教训他们的话。”

我仍然清楚地记得 2010 年 1 月当我作为牧师候选人面谈时的一幕。在面谈结尾时，执事会主席问道：“您在找什么样的教会？”靠着神的恩典，我毫不犹豫地从中说出：“一个认真对待圣经的教会。”从大约十年前我开始在这个教会服事以来，在教会生活中航行时，这也一直成为我的提醒。

无疑的，“认真对待圣经”是全教会的努力，尽管通常始于教会领袖，并且因为教会爱上了神的话而受的启发，即使神的话每主日在讲台上被忠实地传讲和教导。要看教会“认真对待圣经”，就要呼召教会深入钻研圣经本身，而不仅仅是观看或聆听一位心仪的圣经老师的圣经解说。他们也许很有造就性，但他们绝对不能代替神的道。他们所做的只是阐明困难的经节，同时圣经中也有些部分甚至连小朋友都可以理解的。

这就是我们在尼希米记 8 章看到引向我们这段经文的，当神的律法书第一次念给众民听，之后利未人才帮他们明白律法……讲明意思，使百姓明白所念的 (8:7-8)，主要是因为律法是用希伯来文写，而大多数人讲的是亚兰语。效果非常戏剧性：“众民听见律法书上的话都哭了” (8:9 下)，但当他们离去时，他们“大大快乐，因为他们明白所教训他们的话” (8:12 下)。如果我们发誓要“认真对待圣经”，那喜乐最低限度来自自主的承诺，即“[我的话]决不徒然返回，却要成就我所喜悦的，在我差他去成就的事上必然亨通” (以赛亚书 55:11)，而我们可以确定他成就是对我们有好处的。

祷告：我们的天父，你赐给我们你的话让我们可以通过它认识你并从中受益。请帮助我们“认真对待你的话”，使我们的生活体现出你的话。奉耶稣的名，阿们。