

HUNGER FOR GOD'S WORD



David Wilkerson May 12, 2015

“The joy of the Lord is your strength” (Nehemiah 8:10). At the time these words were proclaimed, the Israelites had just returned from captivity in Babylon. Under the leadership of Ezra and Nehemiah, the people had rebuilt Jerusalem’s ruined walls. And now they set their sights on reestablishing the Temple and restoring the nation.

Nehemiah had called a special meeting at the city’s water gate, within Jerusalem’s rebuilt walls. “And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that was before the water gate” (Nehemiah 8:1). Some 42,360 Israelite men were on hand for this meeting. Standing alongside them were 7,300 servants, including 245 singers. Altogether, about 50,000 people were gathered.

First came the preaching of God’s Word. Scripture says the people were hungry to hear it: “They spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses. . . . And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding” (8:1-2).

These people didn’t need to have God’s Word pushed on them. A consensus of hunger had developed among them and they were fully prepared to submit to the authority of His Word. They wanted to be governed by it, to make their lives conform to its truth.

Amazingly, Ezra preached to this crowd for five or six hours—“from the morning until midday” (8:3). Yet no one even noticed the time. “The ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law” (8:3). These people were totally captivated by God’s Word.

What an incredible scene! You simply would not see such an occurrence in any American church today. Yet, I tell you, true revival can never take place without this kind of all-consuming hunger for God’s Word. Indeed, when God’s people grow weary of hearing His Word preached, a spiritual death begins—and the joy of the Lord departs.

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