Tabernacles

Nehemiah 8:13-18

1. Intro
   1. Humans desire fellowship with God.
      1. We desire intimacy with God
      2. We desire direction
      3. And we desire correction
   2. The Feast of Tabernacles or Booths is one of the least understood feasts of the OT
   3. This feast was a precious gift to the people who followed by FAITH
   4. I’m one who wishes we had a similar feast to celebrate today.
2. Text
   1. Verse 13
      1. The leadership gathered for the purpose of studying
      2. Priests: Aaronic, these were the leaders of the Levites. In order to be High Priest, you had to be from Aaron
      3. Levites: Priestly Tribe assigned by God
      4. Heads of the Father’s houses: people with leadership over their groups.
      5. Ezra the scribe: the scribe was considered to be a high position in Judaism
   2. Verse 14-15
      1. They go back to the law that was given by God to Moses
      2. Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the 7th month
         1. The feast of Tabernacles
         2. Reminder of the things they went through during the exodus.
      3. The reminders of where we have come from helps us figure out where we are to go.
   3. Verse 16:
      1. They began to do what God had commanded
      2. The lived in temporary shelters just as they had during the Exodus
   4. Verse 17:
      1. Little explanation of why it needed to be reinstated
      2. They had not spent time remembering what God had done
      3. They rejoiced greatly at the reminder
   5. Verse 18:
      1. They celebrated with the teaching of the word
      2. They celebrated with the obedience to the word
      3. They celebrated by enjoying fellowship with God
3. Points
   1. **We need Reminders**
      1. Reminders of God can be sacred and Holy.
      2. What were they supposed to Remember?
         1. The Exodus:
            1. God brought them out of Egypt
            2. God protected them by sending them to Egypt in the first place
            3. God provided the children of Israel many miracles and displayed His power and reminder of His covenant promises.
         2. God’s law
         3. God’s instruction
      3. Why do we need to Remember these things?
         1. What God has done, God can still do
         2. What God has promised, He will fulfill
      4. How do we remember these things?
         1. In the feast of Tabernacles, the challenge was to purposefully set aside a week to remember when they were leaving Egypt and wondering in the wilderness in disobedience.
         2. They lived in tents, just outside the place where God dwelt.
      5. Modern Application:
         1. It is vital to your current and future Growth in Christ to remember what He has done and what He can do.
         2. We need to put things on our life to remind us of God’s promises
         3. We need to place ourselves in special, intentional times of growth and encouragement
         4. Let us do the things that allow us to remember the initial step of faith
         5. Let us remember the times when we were most on fire, and be able to look back to this times and be encouraged
         6. Strive for GOD, rest in GOD, be encouraged by GOD, be challenged by GOD.
   2. **We need Direction**
      1. Without direction, we cannot find ourselves arriving at an intended destination
      2. If we wonder around in the wilderness, and not find the direction God has already set before us, we will never find the promised land.
      3. We need GOD’S direction each and every day, each and every decision, each and every moment.
      4. Alice in Wonderland: "If you don't know where you're going, any road'll take you there”
      5. We can not survive on the mission field God has placed before us without His direction.
      6. His direction is completely HIS to give us, and we hear better when we lean in close to God and His WORD.
      7. Distraction from God’s Direction comes from the Deceiver
      8. Direction, properly understood, will keep you from distraction.
      9. Do you have a vision for God’s work in your life? Lean in close!
   3. **We need Proximity**
      1. We depend upon the fellowship God has given us by His GRACE
      2. The symbol of the building of a tabernacle and living in it for a week is a symbol of our need for proximity to God today.
      3. We need to tabernacle with God and serve His good cause.
      4. We should seek and desire greatly that close intimate fellowship and relationship with God.
      5. How close are you to the LORD?
         1. Does your proximity affect your ability to listen and respond?
         2. Do you desire to feel that closeness to the presence of Holy God?
      6. There is but one way to foster this PROXIMITY:
         1. Yield yourself to God
         2. Deny yourself and live.
4. Close
   1. What are you doing to promote intimacy with God?
   2. Are you making yourself more available or less?
   3. Are you spending more time in the word and prayer?