

Word notes Sunday 27/11/2011 Tony Hodge
Nehemiah 9 & 10 – Renewal and Revival

Summary (read this bit out to remind cell members what was said on Sunday)

Key Text: Nehemiah 9

Nehemiah's memoirs tell a historical account of rebuilding a city wall. They also tell of the renewal or restoration of relationship between God and man – for the Jews who had previously fallen in sinful ways (hence being exiled) this meant a return to God's Word, to the Law with its festivals, laws and practices but, as we'll see, this was not a legalistic obedience but a response of the heart.

For the Christian, someone who has turned away from doing things their way to follow Jesus, the renewal brought about by the Holy Spirit results in a similar response of the heart, the main difference being that back in Jerusalem the changes happened on the outside the work of men, after the Cross the changes happen on the inside the work of the Holy Spirit – a crucial difference.

Their response on hearing the Law, on having the Word established in their lives, was praise & worship drawing on the history of God's people to say about God that:

- He is infinite, creator, describing His uniqueness and power (5-6)
- A promise-keeping God (7-8)
- A God who shows His love (9-12)
- A God who speaks to His people and unfolds His will (13-15)
- Demonstrates His mercy (16-18)
- Shows His generosity (19-25)
- Proves His faithfulness (32-37)

And then in chapter 10 we read how they recommitted themselves to God's ways by a formal agreement, men women and children – all that could understand – but only God's people.

Jeremiah 31:33 says: "*This is the covenant that I will make with the house of Israel after that time,*" declares the LORD. "*I will put my law in their minds and write it on their hearts. I will be their God, and they will be my people.*" Through Jesus, the living Word, this promise is fulfilled in anyone who will follow him.

Application (this is the bit where cell members get to participate. Lead discussions around these points)

1. Who do you think people see as perfect in our society?
2. How did the Israelites recognise that they were sinful people?
3. What things did they do to get themselves right with God?
4. Can you think of a time in your life when outwardly all was going well, but inwardly God had drifted to the margins? What happened?
5. How did you get back into a God-focussed relationship again? Or, if you're still in that place of your relationship with God being on the back burner, what would it take for you to get into a God-focussed relationship?

Take some time to pray – individually to continued growth by getting closer to God through the Word and in the Spirit and collectively to help each other in that goal.

Witness (this is the bit where the cell talks and prays about how to share the Good News)

Check out the email Tony sent round this week detailing the Christmas Programme. What will you do to get fully involved and help with the arrangements? Current Needs are:

Decorate the church, organise refreshments for the Carol Service, sing at the various Carol Singing events, deliver leaflets to Studlands. **Please talk about this and tell Tony ASAP what your cell is willing to do.**