



Small Group Study Guide for January 26, 2025

Our Savior Lutheran Church and School

Theme: Throughout our life we go through many ups and downs. Nehemiah reminds the people that the joy of the Lord is their strength. Their strength is not found in their numbers, or their fortifications, but in God's joy. May we also go with that joy in each and every day!

Getting Started: (sharing with each other)

1. What is the difference between happiness and joy?
2. Where have you seen the joy of the Lord in your life?

In the Word: Nehemiah 8:1-3

3. Nehemiah's context plays an important role in understanding this section of scripture. Nehemiah is a governor who is given permission by the Persian King, Artaxerxes, to go and help rebuild the city of Jerusalem. By then, the 2nd temple had been rebuilt and Nehemiah leads a group of people back to Jerusalem from exile. Nehemiah is met with opposition but seeks to help restore the people. One of the main ways he accomplishes this is through rebuilding the city walls around Jerusalem. The first 7 chapters of Nehemiah focus on this physical rebuilding. However, in Nehemiah 8 there is a focus on rebuilding the people of God through the word of God. Who initiates the reading from the Book of the Law? What does this tell us about the people who had gathered together?
4. How long did Ezra read from the Book of the Law? What does this tell us about the importance of hearing God's word?

In the Word: Nehemiah 8:5-6, 8-10

5. In verse 6 it says, "And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground." Bowing their faces to the ground was an outward sign of humility and repentance. Where in the worship service do we repent of our sins? Is this something we do together?

6. At the end of verse 9 it says, "For all the people wept as they heard the words of the Law." Why would the people weep? What does this imply?

7. Notice all the things Nehemiah says in verse 10. What does he tell them to do?

8. This gathering is taking place at the Water Gate (vs. 1). As the people are hearing Nehemiah's words they are gazing upon the walls of Jerusalem they had just rebuilt. Where might they have expected Nehemiah to say their strength was found? Where does Nehemiah say their strength is in? What is the difference between those two?

Putting it all Together (what do we believe or do as disciples?)

9. How does knowing that God's joy is your strength impact the way you live?

10. Verse 10 calls us to look out for those in need. "Go your way. Eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions to anyone who has nothing ready." In what ways can we do this? Is there a deep joy that comes from serving our neighbor?

Prayer: Thank God for giving us His instruction through his Holy Scriptures. Ask Jesus to forgive us for when we have not always followed his way for our life. Ask the Holy Spirit to strengthen us in the joy of the Lord so that others might see that joy and come to know of Jesus through our witness.