

PENTECOST METHODIST CHURCH

LIVE-IT-OUT GUIDE

Sermon Date: 01/05/2022

Text(s): Nehemiah 8

Sermon Title: Revival (Part 2)

Preacher: Rev Collin See

(The sermon recording is available in the PMC website and MyPMC App)

READ (5 mins)

Take the time and read the whole of Nehemiah chapter **8** together in your own bibles.

RELATE (30 mins)

(Relate to what was shared and on key themes in the sermon)

- 1. Scripture tells us in v1 that the people gathered as one man. What does it mean to come together as one man? Have you ever seen a church or a company experience revival without coming together as one man?**

Leader's notes: The preacher shared that the people assembled with a unified purpose. That is what it means to gather as one man; having one purpose, having the same goal and agenda. Encourage the members to share in their own words what it means to gather as one man.

Briefly ask if anyone has a story to share of how a church or a business experienced revival because the people laboured together as one man. After that, you can bring attention to how our church was started in 1932 when 12 people came together as one man, along with Rev Chew Hock Hin.

This being PMC's 90th anniversary, use this opportunity to talk about how the church came together to reach the pre-believers and minister to the people in Geylang. Share also how the church survived the Japanese occupation when the church building was taken over by the Japanese army. Below is an excerpt from PMC website. Use this link if you would like to read more: <https://pmc.org.sg/our-history>

Pentecost Methodist Church

1932 On Pentecost Sunday, 15 May 1932, the first Peranakan worship service was held. Twelve people attended. Rev Chew Hock Hin was the appointed pastor.

1936 The church was constituted as Geylang Straits Chinese Methodist Church.

1937 Sunday School continued to grow. Epworth League (precursor of Methodist Youth Fellowship) and the Ladies' Aid Society of Christian Service) were also established.

1939 The church building was acquired by the Japanese military during the war. Members remained faithful, meeting and worshipping in the pastor's and members' homes.

- 2. We also read in v1 that as the people gathered, they asked Ezra to bring out God's Word, the Law of Moses, to be read to them. What can we learn from this? What do you observe here and what thoughts do you have concerning revival among God's people?**

Leader's notes: It is interesting to note that it was the people who first asked the Ezra to bring out God's Word to be read to them. The people stood from early morning until noon in order to hear God's Word. They knew that they would have had to stand for many hours by this request, yet they asked for it nevertheless. It was not forced upon them by Ezra. It was not Ezra who demanded that they stood for hours to hear him read Scripture.

For revival to occur, there must be a true hunger for the Word of God. It is difficult to say which comes first. Does revival first occurs and then we see the people occupying themselves with the reading of Scripture or we get God's people to begin reading the Bible and then revival will start? However revival starts, the important point to note is that in every revival we will definitely see God's people having a greater desire to read Scripture and will truly busy themselves with reading the Bible.

You can extend this discussion by addressing this issue of reading. There are those who say reading is not their thing, that they don't even read newspapers or magazines. What do you suggest for those who do not have a habit of or a liking to reading? Maybe listening to the Bible read to them is a possible solution. Nowadays, there are Bible apps or websites with this facility, where with one click, you could hear a chapter of the bible read to you.

REFLECT (30 mins)

(Reflect and apply God's word to our daily lives)

- 1. As Ezra continued reading Scripture, amazing responses came from the people. What were these responses? What could be some reasons for their responses? Do you think these responses are appropriate for God's people, and if we should allow them to be expressed among us today? Why or why not?**

Leader's notes: Take a look at verses 6 and 9b to see the people's responses.

Nehemiah 8:6 (NLT)

6 Then Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and all the people chanted, “Amen! Amen!” as they lifted their hands. Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

Nehemiah 8:9b (NLT)

9 ...For the people had all been weeping as they listened to the words of the Law.

We see that during the reading of Scripture, the people were shouting, “Amen!” They lifted their hands in praise, they bowed down in worship, and they also wept aloud. Are these responses appropriate for today when we come together for worship, whether during Sunday church services or during life group meetings? Why or why not?

If there’s time, talk about why the people were weeping. Scripture doesn’t say why they were weeping. Were they weeping about their sins as God’s Word was being read? Interestingly, they were told not to weep but to rejoice because it was a holy day (see verses 9 & 11). And v12 tells us that the reason they rejoiced and had a feast was because they **understood** God’s Word that was read to them. This tells us that reading God’s Word might cause us to weep at the beginning when we realise how we have disobeyed God’s Word. But it can also lead us to rejoice when we hear of the many promises of forgiveness, of blessings, and of the mercy and favour of God.

- 2. There was the reading of Scripture. There was great rejoicing among the Israelites. There was feasting. The children were included. There was mutual support for one another. There was also the stepping aside by Nehemiah. How do you see all these signs of revival coming together? What two critical factors do you think maintained this revival?**

Leader’s notes: In the first sermon on revival, the preacher said the critical factors for having a revival are having a spiritual leader, spiritual unity, and the fear of God. In this second sermon, we see the other factors for revival. What are other critical factors that began and sustained this revival? The point of this question is to lead the members to see clearly the factors that are critically required for revival to take place. There are probably several factors that are equally important, so it would be difficult to pinpoint it to one single critical factor. We share **two** critical factors here.

The first critical factor we note is that Ezra was reading God’s Word to the people on a **daily** basis during the 7 days of feasting (see verses 17 & 18). This tells us that consistent, daily reading of Scripture is very important for our spiritual well-being. We cannot afford to have inconsistent unity among us. We cannot afford to have the joy of the Lord in an inconsistent way. We cannot afford to have the fear of the Lord in an inconsistent manner. It would be disastrous if our lives were to alternate between joy and depression on a daily basis. It would be disastrous if our church were to alternate between unity and disunity on a monthly basis.

Nehemiah 8:17–18 (NASB95)

17 The entire assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in them. The sons of Israel had indeed not done so from the days of Joshua the son of Nun to that day. And there was great rejoicing.

18 He read from the book of the law of God daily, from the first day to the last day. And they celebrated the feast seven days, and on the eighth day *there was* a solemn assembly according to the ordinance.

The second factor sustaining unity among God’s people is the presence of the **Holy Spirit**. In the sermon, the preacher said, “We can keep staying together as one man because we have the same Holy Spirit. We may have a lot of differences among us—different ideas, different gifts, different preferences. But when we allow the Holy Spirit to guide us, we can use our different gifts that God has given to us to complement God’s plan and to complement one another. We can work together as one man because we have the same Holy Spirit in us.”

We see that the Spirit of God has been a critical factor in bringing about revival for God’s people and for Nehemiah right from the beginning (see Neh 2:18–20 for example). The hand of God by the Holy Spirit was moving the king and God’s people along (remember that God is Spirit and He does not work with a physical hand like human beings). Uniting God’s people in their hearts was the work of the Holy Spirit.

Nehemiah 2:18–20 (NLT)

18 Then I told them about how the gracious hand of God had been on me, and about my conversation with the king. They replied at once, “Yes, let’s rebuild the wall!” So they began the good work.

19 But when Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem the Arab heard of our plan, they scoffed contemptuously. “What are you doing? Are you rebelling against the king?” they asked.

20 I replied, “The God of heaven will help us succeed. We, his servants, will start rebuilding this wall. But you have no share, legal right, or historic claim in Jerusalem.”

REST (15 mins)

(Take time to share and pray for one another)

(Pray for our church, our nation, and our world. See MyPMC > PRAY for monthly guide)

- Pray for one another to increase in our love and hunger for the Word of God as we allow the Holy Spirit to stir our hearts and not by us forcing ourselves in any way.
- Pray for our church to be a people who understand the importance of unity within the body of Christ and to have the conviction to live and serve as one man.
- Pray for the MCS to continue to be strong and stable, able to meet needs in Singapore, and to stand out as a true witness of Christ Jesus.