

RESPONDING TO GOD

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Neh 8:1-6 All the people assembled together as one person at the square just inside the Water Gate. They asked Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses, which the LORD had given for Israel to obey. So on October 8 Ezra the priest brought the scroll of the law before the assembly, which included the men and women and all the children old enough to understand. He faced the square just inside the Water Gate from early morning until noon and read aloud to everyone who could understand. All the people paid close attention to the Book of the Law. Ezra the scribe stood on a high wooden platform that had been made for the occasion. Ezra stood on the platform in full view of all the people. When they saw him open the book, they all rose to their feet. Then Ezra praised the LORD, the great God, and all the people chanted, "Amen! Amen!" as they lifted their hands toward heaven. Then they bowed down and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground. NLT

For days Ezra had watched the people build the walls against impossible odds. He had watched them respond with enthusiasm to Nehemiah's challenges. He had seen them lift their hearts in prayer to God when they sensed they could not succeed by themselves. How thrilled he must have been to see their motivation to trust God to help them accomplish what humanly speaking was an impossible task. But how much more excited he must have been when the people themselves, after the wall was rebuilt, gathered on their own and ask him once again to read from the Law of God.

When Ezra showed up and took his place on the platform that had been built, the people rose to their feet, in honor of the man of God and in reverence for the Word of God.

Not only did the congregation want to hear the Word of God, they also responded to what they heard. They were convicted of their sin. They begin to repent with their heads bowed low. They were overcome with godly sorrow.

After a time of repenting, they were told that God had heard their cry and forgiven their sin and now it was time to rejoice.

Repentance is a beautiful thing in the sight of God. So is rejoicing!

When Nehemiah first arrived in Jerusalem, the city was in ruins. 52 days later, the walls were standing. Despite unrelenting opposition, they tackled the impossible and succeed. They experienced what God could do through people who were willing to respond to God's will.

It has yet to be determined what all God can do and will do for Cottonwood Christian Fellowship if we will respond to what He ask of us to do.