

Effective Preaching
(Nehemiah 8)

Introduction:

1. This morning we showed from the Scriptures that preaching is an authorized activity in Christian worship.
2. This evening we are considering some additional information that relates to preaching.
3. In our lesson we are concentrating on several factors that contribute to the effectiveness of preaching.
4. We will be making some observations from Nehemiah 8.
5. Before we examine this chapter, let us observe how people responded to the preaching of:
 - a. Jesus (Matthew 7:28-29; 13:54-57a)
 - b. the apostles (Acts 2:41; 17:32-33).
6. Observation: The effectiveness of the preaching of Jesus and the apostles was determined by the responses of the people who heard them.
7. On the basis of this information, let us turn our attention to Nehemiah 8.
8. The first point we need to make is that . . .

Discussion:

- I. THE PREACHING OF GOD'S WORD ON THIS OCCASION WAS VERY EFFECTIVE (vs.13-18)
 - A. The people who were present learned God's will, and they put it into practice.
 - B. Specifically, the people present learned about the Feast of Tabernacles.
 1. "Tabernacles" [feast of booths] was a 7-day feast that began on the 15th day of the 7th month (Leviticus 23:33-43).
 2. During this feast the Israelites lived in tabernacles made of tree branches.
 - C. Note the timing in Nehemiah 8 -- *"the first day of the seventh month"* (vs.2b).
 - D. When the Jews learned that God wanted them to observe the Feast of Tabernacles, they followed His instructions.
 - E. The preaching on this occasion was effective because the people present learned God's will, and they put it into practice (Luke 11:28 -- *"blessed are they that hear the word of God, and keep it"*).
- II. 3 FACTORS CONTRIBUTED TO THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE PREACHING ON THIS OCCASION
 - A. First, a prepared preacher was involved.
 1. A number of speakers were involved, but Ezra was the main spokesman.
 2. His preparation is mentioned in:
 - a. Ezra 7:6 -- *"he was a ready scribe in the law of Moses"*
 - b. Ezra 7:10.
 3. Ezra's preparation enabled him to take advantage of the opportunity presented to him in Nehemiah 8.
 - B. Second, a powerful message was presented (2 reasons why the message was powerful).
 1. The message was powerful because of its content (vs.8a -- God's law).
 2. The message was also powerful because of the way it was delivered.
 - a. (vs.4) Ezra stood on a wooden pulpit made for this purpose.
 - b. (vs.6) Ezra began by blessing God.
 - c. (vs.8) Ezra and the others read distinctly, gave the sense, and caused the audience to understand the reading.
 - C. Third, a respectful audience was present.
 1. It was composed of Jews who had returned to Jerusalem from Babylon.
 2. (vs.1) They assembled, and they asked Ezra to bring God's law before them.
 3. Notice the respect of the audience for God's law.
 - a. (vs.3b) Their ears were attentive to the message.

- b. (vs.5) When Ezra opened the book, all the people stood up.
- c. (vs.7b) They "*stood in their place*" (vs.3 -- from morning until midday).
- d. (vs.9b) They "*wept, when they heard the words of the law.*"
- e. (vs.12) Their respect for God's law resulted in joy.

Conclusion:

1. Why was this information recorded? (see Romans 15:4)
2. The effectiveness of preaching is determined by:
 - a. the preparation of the speaker
 - b. the message and the method of delivery
 - c. the respect and the response of the audience.
3. Was this just a one-time event? (See Nehemiah 9:1-3)