

Reclaiming the Passion

October 13, 2024

Nehemiah 8:1-12

OPENING PRAYER:

Holy and good Creator, we rejoice that you are the God who communicates. Thus, the One who wrote upon tablets of stone is the same One who writes the divine word upon our hearts and minds. Prepare us now, we pray, to hear, receive and obey your word as the Scripture is read and proclaimed. May it penetrate deeply and move us to respond to your Spirit. Amen.

BREAKING THE ICE:

- Describe a time when you were frustrated, down-in-the-dumps, etc. and someone else's joy and enthusiasm brought you up to their level.

WRESTLING WITH THE WORD:

Read Nehemiah 8:1-12

- What surprises you from this passage?
- What brings God joy? Repentance? The lost returning to Him? Worship?
- If this is where our focus should be, what does that imply, compared to the world is around us?
- When you are disengaged, disinterested, depressed, etc have you ever prayed to see the Lord's joy? How could this prayer change the situation?

EMBODYING THE WORD:

We are going to concentrate on Nehemiah 8:10c "...the joy of the LORD is your strength." Read the scripture aloud, one line at a time, emphasizing the word in bold. Be quiet and think about it for a bit and write a few words, phrases, or questions that result from your meditation on each subtle, or not so subtle, nuance:

- The **JOY** of the Lord is your strength.
- The joy **OF** the Lord is your strength.
- The joy of **THE** Lord is your strength.
- The joy of the **LORD** is your strength.
- The joy of the Lord **IS** your strength.
- The joy of the Lord is **YOUR** strength.
- The joy of the Lord is your **STRENGTH**.

NEXT STEPS:

- If joy empowers, how can you bring this into your relationships?
- With whom will you reach out to bring joy this week?

PRAYER FOR THE WEEK:

May the strength of God pilot us; May the wisdom of God instruct us, May the hand of God protect us, May the word of God direct us. Be always ours this day and forevermore. --St. Patrick.