

People of the Book

I. Slide1 **Announce:**

- A. Slide2 **May17th** guest speaker for Children at Risk is...ANDREW DOAN, M.D., PH.D. CDR MC USN [Author: Hooked on Games] Video Game addictions.
1. **Topic - The Endgame:** Protecting Your Family Against Internet Gaming Disorder and Online Predators.
- B. Slide3 **Pray at the Pole:** National Day of Prayer. 12-12:30pm tomorrow at City Hall.
- C. Slide4 **Next Wed Night Meal:** Pot Roast, Red Potatoes, Carrots, Gravy. \$5.50, \$3.50

II. **Intro:**

- A. The **walls** were finished in 52 days **but** the **people** inside sure *weren't*.
1. The 2nd part of the book, the remainder (ch.'s 7-13), teaches us about an **even more important** building program in Jerusalem...*the spiritual building of the people behind the walls.*
 - a) Here we have the first steps toward **community**.
 - b) Did you know you can acquire just about everything in solitude - except *character*.
 - c) **The fruit of the Spirit:** [the 2nd 3 must be shown outward, in community]
 - (1) **1st 3, inner attitudes, God-ward**, sourced in God (**Love, joy, peace**)
 - (2) **2nd 3, relational qualities, man-ward**, expressed to others (**longsuffering kindness, goodness**)
 - (3) **3rd 3, personal qualities, self-ward**, guides indiv conduct (**faithfulness, gentleness, self-control**)

III. Slide5 **PEOPLE OF THE WALL (7:1-6)**

- A. (2) **What 2 things was Nehemiah looking for in his leaders?**
1. **Faithful** men who **Fear God**.
 2. **Required in OT:** Jethro recommended to Moses **Moreover you shall select from all the people able men, such as fear God, men of truth, hating covetousness.**
 3. **Required in NT:** In Acts 6, the 12 looked for **seven men of good reputation, full of the Holy Spirit and wisdom, whom we may appoint over this business...And they chose Stephen, a man full of faith and the Holy Spirit...**
 4. **What do churches look for in leaders today?**

- a) Forceful personality, vision, admin skills, decisiveness, humor, tact? Those all play a part, **but** the most desirable qualities are **godliness & integrity**.
- B. Slide6 (3) In the East it is customary to open the gates of a city at **sunrise**, **and** to bar them at **sunset**, a rule which is very rarely infringed upon. *But here...*
 - 1. A precaution necessary because of the enemies prior attempts against them.
- C. (5) Do you ever have things **put in your heart** by God? Do you respond when He does?

IV. Slide7 PEOPLE OF THE INHERITANCE (7:7-73)

- A. We ought to be very sure that we **&** our loved ones are included in *God's register*.
- B. **Worship** seemed to be an important part of building a strong community of faith.
 - 1. Note the singers – vs.1,44,67,73. [Our musician's Fellowship, The Stir, next Sat 6:30pm. *Renowned vocal coach Billy Purnell* doing a vocal workshop]

V. Slide8 PEOPLE OF THE BOOK (8:1-12)

- A. This was **Bible Conference 101**. Guest speaker...*Ezra*.
- B. Why was Ezra **equipped** to deliver the Word to the people? (1,2)
 - 1. Ezra 7:9,10 *for the gracious hand of his God was on him. This was because Ezra had determined to study and obey the Law of the Lord and to teach those decrees and regulations to the people of Israel.*
 - a) Ezra's personal commitment to **study** the Law, **practice** it in his own life, **&** then **teach** it was reflected.
 - 2. Why not Nehemiah? He wasn't a priest **nor** a Levite.
- C. Slide9a **Where** was the Word going to be read...at **the Water Gate**...where else. *The washing of the water of the word.*
 - 1. **Not** at the **Altar**, **but** at the center of city life. *The kind of place where God's wisdom pleads most urgently to be heard.*
 - a) Slide9b Prov.1:20 *Wisdom shouts in the streets. She cries out in the public square*
 - b) *The Law itself insisting that its voice must not be confined to the sanctuary but heard in the house & the street.* Kidner
 - c) **Where is your water gate/cooler?** Have you taken the Word of God **out of church & to the streets, to your community, to your Town Square?**
- D. Slide9c **How long** did the people stand? (3) [about **6 hours**, from day light **till** noon]
- E. Why do you think the people **stood**? (5)

1. Out of **respect** of the reading of Gods word.
 2. **Ask**, How can we show respect for Gods word today?
 - a) **Balance?** India/never below you/not arm pit. **Nate/ear rung** for dropping as kid.
- F. **Slide10** Why does it mention that he opened up the book *in the sight of all the people & was above them?* (5)
1. I think pastors, Bible study teachers, Children's Church teachers should do this also...*open the book in the sight of all the people.* **Why?** [even needed to in oral]
- G. **How did Ezra bless the Lord?** (Praise, he praised His God) (6)
1. This was **not** a type of **bibliolatry**/biblio book/*Latria* worship as though the scrolls were being venerated simply as a relic. **The adoration was for God**, as vs.6 makes abundantly clear.
- H. **Why did the people get so excited about the hearing of the word of God?** (6)
1. Obviously they were a long time **w/o** it.
 2. **Did everyone have their own bible to read in that day?** [no way]
 3. **Slide11a** Does the Word ever move you to **radical worship?** [prostrate]
- I. **How did Ezra teach them?** (8)
1. **Read distinctly** – **Clear.** *Parash*, to make distinct.
 2. **Gave the sense** – Gave the meaning of, explained.
 3. **Helped them to understand the reading** – how to apply. **Result: they understood**
 4. **Mention: Observation. Interpretation. Application steps.**
- J. **Slide11b** What was the effect of the readings, on the people?
1. **Grief stricken** – mourning & weeping (9) & sorrow (10).
 - a) When they heard & understood God's Law, they understood their violation of it.
 - b) **Blessed are they that mourn for they shall be comforted.**
 2. **Joy** (10) – Nehemiah probably reminded them of God's mercy & forgiveness.
 - a) They heard God **punishes sin**, **but** also **blesses obedience**.
 - b) They had not been **utterly destroyed** as a nation...this was reason for **rejoicing!**
 - c) **We always need to cultivate Holy Joy.**
 - (1) The joy of **sin forgiven**; of **acceptance** w/God; of **hope** that anchors us to the unseen & cannot be ashamed.
 - d) *You may not be able to Joy in yourself, or your surroundings, but you may always rejoice in the Lord.*
- K. **What brought about their joy?** (12 – understanding the teachings)

1. Probably my highest compliment by people new to our church... *"I can understand it when you teach it. You make it simple/plain."*
 2. What does **Jeremiah** say is the connection between **God's Word & Joy**?
Jer.15:16 Your **words** were found, and I ate them, And **Your word** was to me the **joy and rejoicing** of my heart.
 3. The bible is a source of **happiness**.
 4. Slide12 Proverbs 8:34-36 **Blessed** is the man who listens to me (wisdom),
Watching daily at my gates, Waiting at the posts of my doors. For whoever finds me finds **life**, And obtains **favor** from the LORD; **But** he who sins against me wrongs his own soul; All those who hate me love death.
 5. Jesus said in Lk.11:28 **blessed** are those who hear the word of God & keep it.
 6. You can't be happier then when you **discover, accept, & obey** God's word.
- L. What brought about their strength? [Joy-ing in the Lord (10)]
- M. Slide13 The sequence in chapter 8 is striking:
1. **Intellectual response** to the Word(1-8). **Emotional response** to the Word(9-12) **and Volitional response** to the Word (13-18).
- N. What a perfect church gathering: People gathered in unity. They told Ezra *bring the book*. They assembled. Were listening. The word was exalted. **The preacher**: read, explained, applied the word. **The people responded**: by weeping, cut to heart, grief of sin, and by rejoicing & feasting.

VI. Slide14 **PEOPLE OF OBEDIENCE (8:13-18)**

- A. This Feast of Tabernacles is also called the *Festival of Sukkot/booths*.
1. It is also called the *Feast of Ingathering* (as it was at the completion of the **Harvest**)
 2. Josephus said, "it was holiest & greatest festival among the Jews."
 3. Slide15a/b **A feast, not only for harvest but for all the bounty of nature which made life possible and living happy.** Barclay
 4. This was the most joyful feast of the year. A festival packed with **Joy & feasting** lasting 1 week. **This came right after the Day of Atonement.**
 - a) **True Joy** comes only when we know we are right w/God.
 - b) **Why was this harvest festival apropos?** [remember where I've brought you *from*... *i.e.* tents in the wilderness & now from Babylon]
- B. How did the people react to the things they learned? (16,17)

1. The whole assembly went out & **did it**.
 2. **Also note very great gladness** (17) [*simchah gadol meod*, gladness great very]
 - a) How do you view **obedience**? *Drudgery or great gladness?*
- C. **Prayer:** Lord, we want to **honor** your word, **listen** to it, seek to **understand** it & then **obey** it?