

Engage in Reclaiming Joy

Nehemiah 8:10

There is something very extraordinary about returning home. I moved a few times as a kid and a few times as an adult. The only thing those places had in common was that they always became and felt like home. Even today, that nostalgia hits me when I think about or even go to those places. Even though not every place was a joyful experience, the fact that I made it through those times made them a joyful memory. Those moments made me stronger and are monuments to the victories from those times.

Indeed, when one makes the most significant return home, one makes the most important decision to return to God through Christ. We can look back at our past, those mistakes and the pain caused and received from the enslavement of sin and feel depressed, angry, and guilty. I encourage you to look at those times joyfully, for you are no longer there. Reclaim your joy and strength, for God has brought you home wholly.

Nehemiah 8:10 "Then he said to them, "Go, eat of the fat, drink of the sweet, and send portions to him who has nothing prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength." NASB

Upon completing Jerusalem's walls, many Israelites returned home after enduring a 70-year exile in Babylon under Nehemiah's leadership. This marked the dawn of a new era for the Israelites, a time of renewal and revitalization. It was the first day of their new year, celebrated as the Feast of Trumpets. The apostate nation of Israel gathered in the city square, their hearts open and expectant, as Ezra, the priest, stood before them. He began to read aloud from the sacred book of the Law, the divine commandments God gave to the nation of Israel.

This moment marked an essential step in Israel's spiritual journey as they reconnected with their faith and God. The words of the Law, long forgotten during the years of exile, now echoed through the square, a stark reminder of their past and a beacon guiding their way forward. By coming together to listen to the Word of the Lord, the nation demonstrated their collective commitment to a new beginning rooted in their faith and dedication to serving the Lord. They realized how far behind they left God as they heard the Word. Nehemiah stood up and reminded the people to have joy in returning home and confidence, for they returned to God.