* Bible declaration
* Pray together…
  + Open up to Nehemiah 8…

The Lord said “Have Joy…” then I felt lead to just be still..

* I typed those words and sat there for 30 minutes.

Have Joy…

**The strength of Joy**

**Nehemiah 8… Lay context:**

**Nehemiah 8:1-12** Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lordhad commanded Israel. **2**So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who *could* hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. **3**Then he read from it in the open square that *was* in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* to the Book of the Law. **4**So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood [SKIP NAMES] Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, *and* Meshullam. **5**And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was *standing* above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. **6**And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God.

Then all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with *their* faces to the ground.

**7**Also [SKIP NAMES] Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people *stood* in their place. **8**So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped *them* to understand the reading.

**9**And Nehemiah, who *was* the governor, Ezra the priest *and* scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day *is* holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep.” For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

* I’m sure they wept multiple reasons… One of them being they SAW THEIR INADEQUACIES…
* YOUR AWARENESS OF YOUR INADEQUACIES CAN ROB YOUR JOY…

**10**Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for *this* day *is* holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

* Notice, the JOY of the Lord is your strength…
* AKA – you’re in sorrow because you realize how off you’ve been… BUT, that would help give you the strength to change.
  + Don’t get me wrong, it’ll help you start!

**2 Corinthians 7:10** says “For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation”

Godly sorrow produces repentance, BUT the joy of the Lord gives you strength to follow through with that repentance…

EXPLAIN DIFFERENCE BETWEEN CONVICTION AND CONDEMNATION

Don’t operate out of condemnation… the results are worse.

* IF THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH… What does a lack of joy or discouragement do? IT ZAPS YOUR STRENGTH

**11**So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, “Be still, for the day *is* holy; do not be grieved.” **12**And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them.

Understand what the Lord is saying today… DO NOT SORROW... He wants to bring you into deeper levels of Joy in this season.

* You’ll win battles better.

Joy is powerful.

Joy can run deeper than pain…

**Hebrews 12:1-2** Therefore we also, since we are surrounded by so great a cloud of witnesses, let us lay aside every weight, and the sin which so easily ensnares *us,* and let us run with endurance the race that is set before us, **2**looking unto Jesus, the author and finisher of *our* faith, who for the joy that was set before Him endured the cross, despising the shame, and has sat down at the right hand of the throne of God.

[Walk through the above scripture…]

The Joy gave Him strength to endure much pain…

* When you have the joy of the Lord, not even pain can rob it.
* Oh He was in pain… He despised the shame…

Joy has the potency to run deeper than pain does…

Ministry time…