

## RESET!

JUNE 26, 2022 | BUILDING TOGETHER | NEHEMIAH 8:13-18 | PASTOR SCOTT TURANSKY

Let's pray together.

[PRAYER] Lord, as we settle our hearts, we try to erase all the other things that are going on in our lives for the moment, to focus in on your word because we need the encouragement that it provides, or sometimes the conviction that it provides, or sometimes the direction that it provides. Lord, you know the heart of each person that's here and what they're coming with, with their needs. And so we ask that you would do that special miracle you do when we open your word, to touch our hearts. We ask this in Jesus' name, amen.

I'm a Mac guy. I love my Mac toys. I've got a Mac watch, I've got my phone, I've got my iPad that I actually run the presentation with on Sunday morning. I enjoy my Mac toys until I get the little colorful wheel on my computer that freezes my computer and I can't do anything and I'm stuck. I know then I have to reset my computer, I have to restart it. And when I restart it, what happens is the code is able to form again from the beginning up and create a clean program. Because what happens in life is that the applications start to conflict with each other and we end up with that wheel of death. I think there's some similarities between that and our Christian life.

You know, when God created the world, He created this beautiful place, this Garden of Eden in this world. But it was soon broken by sin. And sin as it develops starts to corrupt things. So we have this wheel of death that we even see in our lives today. People who are addicted, they see – oh there's the wheel of death. Or we see people who are overcome by anxiety – oh, there's the wheel of death. Or marriages that are being troubled – oh, there's the wheel of death. Or finances that are struggling – oh, there's the wheel of death. When we see that brokenness that exists in our world, we need to reset our lives. We need to restart our computers, so to speak. It doesn't mean that all the problems go away, but it does allow us to come fresh in the way we approach them.

You see, there is another system trying to reset our world. It's called worldliness or the world system. The world system is a collection of people who are trying to organize the world without the light of God's word. As they do, they continually end up with problems. Problems that show this wheel of death that happens because of a misunderstanding or because of a lack of understanding of the light of God's word in our lives. We need this reset.

In our story today in Nehemiah, the people are resetting. You remember last week we talked about how the people came together on day one. When they came together on day one, they read the scriptures and studied them in small groups, it seems, as it was all explained to them for about four or five hours. It was like a retreat experience for them as they were getting to know

God's word. That was day one. And when they saw God's word, they were grieving about it. They said, "Oh man, we've really made some mistakes here." Nehemiah's response, remember, was – *Don't grieve, for the joy of the Lord is your strength*. So they're resetting themselves. That was day one.

I know you're eager to see the next day. That's day two. That's what we're going to look at today. What happens to these people now on day two? They go to this big retreat experience on day one. And then what do they do on day two? I know you're eager to get into God's word as I am. So let me read the six verses starting in verse 13. Would you please stand with me in honor of God's word? Nehemiah 8, starting in verse 13.

*On the second day the heads of fathers' houses of all the people, with the priests and the Levites, came together to Ezra the scribe in order to study the words of the Law. And they found it written in the Law that the Lord had commanded by Moses that the people of Israel should dwell in booths during the feast of the seventh month, and that they should proclaim it and publish it in all their towns and in Jerusalem, "Go out to the hills and bring branches of olive, wild olive, myrtle, palm, and other leafy trees to make booths, as it is written." So the people went out and brought them and made booths for themselves, each on his roof, and in their courts and in the courts of the house of God, and in the square at the Water Gate and in the square at the Gate of Ephraim. And all the assembly of those who had returned from the captivity made booths and lived in the booths, for from the days of Jeshua the son of Nun to that day the people of Israel had not done so. And there was very great rejoicing. And day by day, from the first day to the last day, he read from the Book of the Law of God. They kept the feast seven days, and on the eighth day there was a solemn assembly, according to the rule.*

You may be seated.

Let's just take that last word – *the rule*. *According to the rule*. You can circle that word and draw a line across to the other page and write the word *shaphat* because that's the Hebrew word, *shaphat*. You can write in the margin of your Bible if you want. But it's the word *shaphat*. It is the word *rule*. It's a word used hundreds of times in the Bible, because the Bible has all of these rules or code, shall I say. The codes that will help us to be successful in life. The Bible contains this code and so the people are finding this, discovering this, and it becomes very significant for them to understand it and grasp it and put it into practice in their lives. The code. The rule.

Young people, there is one chapter in the Bible you don't want to miss. In fact, I would suggest this is the preeminent chapter for young people in the whole Bible. Write it down. Psalm 119. It has 176 verses. You're not just going to read it in one sitting. You could, but you're going to gain the most of it if you read the stanzas. You'll see it's broken up in the scriptures in the stanzas of a few verses in each stanza, all the way to verse 176. The word *shaphat* is used 23 times in this one chapter of the Bible, just describing the rules so that we understand these rules and we know how to live. If you know what the rules are of life and you start ordering your life according to the rules, then you will experience the blessing of God. I'm not saying everything is going to be perfect. I'm not even saying the consequences of sins that you have are ever going to go away. What I'm saying is you'll know how to approach life in a completely different way because you

understand the rules. You understand what God is doing and how He designed the world. The rules. We have to know the rules because they help us to rebuild that code inside of our hearts.

Let's go back to the first part of the passage it says on the second day. So this is the day after. If you if you imagine that this first day was this big retreat, or maybe even we can imagine for us, it might be a Sunday morning experience because you go in, you worship the Lord, and then you hear the Bible taught, and you go to your Sunday school classes or whatever it might be, and you're there for several hours in your experience learning about the Lord. This is like Monday morning. This is like, I want more. And notice who's coming together to get this information. It is the heads of households. The dads are coming together. "We want more. We got to understand more of what's going on here." So they come together and notice what they did. They came together in order to study the words of the law. Why? Because they already discovered some things in God's word they knew were important and valuable, that they needed. It wetted their appetite so that they could gain greater understanding. I want more of this. That's how our attitude should be as we look at God's word because we're trying to understand it. And so here we have these heads of households coming together. And they're coming together to study the words of the Lord.

Notice what happens in the next verse. I'm just going to circle this. I would encourage you to circle it too. *They found it.* They found it. Don't you wish that would happen to you? Sometimes you go, "Oh, my life is struggling in a number of different ways. I found it!" Where did they find it? They found it in God's word. That's what happens when you study the word. You find it.

Now there's two ways that we use this word *find* in the Bible. One is the idea of to find it accidentally. And that does happen in the Bible. You can open it up and you go, "Whoa, I didn't know that verse was there." It's used that way. In a story in the Old Testament in 2 Kings were Hilkiah the priest was told by Josiah, the new young king (he was only twenty-six years old when he gave this assignment), "Go clean up that temple. I want to know more about the temple." So Hilkiah in the priests goes in, starts cleaning up the temple and he finds, he discovers the word of God. He brings it back and Josiah is so excited. "Read it to me," he says. And so you can read about that in the book of 2 Kings. He found it, somewhat accidentally.

But there's other times when we know something's in there, and we go in there because we know we're going to find something. And that's what happens many times as we study the Bible, as we look at it. If you look at Psalm 119, I tell you, you're going to find something very valuable there for yourself. You're going to go there looking for something and God will use it to reset you, reset your day, move you in a direction. How are we going to reset ourselves? How are we going to get God's word into us to rebuild the code inside?

Let me tell you a story about John Burke. Now John Burke is the pastor of GraceWay... Not GraceWay. Do you remember the name of that church? It's in Austin, Texas. I got GraceWay on the brain here. It wasn't a Calvary Chapel. It was a Grace...something [Gateway Community Church]. Anyway, he's this pastor of this church and he works with a lot of young people. He wanted to help them to be able to reset themselves, to be able to get God's word into their lives. So he encourages all of the people in their church to take the 60/60 experiment. For 60 days, on each one of those days, every 60 minutes, you have your watch beep and look at a scripture. In

fact, he's created an app called Soul Revolution. I encourage you to go get the app. My wife did this week. She went and got the app. And so every 60 minutes, her watch beeps and she looks at her phone, I guess, she just looks at our phone and it gives her the verse.

So at one point, her watch or phone beeped and I said, "Well, what does it say in this week?" And she said, "It's that verse about the Comforter will come and the Comforter will enlighten you about all things." I'm thinking, wow, what a great verse to have. Every 60 minutes. I mean some of us do well if we have a Bible study at some point in the course of the week. Every 60 minutes, reset yourself because what you want to do is you want the code to rebuild inside of your life. Where does that code come from? It comes from God's word. So we embed ourselves in God's word in order to do that. I encourage you to try that, to find it, to discover what God might do in your life.

Well, let's figure out what they found. Let's go with the believers there. As they open up the word it's going to affect their day timer now, their planner. It's going to affect their calendar and their to-do list. That's what the Bible should do in our lives. They open it up and they start reading and they learn about this feast, the Feast of Tabernacles. We haven't celebrated that. Well look at that. Isn't it interesting? It's supposed to happen on the seventh. This is the seventh month. Wow. Remarkable, isn't it how God's word changes us in the moment? They say, wow, we're going to go do this. We're going to go and celebrate the Feast of Booths.

When I saw this passage last Sunday, when I opened the Bible, and I saw this is what I'm going to be teaching on, I said, "Lord, I want to ask you to bring me across a Jewish person this week." Because the Jews celebrate this even today and I want to hear how they do this. How this family or whoever I talked to, how they celebrate this. And so I'm on the lookout.

So Monday morning, I go to the gym and I see my answer to prayer. He's right there. There's a guy had covering, big gray beard. And so I go up to him and I say, "Are you Jewish?" He says, "No, I'm Sikh." I said, "Oh, well, you're not going to be able to help me." But I made a friend at the gym on Monday. On Tuesday I was in a Zoom meeting with faith leaders in the community of all kinds of different denominations, churches, whatever. And there is a Jewish rabbi in the Zoom meeting. His name is Rabbi Yaakov. And so at the end of our Zoom meeting, I said, "Rabbi, could you stay a little bit later after the Zoom meeting is over so I can ask you a question?" He said, "Sure." So he and I are on the Zoom meeting now. And he's got his kids all crawling all over him while he's talking to me. I said, "I'm going to teach this Sunday about Sukkot." Sukkot is the name for this particular feast. "Could you tell me how you celebrate Sukkot?" And oh, he was delighted to tell me.

Here's what he said. The most important thing you need to remember about Sukkot is it is a feast of rejoicing. It is a feast of joy. Because we just came off of two holidays. The second one, Yom Kippur, is a very solemn holiday. And so now we're in this feast of rejoicing, which reminds me of the text there. It says there in verse 17 – *and there was great rejoicing*. He says, so what we do as we go out and build this hut somewhere. The only thing above it can be the sky. It has to be under the sky. And it has three sides. And we put all kinds of branches on top. It has to be leafy branches on top. And I don't sleep in the sukkah, he said, but all of the food and water and drink

that I have in the course of those days, takes place in the sukkah. We come in there, we play games, we tell stories, we entertain people. It's all about the sukkah.

So he told me a story about one man who immigrated to the United States, a Jewish man. And he came to this festival. He lives in the sixth floor of an apartment building. Where's he going to put his sukkah? He ended up putting it out on the fire escape because it had to be out under the sky. And so I said to him, "Now, are the children involved in this somehow?" I'm leading him because I know the children are involved. But I'm leading, "Are the children involved somehow?" He looks at me strange. And he says, "Children are involved in everything we do in Judaism. All the celebrations we have. Sabbath day, Passover, all of these celebrations involve the children." And I'm thinking to myself, maybe that's why Jewish kids as they're growing up keep their faith better than Christian kids sometimes. Because in the Jewish home, they have it all in the home. It's all about the home developing these children's spiritually. In the Christian faith, we tend to delegate to the church, to AWANA, to youth group, and other kinds of places, which are good. But it's really the combination of the church and the home that must energize our Christian kids in order to keep their faith and to be able to move forward in their lives. They go out into the sukkah and they tell stories.

In fact, let me show you some pictures of some sukkah huts. This is one example. In fact, if you saw in our passage, they were in the gate of Ephraim and they were at the Water Gate. They were in these different places. It was decorating the whole community. It reminds me kind of our Christmas when people put up lights here and there, and you look around at all the decorations. That's what they did. It's Sukkot. They put these booths out even in public places, so people would remember the Lord.

Here's another picture of a sukkah. A family builds them, gathers all the branches together and puts them together.

Here's yet another one. Now in this one you can't see this, but in the back of this fabric (this is a modern day one where you buy the fabric and put it around), there are these markings at the bottom, which are Bible stories. You can see the pictures of the stories there so that the family will have a discussion about what God did.

You see, the whole Sukkot experience, the Feast of Booths goes on for seven days. And it's to celebrate the fact that we've left Egypt, we've left the world, and now we're sojourners in a land that's not our own on our way to the Promised Land. It's a beautiful picture of Christianity. That we are sojourners and we're on our way to the promised land that God has provided for us. On the way, we need to pause every once in a while and we need to remind ourselves we are just sojourners in this land. And that's what they would do. They would remind themselves that God took care of them. Their lives were different than in Egypt. Now they're living a different kind of life as they're moving toward the promised land.

As we think about passing the faith on to the next generation, let's ask the question, whose responsibility is it? Now we see in the passage that the heads of the households got together to figure out what to do when they discovered this. They went back and articulated this and practiced it. So I do think that dads take a great form of leadership in a home. But if the dad's not

doing it, then moms take a leadership role in the house and they are passing the faith on to their children. But who initiates this? This is what's fascinating to me. Okay.

I'm going to take you to another Bible story. Let's take the story of another big celebration because Joshua (who's mentioned in this passage) takes the people across the Jordan River and the Jordan River opens up, and all the people walk across the Jordan River. Joshua says, "Hey, wait, twelve of you guys go back and get some stones out of the middle of the Jordan River. I want you to get those stones and I want you to pile them up over here on the ground, and I want you to pile them up so that (let me show you the scripture) *when your children ask...*" I just want to point out here that young people and children, you have a job to do. Your job is to ask the questions. Do you know, children and young people, why your parents chose Jesus Christ? Do you know what led them to that decision to accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior? It's your job to ask the question. Do you know why your parents chose GraceWay Bible Church to be their church? It's your job to ask the question. What great questions to ask your parents to learn from them.

Notice it says there – *when your children ask in time to come, what did these stones mean to you?* Isn't that interesting. Not just where these stones mean? What do they mean to you? Notice that the young people are asking the questions. I think our young people need to ask more questions of their parents and other leaders. Why? Why are you choosing Jesus? Why are you choosing to follow Christ, because when they ask the questions, then they learn more about the code. Because we live in a world that is throwing all kinds of code out there that has all kinds of bugs in it and all kinds of death wheels that exist. You don't want to be involved in that code. You want to be involved in the code that Jesus Christ has established in our lives, and that now we have in the scriptures written for us.

Let me finish this story, he says – *Then you shall tell them that the waters of the Jordan were cut off before the Ark of the Covenant of the Lord, when it passed over the Jordan. The waters of the Jordan were cut off. So these stones shall be to the people of Israel, a memorial forever.* I really like what is happening here because in this passage (and in our Nehemiah passage), the faith is being passed on to the next generation as God has designed it to be in the home. It's in the home where we learn all kinds of things. I like to say it's like driver education. You can go to church, it's like reading the book, and learning about the signs and rules of the game of driving, and how the law is implemented and the signs and what they look like. You can learn all of that by coming to church. But if you want to know how life is lived, you find that out at home. How do we deal with emotions in our lives from a biblical perspective? How do we deal with our money? How do we make decisions in our lives? How do we integrate God into the very fabric of our lives? How do we have a fragrance of the Lord in a home? That's where it's learned. It's learned at home.

I know as parents... I know many of you are parents and we want the best for our children. We want our children to grow up to be well-adjusted, we want them to be mature, we want to have a good self-concept, we want them to be confident people, we want them to be happy, we want them to enjoy life. And as we sit here in this moment in this morning, we say, "What is it going to take to help our child to be that?" And we all know as we sit here that really if they're going to have all of these good things, it's going to be if their life is centered on Jesus Christ, if they're

following the Lord in their lives. Yet, sometimes when we start arranging our kids' schedules, our children start gravitating toward things that will take them away from church activities. They'll end up finding themselves on travel teams or projects that take them away from our Sunday morning experience.

Is it wrong to not come to church? Well, I think we have freedom in Christ to miss a service for very various reasons. But if you make a habit of missing services, then what happens is you communicate a message. And this is the message we sometimes communicate to our kids. We say church and Christianity is important if you have time, if you could fit it in. But if you can't fit it in then enjoy life and we'll fit it in later on your life. Sometimes we have kids who get to be 14-15 years old, they're really good at a sport, but inside their hearts are not following the Lord. And so they have a real hard time with the code. Because there's a lot of code out there that's directing the traffic of life. We must reset the code in our lives.

So the passage ends in Nehemiah 8. It says – *They kept all of these things according to the rule.* According to the rule. See, God has laid out the code for us so that we can follow Him and we know where we're going in life. How are we going to help our young people today who are facing pretty significant challenges in our world? How are we going to help them understand that marriage is a valuable thing in a person's life? And how important marriage is? How are we going to help them understand that children are very important and valuable? How are we going to help them understand that sex is important and valuable? Because in our world, they have different ways they're talking about all of these things. Marriage is optional. Children are in the way. The sex is just a biological thing that takes place. But what we're saying is and what God says is that this relationship that a person has, a sexual relationship, is very significant. It's very important, so special, that we save it for some very special place in marriage. How are we going to help our young people grasp this idea? It's found in the code. It's found in God's word as we dig into God's word and we see it.

We must help our young people grasp this idea. And young people, I would encourage you to understand the code. Where are you going to find out the code? You're not going to just find it by attending here. You'll hear about it here. But you're going to find it in your own personal walk and your own personal Bible study. As you open the Bible regularly and you understand what God has for you personally. Let's come and talk about it together as we get together, but spend time on your own studying God's word, because that's where the code is.

One of the things we find in this passage is that the people are doing this kind of remedial work. They're looking at their lives, and they're saying, "You know what, I'm looking at the Bible and I'm seeing that it's not really affecting me the way it should. And so I'm going to make it more prominent in my life. I'm going to dig in and I'm going to change my life accordingly."

So if you're here today and you've never accepted Jesus Christ as your Lord and Savior, you're tracking me, right? That God created the world in this beautiful way, and then sin starts to corrupt it, and we see all these death wheels going on in life, people are in all kinds of trouble. I want you to know that God created the solution in order to reset. That solution is a personal, intimate relationship with Jesus Christ. It's asking Jesus Christ to come into your life and reset you. And the Bible says all things are passed away, all things become new. And then you start on

this pilgrimage of reset by reading God's word, and trying to understand what it means, and apply it to your life so that you can rebuild the code in a way that will allow you to be successful in life. I'm not talking about money success. I'm talking about having that joy that God wants you to have, even amidst the brokenness that you experience. You're going to experience brokenness in this world, but how you respond to that is optional. And God has a code and that code is found in His word. That's the beauty of this passage is that these people are committed to the reset in their lives. Amen?