

I'M LOOKING FOR A CHURCH

Nehemiah 8:1-6, 8

¹ And all the people gathered themselves together as one man into the street that *was* before the water gate; and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

² And Ezra the priest brought the law before the congregation both of men and women, and all that could hear with understanding, upon the first day of the seventh month.

³ And he read therein before the street that *was* before the water gate from the morning until midday, before the men and the women, and those that could understand; and the ears of all the people *were attentive* unto the book of the law.

⁴ And Ezra the scribe stood upon a pulpit of wood, which they had made for the purpose . . .

⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

⁶ And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen, with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

⁸ So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

INTRO: I'm Looking for a Church Like That!

******If you were to take a survey and ask people what qualities they look for in a church and what expectations they have of a church, the differences in opinion would absolutely shock you and me!

******Most people are not looking for Ezra's kind of church.

1. I see People Assembling

Nehemiah 8:1a And all the people gathered themselves together as one man

******As one man with one mind and with one motive.

2. I see People Asking

Nehemiah 8:1b and they spake unto Ezra the scribe to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had commanded to Israel.

******They asked the preacher to preach! Imagine that! Most churches nowadays are looking for ways to get away from the preaching of the Word of God.

3. I see People Attentive

Nehemiah 8:3b and the ears of all the people were attentive unto the book of the law.

******These people cared about what the Word of God had to say unto their hearts, so they paid attention to the preaching of God's Word.

4. I see People Appreciative

Nehemiah 8:5 ⁵ And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people; (for he was above all the people;) and when he opened it, all the people stood up:

******These people were so appreciative of God's Word and God's man, that they showed reverence and respect when the Word of God was read.

5. I see People Amen-ing

Nehemiah 8:6a ⁶ And Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God. And all the people answered, Amen, Amen,

6. I see People Adoring

Nehemiah 8:6b ⁶ . . . with lifting up their hands: and they bowed their heads, and worshipped the LORD with *their* faces to the ground.

7. I see People Accepting

Nehemiah 8:8 ⁸ So they read in the book in the law of God distinctly, and gave the sense, and caused *them* to understand the reading.

**So often we hear people and even preachers say from time to time, “I’m looking for a church,” but they are NOT looking for a church like that.

**Well, I’m looking for a church like that, and I sure hope you’re looking for a church like that!

**We have a good church here because there have been looking those in the past who were looking for a church like we have today.

**If we ever stop looking for a church like Ezra had and a church like we have now, we will stop having a church like that!

**So let me tell you what kind of church I’m looking for!

BODY – I’M LOOKING FOR A CHURCH

I. I’m Looking for a Church that is Respected

A. Respected because it has a Testimony

**I’m Looking for a Church where people will say . . .

1. That’s a Preaching Church

I Corinthians 1:18 ¹⁸ For the preaching of the cross is to them that perish foolishness; but unto which are saved it is the power of God.

**If you don’t like preaching, you are in the wrong church!

2. That’s a Praying Church

**May our church testimony be that we pray for the Lord’s people and the Lost people alike.

3. That’s a Praising Church

**May it be said, those folks sing and shout the Lord’s praises!

4. That’s a Powerful Church

**Our church is only powerful if it has a Holy Ghost Power and a Heavenly God Power moving in it.

**Some churches have the testimony of being a problem church! Ain’t nobody wanting that or got time for that!

B. Respected because it has a Torch

**The torch is the Word of God!

1. Our Torch is to be a Beacon

2. Our Torch is to be a Blessing

a. We are Disciplined by the Torch

b. We are Disciples by the Torch

C. Respected because it has a Trust

**People will have respect or no respect for this church based upon a) Your Doings and b) Your Dealings.

Illustration: That fellow there uses bad language all the time. What kind of church does he belong to? Or – I don’t care what kind of church he goes to. If his mouth is moving he’s lying or trying to scam you.

D. Respected because it has a Touch

1. May Our Church Have A Special Touch Of God

2. May Our Church Have A Spiritual Touch Of God

**Oh how I am looking for a church that has a special and spiritual touch of God on it! That’s what I want us to have here!

II. I'm Looking for a Church that is Right

A. The Church Doctrine Must Be Right

**That means we . . .

1. Believe the Book

II Timothy 3:16 ¹⁶ All scripture *is* given by inspiration of God, and *is* profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness:

2. Believe the Blood

Romans 5:9 ⁹ Much more then, being now justified by his blood, we shall be saved from wrath through him.

B. The Church Direction Must Be Right

1. The Emphasis must be put on Godly Preaching!

2. The Emphasis must be put on God's Power!

**Some emphasize the social, the singings, the specials, or the schemes, or even the shout but I'm looking for our church to emphasize the Savior and the Scripture!

C. The Church Desires Must Be Right

1. Our Desire Should Be To Worship

I Chronicles 16:29 ²⁹ Give unto the LORD the glory *due* unto his name: bring an offering, and come before him: worship the LORD in the beauty of holiness.

2. Our Desire Should Be To Work

John 9:4 ⁴ I must work the works of him that sent me, while it is day: the night cometh, when no man can work.

a. Work with Humbleness

b. Work with Holiness

III. I'm Looking for a Church that is Real

II Timothy 3:5 says that some churches are like this:

⁵ Having a form of godliness, but denying the power thereof: from such turn away.

**I refuse to go to a church that is not real with a real power of God on it!

A. The Preachers need to be Real

**We need preachers who are real about His Praises and His Power!

**Some are only concerned about a Position, a Parsonage, a Paycheck, or a Pension!

B. The People need to be Real

1. Our Worship Must Be Real

a. Real Worship should exist in our Hearts

b. Real Worship should exist in our Homes

2. Our Witness Must Be Real

a. Our Public Witness must be Real

b. Our Private Witness must be Real

C. The Power needs to be Real

1. Real Power changes Destinies

2. Real Power changes Desires

D. The Prayers need to be Real

1. Real Prayer Touches the Lord

2. Real Prayer Touches the Lost

E. The Professions need to be Real

Real Professions means you are really **Convicted, really **Converted**, and really **Changed**!

F. The Praises need to be Real

Psalms 150:6 ⁶ Let every thing that hath breath praise the LORD. Praise ye the LORD.

IV. I'm Looking for a Church that is Ready

A. Ready for Revival

Psalms 85:6 ⁶ **Wilt thou not revive us again: that thy people may rejoice in thee?**

****We need to pray: Lord revive our Devotion, our Dedication, and our Determination to live for you!**

B. Ready for Reaping

John 4:35-37 **behold, I say unto you, Lift up your eyes, and look on the fields; for they are white already to harvest.**

³⁶ **And he that reapeth receiveth wages, and gathereth fruit unto life eternal: that both he that soweth and he that reapeth may rejoice together.**

³⁷ **And herein is that saying true, One soweth, and another reapeth.**

****If we do any reaping, we must first do some sowing!**

1. Sow some Compassion.

****On the Drunks, on the Druggies, on the Dirty, on the Different, and on the Dreadful.**

2. Sow some Convictions

****We can reap the right kind of church if we will sow some convictions about our Steps, our Songs, and our Smock (suits and skirts).**

C. Ready for Rapture

Luke 12:40 ⁴⁰ **Be ye therefore ready also: for the Son of man cometh at an hour when ye think not.**

****I'm looking for a church that is . . .**

1. Ready for His Return

2. Ready for His Reunion

****Are you a church that is ready? I sure am!**

CLOSE

1. What kind of church do you belong to today?
2. What kind of church are you looking for today?
3. Not many are looking for the kind of church that assembled before Ezra in Nehemiah.
4. Not many are looking for the kind of church that I have described today.
5. You that are members of this church Are you making this church the kind of church I'm looking for?
6. Are you making this church the kind of church you're looking for?
7. If not, we need to repent and make this church a church that is Respectable, a church that is Right, a church that is Real, and a church that is Ready!
8. With all due respect, if you don't want this kind of church that I've outlined here, then you need to seek God or seek another church!