

THE USE OF THE PULPIT

Text: Nehemiah 8:4

INTRO: Judah had been 70 years in Babylonian exile. Now, their exile ended, they are in the process of re-establishing themselves in the land of promise under the leadership of Ezra, Nehemiah & Zarubbabel. They have just finished rebuilding the city walls. The date is Sept. 27, 444 B.C., the first day of their 7th month.

I. THE IDEAL USE OF THE PULPIT NECESSITATES A PROPER ATTITUDE ON THE PART OF THE CONGREGATION, vs 1-3

- A. All gathered together.
- B. They requested that Ezra bring the book of God's law.
6 men to his right, 7 to his left, vs. 4
- C. They were attentive to the Law of God.

II. THE PREACHER OR TEACHER MUST BE AWARE OF HIS RESPONSIBILITY & OPPORTUNITY, vs. 8

- A. They read distinctly.
Till I come, give attention to reading, to exhortation, to doctrine. (1 Tim. 4:13). NOTE: We teach by the WAY we read. "I would not have you ignorant brethren."
- B. They gave the sense, explained what they read.
For instance, Paul quotes from Gen. 22:18 & explains it in the light of its fulfillment:

Now to Abraham & his Seed were the promises made. He does not say, "And to seeds," as of many, but as of one, "And to your Seed," who is Christ. (Gal. 3:16).
- C. They caused the people to understand; illustrated the truth in a way the people could identify with. Example: parables of Jesus.

III. PREACHERS & TEACHERS SHOULD REMEMBER THE GOAL OF THE PULPIT.

- A. The pulpit, the meeting house, etc., are not ENDS, but simply a means to an end.

Sometimes we allow such things to be our goal & miss the point of Christianity. "I've been to class." "I've been to preaching," etc.

- B. The needed message may sometimes bring weeping, but this is not its real goal, vs. 9.

Now I rejoice, not that you were made sorry, but that your sorrow led to repentance. For you were made sorry in a godly manner, that you might suffer loss from us in nothing. For godly sorrow produces repentance leading to salvation, not to be regretted; but the sorrow of the world produces death. For observe this very thing, that you sorrowed in a godly manner: What diligence it produced in you, what clearing of yourselves, what indignation, what fear, what vehement desire, what zeal, what vindication! In all things you proved yourselves to be clear in this matter. (2 Cor. 7:9-11),

- C. The goal of preaching is to produce joy, & gladness, which comes as a result of obeying its message, Neh. 14-17
- D. The ultimate goal--eternal joy & bliss in heaven.

La Porte, TX, June 20, 1982

Exton, PA, June 30, 1985

Shiloh, Mexia, TX, February 4, 1996

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