

How Do You Say 'Thank You'?

Scripture: Nehemiah 12
(02-22-26 Pastor Tony Hao)

Nehemiah 12 is a detailed description of the ceremonial procession and praises with which the walls of the city were dedicated to the Lord. It begins with the priests, Levites, the people, the walls, and the gates were purified. For sinners to come into God's presence, the defilement of sin must be removed. The filth of sin needs to be washed away. These purification rituals were symbolic of the need for spiritual cleansing.

Then worshipers sang with thankful hearts. Those who have experienced great grace and mercy cannot help but sing songs of gratitude and praise. Christianity is a religion that sings. God has put a "new song" within us. This is not true of other religions. Christians write hymns . . . choruses . . . oratorios. Why is this? Obviously because Christianity is itself joyous. It is a response to the great acts of God on our behalf.

Finally, giving regularly to the work of God as it is an act of worship to be done cheerfully and with enthusiasm. When God is at the center of our lives, everything we have is viewed as His, and support for gospel ministry is a joy and not a burden. When the gospel governs our giving, it is always an act of gratitude.

GROWING DEEPER (Reflection & Application)

1. Before the celebration began, the priests, Levites, and the wall itself were purified (v. 30). Why is purification (confession and sanctification) a necessary first step before we can truly worship God?
2. Nehemiah organized two large choirs to walk in opposite directions on top of the wall (v. 31). What is the significance of worshiping in a way that is visible and audible to the surrounding world?
3. Verse 43 says the joy of Jerusalem was heard far away. Reflect on a time when you experienced "great joy" in the Lord. Was that joy evident to those outside your church or family?
4. Following the celebration, people were appointed to manage contributions and tithes to support those in ministry (v. 44). How does our financial stewardship reflect our gratitude for what God has built in our lives?