

## Thought for the Day 8th September - Joan Loan

Nehemiah 8-10

Are you still as vigilant with your Covid 19 safe precautions as you were at the beginning? Or do you find you are starting to take short cuts and are slacking off a bit? It seems to go on and on...

Well this is the history of Israel, all keen one moment and then a huge slackening of standards. Then there is a loss in battle or a plague and all the people turn back to God and vow to obey Him.

This is what happened here in Nehemiah's time. They had finished the wall of Jerusalem and then they told Ezra the scribe to bring out the Book of the Law of Moses and read it. (Where had Ezra been during the first 7 chapters? He came down to Jerusalem thirteen years before Nehemiah did. Maybe he had taken a Sabbatical and gone back to the Court of King Artaxerxes for a time!)

They built a special wooden platform for Ezra and his colleagues to stand on. All the people, men, women and all who could understand, stood before him from daybreak till noon...for at least 5 hours. Nehemiah, Ezra and the Levites made the meaning clear to the people...maybe some translation from Hebrew to Aramaic was required. Perhaps they split up into Bible Study Groups!

The people were devastated when they heard the Law and started weeping when they realised how far they had fallen from God's ways. But Ezra, Nehemiah and the Levites said: " Don't mourn or weep for the joy of the Lord is your strength."

Worldly sorrow over sin is self-centred because it regrets having to suffer the consequences of the action. However Godly sorrow leads to true repentance and great joy in God's gracious forgiveness. (2 Corinthians 7:10-11)

And joy is contagious!