Topic : **The Power of God's Word in Our Fellowship**

Scripture : Nehemiah 8 :1 to 12

Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. 2So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month. 3Then he read from it in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate from morning until midday, before the men and women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law.

4So Ezra the scribe stood on a platform of wood which they had made for the purpose; and beside him, at his right hand, stood Mattithiah, Shema, Anaiah, Urijah, Hilkiah, and Maaseiah; and at his left hand Pedaiah, Mishael, Malchijah, Hashum, Hashbadana, Zechariah, and Meshullam. 5And Ezra opened the book in the sight of all the people, for he was standing above all the people; and when he opened it, all the people stood up. 6And Ezra blessed the Lord, the great God.

Then all the people answered, “Amen, Amen!” while lifting up their hands. And they bowed their heads and worshiped the Lord with their faces to the ground.

7Also Jeshua, Bani, Sherebiah, Jamin, Akkub, Shabbethai, Hodijah, Maaseiah, Kelita, Azariah, Jozabad, Hanan, Pelaiah, and the Levites, helped the people to understand the Law; and the people stood in their place. 8So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

9And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, “This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep.” For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

10Then he said to them, “Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.”

11So the Levites quieted all the people, saying, “Be still, for the day is holy; do not be grieved.” 12And all the people went their way to eat and drink, to send portions and rejoice greatly, because they understood the words that were declared to them. Amen !

The Power of God's Word in Our Fellowship.

What does the expression God’s Word mean ?

When the Bible speaks about the Word of God, it can refer to three things. First, the Word of God refers to Jesus Christ, the living Word. The apostle John writes: “In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God” *(John 1:1).* Jesus Christ is the perfect revelation of God. Through Him, God has made Himself known to us. Therefore, Jesus is the living Word of God.

The expression “the Word of God” can also refer to the Scriptures, which are God’s written Word, the Bible. Second Timothy 3:16–17 teaches that all Scripture is inspired by God and is useful for teaching, rebuking, correcting, and training believers in righteousness.

The expression “the Word of God” can also refer to the gospel when it is faithfully proclaimed. When the gospel is not replaced by motivational speeches, weakened by human wisdom, or hidden behind too many stories and entertainment, that is God word. Paul says in 1 Thessalonians 2:13:“For this reason we also thank God without ceasing, because when you received the word of God which you heard from us, you welcomed it not as the word of men, but as it is in truth, the word of God, which also effectively works in you who believe.”

What Is Christian Fellowship?

Christian fellowship is more than meeting in cell groups, serving in ministries, or attending the services every Wenesday and every Sunday. We may do all these things, but if we do not share the same faith in God allmigthy, the same Lord, **Jesus Christ**, there is no true Christian fellowship. We may have a social club, but not genuine fellowship.

Christian fellowship means sharing a common relationship with Jesus Christ. He is the vine, and we are the branches. We are united with Him, and without Him we can do nothing.

Christian fellowship means living under the authority of God’s Word in both our beliefs and our conduct. Christian felloswship means to be united by the same Spirit. Christian fellowship means to love and care for one another, to preserve the unity of the body of Christ, the Church. Christian fellowship means to serve the Lord Jesus Christ together.

Brothers and sisters, Nehemiah 8:1–12 shows us how God’s Word can work powerfully in a gathering, when believers have fellowship with God, when believers are united to God and obey His Word.

UNITED

Verse 1Now all the people gathered together as one man in the open square that was in front of the Water Gate; and they told Ezra the scribe to bring the Book of the Law of Moses, which the Lord had commanded Israel. 2So Ezra the priest brought the Law before the assembly of men and women and all who could hear with understanding on the first day of the seventh month.

Brothers and sisters, God's Word works powerfully among His people when they gather in unity. The Bible says:

"Where two or three are gathered in My name, I am there in the midst of them" (Matthew 18:20).

Therefore, Jesus Christ must be at the centre of our fellowship. Let us ask ourselves: **Who unites us this morning? Whom have we come to seek?**

The people of Israel gathered **"as one man"** to hear God's Word. In the same way, brothers and sisters, let us allow God to have His way in our cell groups, ministries, and worship services. When Jesus is at the centre of our gatherings, He unites us and helps us live as one body.

Lord Jesus, unite IFC in You. Give us one faith, one purpose, and one desire: to hear and obey Your Word. Amen.

A DEEP HUNGER FOR GOD'S WORD

Brothers and sisters, when we are united in Christ, we develop a deep hunger for His Word. We long to hear His voice because His truth is more important than human ideas.

In Nehemiah 8, Ezra and those who served with him did not place their own opinions above the Law of Moses. They faithfully read and explained the Scriptures. Through Ezra's ministry, God's voice was heard more clearly than any human voice.

Brothers and sisters may God's voice be louder than our voices at IFC! May God voice be louder than our voices in our various ministries, May God voice be louder than our voices in our cell groups, May God voice be louder than our voices in the Council, may God voice be louder than our voices in the Board of Elders. Hallelujah !

Brothers and sisters, because the people clearly heard God's Word, they responded with reverence and attention. Nehemiah 8:3 tells us that Ezra read God's Law from morning until midday, and **"the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law."**

O God, give us the same hunger for Your Word. May we listen to it carefully, may we receive it with faith, and may we obey it with humble hearts.

Let Us Be Attentive to God's Word

Brothers and sisters, I grew up in a Baptist church where some choir members and musicians did not seem interested in listening to God's Word. Their main desire was to sing and dance. As soon as the sermon began, they went outside, and when the sermon ended, they returned to sing.

Singing is good, brothers and sisters. It is an important part of our worship, but it must never replace the preaching of God's Word.

I once visited a church in the Cocody Cité des Arts area, and I was surprised to see people talking throughout the service. Even during the sermon, some were speaking to one another, taking selfies, and using

social media. Their attention was divided, and they were not listening carefully to the word of God.

Brothers and sisters, let us examine our own hearts and give our full attention to the voice of God. Nehemiah 8:3 tells us that Ezra read God's Law from morning until midday, and **"the ears of all the people were attentive to the Book of the Law."** The people listened to God's Word with attention and reverence.

May the Lord give us the same desire and respect for His Word. When the Scriptures are read and faithfully preached, let us put away distractions and listen carefully God's word. May we receive God's word with faith. May we respond to God word with obedience.

TRANSFORMATION THE POWER OF GOD WORD

Brothers and sisters, when God's Word is received with reverence and attention, and when His voice is louder than every human voice in our fellowship, **revival can take place**.

In Nehemiah 8:9–10, something powerful happened: God's Word touched the hearts of the people. They understood their sin and began to weep. They repented.

8So they read distinctly from the book, in the Law of God; and they gave the sense, and helped them to understand the reading.

9And Nehemiah, who was the governor, Ezra the priest and scribe, and the Levites who taught the people said to all the people, "This day is holy to the Lord your God; do not mourn nor weep." For all the people wept, when they heard the words of the Law.

Brothers and sisters, the Word of God is powerful. It changes lives and transforms hearts. In Nehemiah 8, the people's tears showed how deeply God's Word had touched them. When they understood the Law, they became aware of their sins and wept before God. His Word led them to repentance and sincere worship.

Hebrews 4:12 says : For the word of God is living and powerful, and sharper than any two-edged sword, piercing even to the division of soul and spirit, and of joints and marrow, and is a discerner of the thoughts and intents of the heart.

Brothers and sisters God's Word reveals what is in our hearts. God's word corrects us, God's word leads us to repentance. God's word restores us through His grace. WE need God's wordin our various gathering, we nee to receive God word with humility, faith, and obedience.

THE JOY OF THE LORD IS YOUR STRENGTH

Brothers and sisters, when sinners repent on earth, there is joy in heaven. Jesus said:

"I say to you that likewise there will be more joy in heaven over one sinner who repents than over ninety-nine just persons who need no repentance" (Luke 15:7).

When the people of Israel understood God's Word, they became aware of their sins and began to weep, Nehemiah urged them not to remain in sorrow. Why ? Because their repentance was meant to lead them back to God and to the joy of His salvation.

Nehemiah 8:10 says:

“Then he said to them, ‘Go your way, eat the fat, drink the sweet, and send portions to those for whom nothing is prepared; for this day is holy to our Lord. Do not sorrow, for the joy of the Lord is your strength.’”

Brothers and sisters, genuine repentance may bring tears, but temeber genuine reoentance leads us to the joy of forgiveness and restoration.

Why Is the Joy of the Lord the Strength of a Person Who Repents?

When sinners obey God’s Word, repent, and return to Him, they experience the joy of His forgiveness and restoration. They are no longer separated from God but can enjoy fellowship with God. This joy gives them strength in many ways:

1. God becomes their refuge

Those who return to God find safety and rest in His presence. Psalm 91:1 says: “He who dwells in the secret place of the Most High shall abide under the shadow of the Almighty.”

2. God gives them peace

When people return to God, they receive the peace that comes from knowing Him and trusting in His care. Numbers 6:24–26 says:

The Lord bless you
and keep you;
25 the Lord make his face shine on you
and be gracious to you;
26 the Lord turn his face toward you
and give you peace.”’

3. God remains with you

God promises never to leave or forsake those who belong to Him. Even in times of difficulty or opposition, He remains present and faithful. He can open a way forward when the situation seems hopeless.

“I will never leave you nor forsake you” (Hebrews 13:5).

The joy of knowing that God is always with us gives us courage and strength to continue.

4. God brings healing and restoration

God has the power to heal and restore. We should trust Him and pray for healing while also recognizing that He may work in different ways and according to His wisdom. Psalm 107:20 says:

“He sent His word and healed them, and delivered them from their destructions.”

Proverbs 3:7–8 also says:

“Do not be wise in your own eyes; fear the Lord and depart from evil. It will be health to your flesh and strength to your bones.”

God’s Word brings spiritual healing, renews our hearts, and teaches us to live wisely.

5. God guides you

When we return to God, we no longer have to walk without direction. God uses His Word to show us the right path and to help us make wise decisions. Psalm 119:105 says:

“Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path.”

God’s word gives us enough light to take the next step in faith and obedience.

Conclusion

Brothers and sisters, when God's Word is faithfully preached and received in our cell groups, ministries, and worship services, it will work powerfully among us. It will lead us to repentance, restore our joy, strengthen our faith, and unite us in Christ.

God has not changed. He is the same yesterday, today, and forever. Therefore, let us give His Word the highest place in our fellowship. Let us listen to it with reverence, receive it with faith, and obey it with humble hearts.

May God's voice always be louder than our voices at IFC. May His Word transform our lives and strengthen our fellowship.

Let us bow our heads in prayer.

SOng

We praise Thee, O God,
For the Son of Thy love,
For our Savior who died and
Is now gone above.

Hallelujah! Thine the glory,
Hallelujah! Amen;
Hallelujah! Thine the glory,
We praise Thee again.

2 We praise Thee, O God,
For Thy Spirit of light,
Who has shown us our Savior,
And scattered our night.

3 All glory and praise
To Thee, Father of love,
For through Jesus' redemption
Thy heart we may prove.

4 We praise Thee again;
We are filled with Thy love,
And each heart is rekindled
With fire from above.

Prayer Points

1. **Pray that God will open your spiritual eyes so that you may see Him more clearly through His Word.**
2. **Pray for the week ahead. Ask God to guide you, protect you, and grant you success in everything you do for His glory.**