



Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-11 New Revised Standard Version

¹ All the people gathered together into the square before the Water Gate. They told the scribe Ezra to bring the book of the law of Moses, which the LORD had given to Israel. ² Accordingly, the priest Ezra brought the law before the assembly, both men and women and all who could hear with understanding. This was on the first day of the seventh month. ³ He read from it facing the square before the Water Gate from early morning until midday, in the presence of the men and the women and those who could understand; and the ears of all the people were attentive to the book of the law.

⁵ And 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. ⁶ Then Ezra blessed the LORD, the great God, and all the people answered, "Amen, Amen," lifting up their hands. Then they bowed their heads and worshiped the LORD with their faces to the ground.

⁸ So they read from the book, from the law of God, with interpretation. They gave the sense, so that the people understood the reading.

⁹ And Nehemiah, who was the governor, and 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 or weep." For all the people wept when they heard the words of the law. ¹⁰ Then he said to them, "Go your way, eat the fat and drink sweet wine and send portions of them to those for whom nothing is prepared, for this day is holy to our LORD; and do not be grieved, for the joy of the LORD is your strength."



Back in 2018, Robert Stroud came upon the book entitled "Spoon River Anthology" amongst his mother's personal belongings. Upon further investigation, Stroud discovered that his mother had checked out this

book from her local library in 1934, but failed to return it. While the library ended up waiving any late fee for its overdue nature, the family made a contribution to that library in the amount of \$1,542.65. That figure came from a five cents per day late fee times the number of days/years that it was overdue.

Talk about a significant oversight by Stroud's mother! However, library books are not the only things which can fall into neglect. If we are not careful, we can ignore our relationship with God. We may not do it intentionally, but it can happen with time and a lack of attention. The people of Judah understood firsthand what it was like to neglect their relationship with God. It went so far as to create the situation which led to their exile in 587 B.C.

The good news is that we do not have to remain in such a state. There is time for a transformation and it can start right here and now. However, we must decide if that is what we truly desire for our lives. God will not force renewal upon any of us.

1. If you feel there is space between you and God, guess who moved?
2. Renewing our commitment is essential to starting over.
3. Renewal comes through a conviction to change for the better.

Prayer Pebble: Lord, take the messes which I create, my disobedient tendencies, and my forgetfulness of you, and make me new again.