The Heart of Worship
Nehemiah 12:27, 44-46

Introductory Thought
After all we covered last week as we evaluated what ‘now’ (12:27) means I wanted to continue the sermon on ‘His Strength is Perfect’ but came to realize that the experience of His strength that led to their joy stirred their hearts to sincerely worship God. Their joy did not only make them happy to have safety for their families and well-being it led them to worship God first. This is powerful because it shows that their hearts were sincere. It is this sincere heart that brought God joy that allowed them to experience His strength. This is the heart of worship that pleases God and blesses the worshipper.

Many times when God blesses us we look for more blessings. His blessings that powerfully establish us in His strength should not lead to a selfish response. It should lead us to be like David who could not wait to go to the house of the Lord for worship and to chase after God like a deer pants after water (Ps. 42:1).

Sermon Outline

A. God’s Strength Stirs the Heart to Worship (vs. 27)

1. They sought out - They had a set plan and they pursued it until the found it.
2. They sought out – They were purposeful and intent in making sure that worship functioned within God’s structure (Acts 2:42-47; Colossians 3:15-17; Ephesians 5:15-20).
3. “They” is repeated throughout this verse because the people worked together to establish the wall (this is highlighted in 2:17-20).
4. Celebrated – They people felt that because God built the wall they were ethically obligated with creativity to celebrate God. It is interesting that word is also attached hard work, toiling with a faithful heart and much energy.
5. Dedicated – This is the same as to inaugurate meaning they have placed the wall into its ‘office’ of protection for them by preforming this ceremony.
6. Dedicated – By inaugurating a wall in the midst of worship is to put into its function while honoring and adoring God for what He has done. They place God as the one who protects by means of the wall.
7. Gladness – They worshipped God with a cheerful heart.
9. Hymns of thanksgiving – They honored God who God is in the form of thanksgiving.
10. Hymns of thanksgiving – They honored God with thanksgiving because the wall is a visible representation that ‘God’s strength is perfect.’
11. **Songs** – They also worshipped God with a variety of music accompanied with instruments. This can also mean the songs were poetic but sacred not secular.

**B. The Heart of Worship is a Grateful Hearts (vs. 44)**

1. **Appointed; Untouched** – Those in authority made decisions to bring about change in how the chambers for storing the offering are maintained.
2. **Contributions** – The people brought their financial support of the temple that they had set aside for God. The priest then took this contribution into a ceremony where they raised it high before God.
3. **First-Fruits** – The people brought the choicest or best of items set aside as a sacrifice to God (Genesis 4:1-8). It represented their reverent fear and adoration for God.
4. **Rejoice; gladness** – They were in a state of happiness that came from the heart. It became their full desire to worship God with gladness.
5. **Served; stood** – The people did this with a commitment to be steadfast. They made this their official duty before God. They were committed to do all that was required of them by the law.

**C. A Worshipful Heart is Sincere and Celebratory (vs. 45-47)**

1. **Chambers for the stores** – Store rooms where the tithes and free-will offerings were kept.
2. **Performed; guard** – The people were so committed to worship God based on His law that they paid careful attention to all that the Word of God said with a heart to preserve it (David – Psalm 119:9-11).
3. **Worship; to ward** – Once the people had put everything together for worship based on the law they guarded it so that it never gets outside the will of God.
4. **Worship; to ward** – The people diligently organized worship so that they exercise great care to serve God in the manner in which He directed them to do.
5. **Purification** – This is to purify oneself. The made sure they came into God’s presence in respect of who God is, holy (Hebrews 10:19-25).
6. **In accordance with the commandments** – They people were deeply committed to do everything based on the divine will of God.
7. **Songs** – They also worshipped God with a variety of music accompanied with instruments. This can also mean the songs were poetic but sacred not secular.
8. **Praise** – This is to publicly give God adoration. The publicly declared with joy to God for His divine, powerful nature and for all the works He has done for them.
9. **Thanks** – This is the heart upon which praise is built. It is a public declaration or proclamation that comes for the heart describing all that God has done and how is truly is.