

From the Pastor's Desk 1980-1989

The Pulpit Bible

In the book of Nehemiah the story of Israel's revival is recorded. Ezra got together a huge crowd of men, women, boys and girls. He had a large platform built for himself and his aides. Many in the crowd didn't have the old Testament Bible nor were able to read. Yet they wanted to have the Law of God. To satisfy the congregation, the Levites and Priests took the Law, which was kept in a cedar box in the temple, and read and explained it to the assembled crowd.

How rich are we in this day and age. We have the whole Bible! We are privileged as we hold in our hands all the promises of God. We live by the Bible! The believer hungers and thirsts for the Word.

A spiritual revival always, asks for more of the Word. For a healthy and wholesome spiritual life, the Lord must be our heart's desire. As I meditated on Nehemiah and Ezra's desire to expound the Scriptures, my thoughts went to the pulpit in our church. We don't keep the Bible in a cedar box. But if we do not have the Bible laying open on the pulpit, We should we have. Historically the churches of the Reformation have always emphasized the centrality of the Word in the worship service. Preaching was called the service of the Word. It was seen as the God ordained means to build up the congregation in the faith. This trend of thought is directly in line with the teaching and practice of Ezra and found elsewhere in Scripture.

Why an open Bible on the pulpit? We confess through this means that preaching is the opening of the Word of God. Our authority for faith and practice comes from God and not from man. Of course a minister can take a small Bible into the pulpit with him. But this is not the same as having the Bible permanently open on the pulpit for one and all to see.