

THE GOD WHO FIGHTS FOR US AS WE FACE OPPOSITION

NEHEMIAH 4:1-23

CHURCH GROUP SERMON DISCUSSION GUIDE – MARCH 10, 2024

SCRIPTURE READING

Nehemiah 4:1-23 ESV

1 Now when Sanballat heard that we were building the wall, he was angry and greatly enraged, and he jeered at the Jews. 2 And he said in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, "What are these feeble Jews doing? Will they restore it for themselves? Will they sacrifice? Will they finish up in a day? Will they revive the stones out of the heaps of rubbish, and burned ones at that?" 3 Tobiah the Ammonite was beside him, and he said, "Yes, what they are building—if a fox goes up on it he will break down their stone wall!" 4 Hear, O our God, for we are despised. Turn back their taunt on their own heads and give them up to be plundered in a land where they are captives. 5 Do not cover their guilt, and let not their sin be blotted out from your sight, for they have provoked you to anger in the presence of the builders. 6 So we built the wall. And all the wall was joined together to half its height, for the people had a mind to work. 7 But when Sanballat and Tobiah and the Arabs and the Ammonites and the Ashdodites heard that the repairing of the walls of Jerusalem was going forward and that the breaches were beginning to be closed, they were very angry. 8 And they all plotted together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause confusion in it. 9 And we prayed to our God and set a guard as a protection against them day and night. 10 In Judah it was said, "The strength of those who bear the burdens is failing. There is too much rubble. By ourselves we will not be able to rebuild the wall." 11 And our enemies said, "They will not know or see till we come among them and kill them and stop the work." 12 At that time the Jews who lived near them came from all directions and said to us ten times, "You must return to us." 13 So in the lowest parts of the space behind the wall, in open places, I stationed the people by their clans, with their swords, their spears, and their bows. 14 And I looked and arose and said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "Do not be afraid of them. Remember the Lord, who is great and awesome, and fight for your brothers, your sons, your daughters, your wives, and your homes."

15 When our enemies heard that it was known to us and that God had frustrated their plan, we all returned to the wall, each to his work. 16 From that day on, half of my servants worked on construction, and half held the spears, shields, bows, and coats of mail. And the leaders stood behind the whole house of Judah, 17 who were building on the wall. Those who carried burdens were loaded in such a way that each labored on the work with one hand and held his weapon with the other. 18 And each of the builders had his sword strapped at his side while he built. The man who sounded the trumpet was beside me. 19 And I said to the nobles and to the officials and to the rest of the people, "The work is great and widely spread, and we are separated on the wall, far from one another. 20 In the place where you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us." 21 So we labored at the work, and half of them held the spears from the break of dawn until the stars came out. 22 I also said to the people at that time, "Let every man and his servant pass the night within Jerusalem, that they may be a guard for us by night and may labor by day." 23 So neither I nor my brothers nor my servants nor the men of the guard who followed me, none of us took off our clothes; each kept his weapon at his right hand.

ICE BREAKER QUESTION

What have you done right and well, only to find opposition, seemingly at every turn?

SERMON RECAP

To do God's work in the face of opposition – "Don't underestimate God's ability to turn evil into good."

1. Pray firstly and continually.
2. Fear God not people.
3. Stay on guard.
4. Keep doing the work.

DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

Observation: What does the passage say?

1. Read Nehemiah 4:1-23 aloud as a group. Let group members share observations. Try not to move into interpretation of the passage or application of what you read quite yet. Simply share what you observe.
 - What words of opposition do God's detractors use in verses 1-6 and how did Nehemiah respond?
 - What actions did God's detractors threaten in verses 7-14 and how did Nehemiah respond?
 - How did the people work and how did God work in verses 15-23?
 - How would you summarize Nehemiah 4:1-23?

Interpretation: What does the passage mean?



1. Read Ephesians 6:12 – Be Prayerful!
 - What weapons do Sanballat, Tobiah, and Geshem use against God’s people?
 - Who is at the root of opposition to God’s work and why is he there?
2. Read Nehemiah 4:14, 4:20, and Matthew 10:28 – Be Reverent!
 - What impact did the taunts and impacts have on God’s people who were rebuilding the wall?
 - What impact did Nehemiah’s godly leadership have on God’s people?
3. Read Nehemiah 4:9 and 1 Peter 5:8-9 – Be On Guard!
 - How did Nehemiah physically protect God’s people so they could work?
 - How did Nehemiah spiritually protect God’s people so they could work?
4. Read Nehemiah 4:15 and 4:21 – Be Diligent!
 - How did God’s people work when they focused on the enemy?
 - How did God’s people work when they relied upon God for everything they needed?

Application: How can we apply this passage to our lives?

1. Pray firstly and continually.
 - What is the quality of your prayer life – How well are you in communion with God?
 - How can your Church Group help you to grow closer to God through prayer?
2. Fear God, not people.
 - What slings and arrows of people get to you and bother you?
 - How is social, or other media driving a wedge into your life that takes you away from God?
 - Where are you more concerned about what other people think than what God thinks?
 - How can your Church Group pray that you would put God above yourself and other people?
3. Stay on guard.
 - How often are you in the Word – How is God’s Word a primary source of protection for you?
 - To whom can you turn to hold you accountable?
 - What steps should you take to turn away from things that weaken your guard?
 - How can your Church Group serve as a hedge of protection around you?
4. Keep doing the work.
 - How diligently do you work for money and how diligently do you work for the Lord?
 - How does your work show others that you are doing it for the Lord and persevering?
 - How does your Church Group work to grow you in spiritual maturity?
 - How is your Church Group doing the Lord’s work consistently?

LEADER NOTES

- [“How Do You Take Criticism of Your Views?” by Tim Keller](#)