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Nehemiah 4 Battle-Build

Weekly Bible Study Schedule

Tuesday, May 10, 7:00 AM in HHR #5

(breakfast provided)

Tuesday, May 10, 8:30 PM in Office #225

(Sen. Wayne Wallingford's office)

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non-denominational**

The book of Nehemiah concerns rebuilding the walls of Jerusalem by Nehemiah, a Jew, who was a high official at the Persian court. The Babylonian Exile (Captivity) forced the detention of Jews in Babylonia following the conquest of the kingdom of Judah in approximately 586 BC.

The exile formally ended in 538 BC, when the Persian conqueror of Babylonia, Cyrus the Great, gave the Jews permission to return to Jerusalem to rebuild their temple. Zurebbabel, Governor of Judah, led the first return along with 50,000 people. Followed by Ezra in 458 BC with 2000 people to reestablish worship in the temple. The third return was in 445 BC when Nehemiah rebuilt the city walls in Jerusalem.

The Christ follower's mandate is to **battle the enemy** and to **build the kingdom of God**. The enemy is not unbelievers in your home, in your relationships, or in your place of employment. It is not legislators that might vote differently than you, friends that believe differently than you. Our enemy is the devil who seeks to devour the destinies of the men and women that lead our nation, our state, our cities, and that lead our families.

God's people are called to build His kingdom. In His kingdom there is **love, righteousness, and forgiveness**. God's people carry both, the torch of truth and grace. We are a people of prayer, of faith, of vision, of promise. We are a people that understand it is God that raise's up leaders and takes them down. He raise's up nations and takes them down, He raise's up kingdoms and He takes them down.

Let every person be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and those that exist have been instituted by God. (Romans 13:1)

There is a correlation of what is going on in the book of Nehemiah with what is going on in our life, and in our state and nation, and what goes on in the spiritual battles we face.

1. What is the source and nature of the opposition?

In Nehemiah chapter four we find the source of pressure being directed against Nehemiah. The pressure is coming from Sanballat, the Governor of Samaria in the north, and Tobiah, the Ammonite. They offer a false counsel, intended to stop the mission to rebuild the walls of Jerusalem.

Sanballat...became angry and was greatly incensed (Nehemiah 4:1).

2. The Odds are Against Us – Use of Intimidation

Sanballat and Tobiah in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria ridicule the people who are working on the wall in the presence of his brothers and of the army of Samaria, *“What are these feeble Jews doing? If a fox goes up on [the wall] he will break down their stone wall!” (Nehemiah 4:2-3)*

A fox would hardly move a pebble on the road. The insult is very clear, ridiculing what is being done and **attempting to focus on their weakness**. Those working on the wall are working with rubble, limestone, that's not very good building material.

“Hear us, O our God for we are despised. Turn their insults back on their own heads”. (Neh. 4:4)

Nehemiah's first instinct is to pray. When you go to the Lord in prayer, you **battle against unseen spiritual forces that oppose God and His people**.

For our struggle is not against flesh and blood, but against the rulers, against the authorities, against the powers of this dark world and against the spiritual forces of evil in the heavenly realms. (Ephesians 6:12)

Nehemiah gained spiritual authority over what controls individual's thoughts and actions. Nehemiah refused to engage in a verbal combat, instead goes to the Lord in prayer. This is not to suggest that Christ-followers are to mute their voice or to allow others to silence them,



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however, the greatest power one has is through prayer. We battle with **spiritual weapons, like prayer and the Scripture.**

We use God's mighty weapons, not worldly weapons, to knock down the strongholds of human reasoning and to destroy false arguments. (2 Cor. 10:4)

Not only does Nehemiah battle, he builds. He does more than pray. He puts himself to work. **He focuses on the task.**

At last the wall was completed to half its height around the entire city, for the people had worked with enthusiasm. (Neh. 4:6)

He posts a guard day and night to meet the threat. He knows in the end the triumph of completing the wall and restoring worship and the purity of family will happen. But if he fails, at least he fails while daring greatly, so that his place shall never be with those timid souls who know neither victory nor defeat.

[They] heard that the repair of the walls of Jerusalem went on, and that the breaches began to be closed, they were very angry. All of them conspired together to come and fight against Jerusalem and to cause a disturbance in it. But we prayed to our God, and because of them we set up a guard against them day and night. (Neh. 4:7-9)

Nehemiah is circled by an alliance of enemies that are going to come against him. Have you ever come to a moment you thought you had victory and you had really broken through to God and it was going to be a whole new day then all of a sudden everything doubled back on you and the fight became harder than it ever was before?

That's exactly what is happening here with Nehemiah. The wall is half built. They're in a position of strength more than they've ever been yet the pressure is going to come against them stronger than it's ever been before. And **critics have a way of running with critics.** So Nehemiah has picked up opposition. Nehemiah **keeps praying, keeps working.** He does not let critics sidetrack him from the purpose and plan of God.

Also our enemies said, "Before they know it or see us, we will be right there among them and will kill them and put an end to the work." Then the Jews who lived near them came and told us ten times over, "Wherever you turn, they will attack us." (Neh. 4:9-11)

A sense of defeat is in the air. A feeling of hopelessness is looming. Human nature is to forget how God has helped through the years, and instead of banking on God's continued faithfulness from the past to present, we tend to focus on the immediate challenge and allow our battles to blur our sight of the mighty God of creation. Let it not be so with you and me, **"LET FAITH ARISE"**. We walk by faith, not by sight. We walk by faith, not by feelings. We walk by faith not by an anemometer.

3. Mobilize for Success

When I saw their fear, I rose and spoke to the nobles, the officials and 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 houses." As for the builders, each wore his sword girded at his side as he built, while the trumpeter stood near me. At whatever place you hear the sound of the trumpet, rally to us there. Our God will fight for us." (Neh. 4:13-23)

He keeps praying all the way through this battle and we must attribute success to prayer. He keeps everybody working. In fact, he gives new working routines that they must work with the **shovel and swords simultaneously.** Because the work is so spread out, he keeps a man with a trumpet by him so **if anybody gets in danger they sound the trumpet and everybody rallies.**

In spite of all the opposition, the walls of Jerusalem were rebuilt in 52 days. Zerubbabel rebuilt the temple of God and Ezra reestablished the worship and word of God. **A revival of relationship between God and His people were in play.**

Battle in prayer for a revival of righteousness and build His kingdom on earth as it is in heaven.

